



HISTORY OF THE ALPINE BRAND

Alpine is the story of a brand, but it is also the story of men before being, tomorrow, the story of a renewal.



CONTENTS

- I. A "RENAULT" FAMILY
- II. JEAN RÉDÉLÉ, RACING CHAMPION
- III. THE CREATION OF ALPINE
- IV. FROM ALPINE TO ALPINE-RENAULT
- V. AN INNOVATIVE EXPORT POLICY
- VI. ALPINE'S REBIRTH
- VII. MOTORSPORT, ALPINE'S DNA
- VIII. ALPINE: A HISTORY OF MEN
- IX. ALPINE PRODUCTION IN FIGURES
- X. SOME TITLES WON BY ALPIN

I. A RENAULT 'FAMILY'

Jean Rédélé was the first-born son of Madeleine Prieur and Emile Rédélé, a Renault dealer based in Dieppe and a former mechanic of Ferenc Szisz – the first Renault Frères 'factory driver', winner of the Grand Prix de la Sarthe in 1906 at Le Mans and runner-up in the Grand Prix de l'A.C.F. in Dieppe in 1907.

Louis Renault himself had hired Emile Rédélé right at the beginning of the 20th Century.

At the end of the First World War, at the request of Louis Renault, the young Emile Rédélé settled in Dieppe and opened a Renault dealership there in rue Thiers. Two years later, Jean-Emile-Amédée Rédélé was born on May 17, 1922.

After completing his studies in Normandy, Jean Rédélé took his Baccalauréat exam during the Second World War and came into contact with people as diverse as Antoine Blondin, Gérard Philipe and Edmond de Rothschild. He chose to be a sub-prefect before settling on a career direction and enrolling at the H.E.C. (Hautes Études Commerciales) business school in Paris. There, he achieved a joint degree in economics and business and graduated in October 1946, but not before sending a work placement report to the general management of Renault. In it, Jean Rédélé made several ground-breaking observations about the business strategy of the nation's leading carmaker, with sufficient conviction to be summoned to Boulogne-Billancourt by Pierre Dreyfus, the CEO of Renault. To help the company to translate its ideas into actions, Rédélé was appointed Renault's official dealer in Dieppe, following in the footsteps of his father.

Jean Rédélé was just 24-years-old and as such, became the youngest car dealer in France.

He threw himself into motorsport in 1950, reasoning that "racing is the best way to test production cars and victory is the best sales tool". To no great surprise, he chose the brand new Renault 4CV as the vehicle for his competition activities.

II. JEAN RÉDÉLÉ, MOTORSPORT CHAMPION

On July 24 1950, he entered the 1st Rallye de Dieppe. On home turf and up against 40 rivals, he steered his 4CV to first place ahead of a brigade of Peugeot 203s and more powerful Salmson entries.

That victory was lauded by both the press and Renault's management who suggested Rédélé enter the 21st Rallye Monte-Carlo in 1951 in a '1063', the special 'racing' version of the 4CV. He finished fourth in class, then runner-up in the 2nd Rallye de Dieppe. His driving career had started to take off. Winner of the 1st Rallye de Dax, fifth in the Rallye du Dauphiné, third in the punishing Marathon

de la Route which stretched from Liège to Rome and back to Liège, third again in the Tour de France Automobile, he finished his season by triumphing in the Tour de Belgique.

Jean Rédélé and his co-pilot Louis Pons participated in the very demanding 'Mille Miglia', a 1,500km race contested over open roads from Brescia to Rome and back to Brescia again in Italy. They won their class and broke every record, leaving their pursuers trailing more than an hour behind them at the finish.

Entered officially by Renault in the 1952 Le Mans 24 Hours, Rédélé in his 4CV was leading his class at 13.00 on Sunday – just two hours from the end – when he was forced to retire. He gained his revenge in the Tour de France Automobile in which he finished third overall, quite an achievement given the relative modesty of his car.

In 1953, Rédélé and Pons won their class in the 'Mille Miglia', again in the 4CV 1063 – but Jean Rédélé was itching to drive the 'Renault Spéciale' that he had ordered in Italy. In the Renault Spéciale's very first outing, Rédélé won outright, defeating two Jaguars and a Porsche.

In 1954, Rédélé and Pons won the 'Mille Miglia' – an event that would become their trademark race – and then the Critérium des Alpes. **"I thoroughly enjoyed crossing the Alps in my Renault 4CV, and that gave me the idea of calling my future cars 'Alpines'. It was important to me that my customers experienced that same driving pleasure at the wheel of the car I wanted to build,"** said Jean Rédélé. By the end of a 1954 season that had been every bit as successful as 1953, Jean Rédélé had gained a reputation as a top driver. That meant a lot to him even if, deep down, he knew he would soon have to choose between driving his cars and managing his business.

In 1955, as soon as Jean Rédélé received his "Rédélé Spéciale", the second car produced expressly for him in Italy, he finished second in the "Mille Miglia", a race won by Jean-Claude Galtier on "Rédélé Spéciale".

That one-two convinced Jean Rédélé to create his own brand: it would be called 'Alpine' and would be based in both rue Forest in Paris and avenue Pasteur in Dieppe.

III. THE CREATION OF ALPINE

Jean Rédélé quickly saw the potential of a car brand, which he wanted to build based upon the following basic principles: a car of innovative design, equipped with simple yet competitive **mechanics** underneath a lightweight, attractive body, whilst using the greatest number of mass-produced parts possible to obtain a low cost price and low maintenance cost in relation to the car's performance.

The second principle developed by Jean Rédélé was to boost his company's domestic activity with the provision of international licences.

Commenté [T1]: Glossaire Renault donne 'mechanicals' et 'mechanics' pour 'mécanique'. Toutefois 'mechanicals' me semble très bizarre, et je ne l'ai jamais vu/entendu auparavant. Mechanics or mechanical elements?

The limited liability company 'Société des Automobiles Alpine' was founded on June 25, 1955. In early July, Jean Rédélé himself presented three A106 Coachs ('A' for Alpine and '106' relating to the reference number 1062 of the 4CV, which had served as a source for parts). The first car was blue, the second white and the third red. That said it all. "A French car waving the colours of our flag both on the roads and in competition."

On October 6, 1955, Jean Rédélé officially launched his brand and cars during the 42nd Paris Motor Show.

The 'Société RDL', founded by Jean Rédélé and based in Dieppe, commissioned a convertible from Giovanni Michelotti and it arrived in early 1957. The pure and simple lines of this convertible would set the tone for all future Alpines.

In 1958, the A106 evolved into the A108. To begin with, the car used the original platform, before changing, in 1960, to the genuinely innovative 'backbone frame' chassis, the real key to the Alpine's agility.

After 251 cars had been manufactured, the 'Coach' and then the coupé made way in turn for the convertible and the Berlinette.

The myth was born.

Equipped with the same engine as the Renault Dauphine, the A108 soon gave birth to the A110, which benefitted from the Renault 8 as a parts bank.

With the A110, commercial success was achieved. The production of the A110 made continuous progression, victories in rallies were piling up, the success of its prototypes at Le Mans made Alpine famous ('The world's fastest litre of petrol') and Henri Grandsire, French F3 Champion in an Alpine, starred as cartoon character Michel Vaillant on television behind the wheel of Alpine-Vaillants!

The A110 was continually evolving – first with a 1108cc engine, then 1255cc, then 1565cc and then 1605cc. Aesthetically, the changes were minor but numerous: a front grille with four headlights, widened wings, a front-mounted radiator, a removable rear skirt and so forth... until 1977, the model's final year of production (the 1600 SX with a 1647cc engine).

Meanwhile, some 7,500 Berlinettes had been produced, and the car had shone in every competitive arena it had entered (rallying, circuit racing, rallycross, hillclimbing, ice-racing, etc.).

Commenté [T2]: Glossaire Renault contient 'cabriolet' et 'convertible'

Commenté [T3]: Glossaire Renault

IV. FROM ALPINE TO ALPINE RENAULT

Alpine's burgeoning success, spawned by the Berlinette A110, forced Jean Rédélé to create a second production unit in Thiron-Gardais.

Jean Rédélé found himself faced with an increase in Berlinette orders that his avenue Pasteur workshop was unable to handle. The upshot was that the factory in Thiron-Gardais began to produce assembled chassis and car bodies, painted and marked 'A110' before being transferred by truck to Dieppe where the mechanical elements were added. Led by a colleague in Dieppe, Daniel Vue, this unit was operational until it was taken over by Renault.

At the same time as this increase in production capacity, Jean Rédélé had imagined a completely new car: the A310, presented at the 1971 Geneva Motor Show. This car, designed by Jean Rédélé himself, was intended to establish the brand in the arena of sports cars and grand touring vehicles. Maintaining the traditional 2.27-metre wheelbase (as on the Porsche 911), this car was a success of aesthetical balance, and Jean Rédélé founded a new factory especially for it, on avenue de Bréauté, Dieppe.

The A310 and the new Dieppe factory, however, would become victims of the fuel crisis of 1973 and suffered a significant drop in sales.

That said, the A310 underwent regular evolutions and found its customer base. After the four-cylinder, 140hp, 1605cc engine of 1971, fuel injection was added in 1974, and then, from September 1976, it was equipped with the V6, 150hp, 2700cc powerplant taken from the Renault 30 TS. In 1981, it gained the rear end of the new Renault 5 Turbo. After more than 11,600 units had been produced (2,340 of the four-cylinder version and 9,287 of the V6 version), the A310 gracefully bowed out to make way for the new GTA in 1985.

In the meantime, the Renault 5 Alpine had been successfully launched. Some 56,000 units of the naturally-aspirated version were produced between 1976 and 1980, followed by 23,000 turbo models from 1981 to 1984.

The new GTA (Grand Tourisme Alpine) was very innovative in its production process. This technique enabled the polyester body to be 'bonded' to the chassis, thereby endowing the car with exceptional rigidity. Beyond that key technological innovation, the car featured a record low drag coefficient (CdA), plus fuel-efficient performance in absolute comfort. Initially equipped with a 2849cc engine producing 160hp, the GTA hit a top speed of more than 230kph. Several months later, a turbo version appeared on the market. It boasted 200hp and enabled the GTA – the fastest French car in production – to be labelled by the press a 'fighter jet for the road'.

The car gave birth to two rare versions. First, there was the 'Europa Cup' (not approved for road use), which competed in 'curtain-raiser' races at Formula 1 Grands Prix between 1985 and 1988 (69 examples produced). Then, there was the 'US' version with retractable headlights, designed

Commenté [T4]: Glossaire Renault

for export to the USA as part of a commercial and industrial agreement with 'American Motors', an American subsidiary of Renault.

In 1989, the 'Mille Miles' version – in recognition of Jean Rédélé's earliest victorious Alpines – was offered as a numbered limited edition (100 examples). Then, in 1990, the 'Le Mans' version – another tribute, this time to Alpine's triumphs in Le Mans 24 Hours – appeared with a more environmentally-friendly V6 Turbo engine.

In 1990, the A610 was made available to European sporting clients with a 2963cc turbo engine. An excellent touring car, it benefitted from dynamic performance worthy of praise and was received in just such a manner by a unanimous press. However, it struggled slightly to find its niche market. Despite the special 'Magny-Cours' edition, it disappeared from the range at the end of 1995 following the production of 818 units.

Jean Rédélé always kept his faith in Renault. Thanks to this close relationship, the cars produced in Dieppe were called Alpine Renaults from the end of 1967 when Jean Rédélé's brand was tasked with officially representing Renault in motorsport.

From that point on, Alpine cars sported the Renault diamond on their bonnet, and the economic links between the two companies became increasingly close. Finally, in 1973, those links were materialised when Renault acquired a 70 per cent majority share in Alpine. Henceforth, 'Nouvelle Société Alpine' was run as a public limited company with a board of directors and a supervisory board.

V. AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TOWARDS EXPORTS

After two efforts in the USA and then in Belgium – where several 'Coach' models were assembled in Herstal – Jean Rédélé decided to ramp things up a notch. He understood that the future would be about internationalisation and was conscious that his business – not yet supported or relied upon by the powerful Renault management – didn't have the financial means to create and develop an export network with 'official importers'. Rather than exporting, therefore, he proposed an industrial project to his partners.

The first target was Brazil, and an agreement was quickly reached with Willys-Overland do Brasil, who already produced Dauphines under a Renault licence. From 1960, A108 Berlinettes, coupés and convertibles built using equipment from Dieppe left workshops in Sao Paulo under the name 'Interlagos', after the famous Brazilian motor racing circuit there. The contract lasted for six years and allowed for the production of more than a thousand sports cars.

The second country targeted was Spain. Jean Rédélé made contact with FASA (Fabricación de Automóviles Sociedad Anónima), a motoring organisation that similarly produced Dauphines under licence in Spain. Almost two thousand Alpine FASAs were produced in Valladolid from 1964 to 1978.

Buoyed by these successes, Jean Rédélé then approached the Mexican company, Dina, which had also just signed a contract with Renault to produce the Renault 8. Thus, from 1963, the Dinalpin was produced in the suburbs of Mexico City. The collaboration ended in 1971 after 700 cars had been produced.

One final attempt – this time at Renault's request – took place in Bulgaria. Renault 8s were produced in a factory in Plovdiv, which Renault owned in partnership with the Bulgarian government. Certain Bulgarian leaders desired a national sports car, and from that desire was born the Bulgaralpine, of which around 50 units were produced in the late 1960s.

In every country in which they were produced, Alpines raced and won in the hands of champions of the calibre of Emerson Fittipaldi (driving an Interlagos), who would go on to win the F1 World Champion title and the Indy 500, future World Rally Champion Carlos Sainz (Alpine FASA), the East European Champion Ilia Tchubrikov (Bulgaralpine), etc.

VI. ALPINE'S REBIRTH

The relaunch of Alpine has never been forgotten by Renault's managers, conscious of having a "gold nugget" in their portfolio.

The success of the Alpine A110-50 concept car created to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Berlinette and which ran on the Monaco and Le Mans circuits as a demonstration, the enthusiasm of spectators during the 2013 Historic Monte Carlo Rally where five A110s raced, the press coverage at the announcement of Alpine's relaunch, are all proof that expectations were high.

At the same time, Alpine's dedicated design, engineering and purchasing teams finalised the overall concept of the production car and set the style for this first car of the renaissance of the Arrowed A, named after its illustrious elder A110. To this end, the historic Dieppe factory is benefiting from significant investments that began in 2014, while some of the 'mules' are already on the road, testing a number of solutions and technical innovations.

In late January 2015, for the "Concept Cars and Automotive Design" exhibition under the Dôme des Invalides, the full-scale model of the Alpine Vision Gran Turismo, which is the new heroine of the racing simulator "Gran Turismo", was presented to the public.

The story would then accelerate with the presentation of a show car at the opening of the 2015 24 Hours of Le Mans: the Alpine Célébration, created to celebrate the brand's 60th anniversary.

In February 2016, Alpine's relaunch was made official at an international press conference in the port of Monaco, a highly symbolic venue for a brand that has won the Monte Carlo Rally twice. The Alpine Vision show car revealed on this occasion prefigures the production car in preparation. This new model will develop 252 hp and weigh only 1083 kg to obtain an excellent power-to-weight ratio, a characteristic that has made the success of the Alpine developed by Jean Rédélé and his teams.

These two essential elements in the development of the car have made it possible to respect the brand's DNA of lightness and agility.

At the end of 2016, Alpine announced the opening of pre-orders for the Alpine A110 First Edition, a limited edition of 1955 units in reference to the year the brand was created by Jean Rédélé. The entire limited edition was pre-ordered in less than a week.

Marketing of the Alpine A110 First Edition started in late 2017 and continued throughout 2018 at 60 points of sale in Europe, as well at locations in Asia (Japan, Singapore, and Australia). The year 2018 also marked the launch of new Pure and Legend versions of the A110.

In March 2019, the journalists who were members of the European Car of the Year (COTY) jury ranked the Alpine A110 second in the final ranking, among a selection of more than 60 vehicles launched in 2018. Since its launch, this model has won numerous Sports Car of the Year awards from journalists in several European countries.

As soon as the A110 was launched, Alpine developed a more powerful version called A110S (292 hp), with a specific chassis where driving precision and stability at high speed have been modified to satisfy a more demanding clientele in terms of sportiness. This second version will be marketed at the end of 2019.

Alpine continues to expand its catalogue and in 2020 offers an A110 GT Legend version, the most elegant interpretation of the A110 to date, revealed alongside the A110 Color Edition 2020. This year also sees the launch of the Atelier Alpine customisation programme, which is rich in new features.

As part of Groupe Renault's strategic plan 'Renaulution' presented January 14th, 2021 by Luca De Meo, CEO of Groupe Renault, Alpine unveiled its long-term plans to position the brand at the forefront of Groupe Renault's innovation.

The activities of Alpine Cars, Renault Sport Cars and Renault Sport Racing are united as one entity under the Alpine brand. The newly created entity intends to be a "new generation" automotive Brand for discerning, passionate early adopters.

The new organizational structure, the intensification of synergies with Groupe Renault, the Alliance, and collaboration with selected partners will be instrumental to support Alpine's product plan. This will include a 100% electric B-Segment Hot Hatch based on the Alliance CMF-B EV platform, a 100% electric C-segment Sports Cross Over based on the Alliance CMF-EV platform, and a 100% EV replacement of the A110 developed with Lotus

VII. MOTORSPORT, ALPINE'S DNA

Alpine is a sporting brand. Racing is in its blood. This formidable image was, naturally, founded on the car's exploits in rallying. Still Alpine was also victorious in prototypes in the world's greatest endurance races, including the Le Mans 24 Hours, sports car racing's star event. The car similarly triumphed in single-seater competition – motor racing's most exacting discipline – and in rallycross, a discipline that calls for all-round strength.

In rallying, everything began with the A106 'Coach'. Independently of Jean Rédélé, several drivers took this first Alpine to victory. After a few years, they formed the first group of professional drivers. They were Jacques Feret (winner of the 1958 Rallye Monte-Carlo in a Dauphine, and later director of sporting promotion for Renault), Henri Greder and Jean Vinatier. The latter alone was a motor racing legend. He drove in the 1953 Bol d'Or in a 2CV barquette and, after several further outings (for Salmson, Aston Martin and Alfa Romeo), acquired one of the first examples of Alpine's 'Coach'. He entered it in the Mille Miglia at the age of just 23, yet he already had a promising career behind him. That career would accelerate with DB Panhard and later René Bonnet and Abarth, before he was entrusted with several Alpines by Jean Rédélé in 1964: a prototype in the 24 Hours of Le Mans, an Alpine Gordini Formula 2 single-seater and a Berlinette in rallying. At the same time, he was also racing for Renault as a factory driver. Moreover, still in 1964, he claimed his first major victory with a Renault 8 1100 Gordini in the Tour de Corse. Meticulous, organised, intelligent and mechanically sympathetic, he was reliable and quick and achieved numerous successes. His greatest source of pride came from winning a Coupe d'Or in the Coupe des Alpes. Only Englishmen Ian Appleyard and Stirling Moss could lay claim to possessing a similar trophy. After driving the three-litre Alpine A220 at Le Mans, he became French Rally Champion in 1969 in a Berlinette. Later, he would be appointed Sporting Director, first at Ford, and later Fiat Abarth before taking charge of important responsibilities at the French motor racing federation (Fédération Française de Sport Automobile).

The arrival of the A110 in the rallying world launched the careers of other drivers, too, like Gérard Larrousse, who looked set to win the 1968 Rallye Monte-Carlo until he found himself caught out by a patch of snow deposited by ill-intentioned spectators. Later, Larrousse would go on to drive Alpine prototypes before becoming director of Renault's F1 team.

It was, though, above all the team of 'Musketeers' created by Jacques Cheinisse, the brand's sporting director, that captured the public's imagination. Composed of the acrobatic Jean-Luc Thérier, perfectionist Bernard Darniche, dependable Jean-Pierre Nicolas and the brilliant Jean-Claude Andruet, the team truly stood out. It was strengthened from time to time by drivers of the calibre of Ove Andersson, who won the Rallye Monte-Carlo for Alpine in 1971.

That year would be one of title success for Alpine in the International Rally Championship for Manufacturers, a sort of precursor to the World Rally Championship. That followed on from 1970 when Jean-Claude Andruet had snared the European Rally Championship crown. This excellent

driver had already clinched the French title in 1968. Jean Vinatier succeeded him in 1969, but the ineffable Jean-Claude regained the laurels in 1970. In 1971, it was the turn of Jean-Pierre Nicolas, whilst Bernard Darniche prevailed in 1972. The fourth musketeer, Jean-Luc Thérier, finally clinched the French championship in 1973 but what was even more remarkable was that it was a private entrant who then picked up the baton and claimed the laurels for two years in succession, in 1974 and 1975. His name was Jacques Henry, and he maintained his cars himself in a small garage in Lure!

For eight years, the Berlinette remained on the top step of the podium – most notably during its exceptional 1973 campaign when, notwithstanding a minimal budget compared to its rivals, Alpine didn't shy away from going in search of the Holy Grail... the World Rally Championship crown. To begin with, the team achieved a veritable 'strike' by filling five of the top six places in the demanding Rallye Monte-Carlo. Even better, Berlinettes monopolised the podium, with Andruet finishing ahead of Andersson and Nicolas. Thérier and Piot finished respectively fifth and sixth. Jean-Claude Andruet's co-driver, 'Biche', confessed that he had "never been so fast on a rally".

That year, there was another standout performance by Jean-Luc Thérier who finished third in the Swedish Rally, traditionally a favourite stomping ground of Scandinavian drivers. There was another **one-two** on the Rallye de Portugal, courtesy of Thérier and Nicolas, and then victory for Darniche on the Rallye du Maroc – an event he was attempting for the first time. In rocky, sun-baked Greece, Thérier dominated the Acropolis Rally. In Austria, a controversy deprived Darniche of victory, whilst Thérier won the Rallye Sanremo in Italy. The crowning glory came in Corsica where – as they had done in the very first round of the World Rally Championship in Monte-Carlo – Alpine-Renaults annexed the top three positions, Nicolas winning ahead of Piot and Thérier.

Commenté [T5]: one-two (doublé) - This could be a UK term. I am not familiar with it. Also used elsewhere above.

In the final classification that year, Alpine-Renault destroyed the opposition with a score of 155 points, ahead of Fiat Abarth on 81 and Ford on 76.

When the A310 succeeded the A110, it was similarly baptised in a competitive environment. Jean-Pierre Nicolas, Jean-Luc Thérier and the incredible Jean Ragnotti drove it to victory with the four-cylinder Gordini engine, before Guy Fréquelin won the French Rally Championship in 1977 with the V6 powerplant. Only the advent of the awesome Renault 5 Turbo – also produced in Dieppe – brought an end to the A310's impressive run.

In prototypes, Alpine made its debut in the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1963, under the management of José Rosinski. Here again, Alpine demonstrated its originality by targeting performance and efficiency rather than outright victory. With their small, 1000cc or 1300cc Gordini engines, the cars were able to defeat their rivals, particularly thanks to their carefully honed aerodynamics. In 1964, Henry Morrogh and Roger Delageneste won their class at Le Mans in an M64 fitted with a 1100cc engine.

In 1966, there was a second victory for fuel efficiency with the A210 of Cheinisse-Delageneste. Still, it was above all a group success as the four Alpine prototypes that finished the race covered a total of more than 4,000km – a feat that no French car had ever accomplished before either at Le Mans or elsewhere.

In 1968, Alpine presented an A220 equipped with a 3.0-litre Gordini V8 engine. However, vibration issues meant it was unreliable, and after another failure in 1969, a curtain was drawn over the prototype initiative. It was revived in 1973 with the two-litre, V6 A440, and the programme reached its crowning glory with the historic victory of Jean-Pierre Jaussaud and Didier Pironi in an Alpine Renault A442-B in the 1978 edition of the Le Mans 24 Hours. The duo triumphed outright, whilst rally pairing Ragnotti/Fréquelin piloted a second A442 to fourth place. It was after this performance that the endurance programme was halted to focus instead on Renault's 1.5-litre Turbo Formula 1 car which followed on from the A500. This single-seater had been developed by André de Cortanze, the man in charge of Alpine's research department.

Alpine also triumphed in single-seaters. In the very first year in which the brand was officially engaged in competition, Alpine claimed the French Formula 3 Championship in 1964 with the talented Henri Grandsire. In 1971, Patrick Depailler became French Champion in the famous Alpine A364 'Dinosaure' followed in 1972 by Michel Leclère. That same year, Alpine was also crowned teams' champion in European F3, ahead of the formidable English outfits.

Alpine shone in other disciplines, too. In rallycross, Jean Ragnotti, Bruno Saby and Jean-Pierre Beltoise clinched the French title in three consecutive years (1977, 1978 and 1979 respectively), whilst Austrian Herbert Grünsteidl lifted the European laurels in 1977. In hillclimbing, meanwhile, there were successes for Jean Ortelli, Marcel Tarres and hundreds of other drivers.

The return to competition

When the study was initiated to revive the Alpine brand in 2012, the decision to enter the A arrows in competition was not long in coming. By teaming up with the Signature team, founded and managed by Philippe Sinault, Alpine is joining forces with a team that has won numerous single-seater races on circuits all over the world. Thus was born Signatech Alpine, the team that was to represent the Dieppe brand in the European Le Mans Series (ELMS) Championship from the start of the 2013 season.

The return of blue cars to European circuits was causing a sensation, with a first European Endurance Championship title for Signatech Alpine with a single-seater named A450 and bearing the N°36, driven by Nelson Panciatici and Pierre Ragues. The team would go on to repeat its commitment to this same championship in 2014, with a new title at the end of the season for the Paul-Loup Chatin, Nelson Panciatici and Oliver Webb crew. Invited to the 2014 24 Hours of Le Mans thanks to their European title obtained in 2013, the Signatech Alpine team finished 3rd in the LMP2 category of the famous Mancelle race. After these 2 consecutive titles, Alpine decided to take a step towards the World Endurance Championship (WEC), only 2 years after its return to competition.

During this first season in the LMP2 category of the World Endurance Championship, the Signatech Alpine team discovered new circuits with its A450b and obtained a initial podium at the 6 Hours of Fuji, then a first victory at the 6 Hours of Shanghai with Nelson Panciatici, Paul-Loup Chatin and Vincent Capillaire. The team finished the 2015 season in fourth place in the championship.

For the 2016 season, Alpine began stepping up the pace by entering two cars christened A460 in the LMP2 World Endurance Championship, the N°35 car driven by Nelson Panciatici, Ho-Pin Tung and David Cheng, and the N°36 car driven by Nicolas Lapierre, Stéphane Richelmi and the young Californian, Gustavo Menezes.

Signatech Alpine went on to accomplish a dream season, with 4 victories for the N°36, including one at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in front of 250,000 spectators, and earned 3 places on the podium. These results allowed the team to finish at the top of the LMP2 category of the World Championship and to win the FIA Team and Drivers Endurance Trophy. What a great gift to celebrate the official rebirth of the Alpine brand, with the future commercialisation of the new Alpine A110.

In 2017, the team's results were declining, with one victory at the 6 Hours of the Americas and four podium finishes. Signatech finished up the season in third place in the FIA WEC LMP2 Championship.

At the end of the year, Alpine announced the creation of a championship called the Alpine Elf Europa Cup, in reference to the eponymous championship launched by the brand in 1985 with races taking place at the opening of the Formula 1 Grand Prix. The car for this new championship was developed and assembled by Alpine's partner team in the World Endurance Championship, Signatech, based on a production A110. It was equipped with the same 1.8l Turbo engine, pushed to 270 hp, and coupled to a specific sequential gearbox to meet the constraints of the race. The A110 Cup also had all the equipment necessary for evolution in competition. Won in 2018 by Pierre Sancinéna, this competition was also organised in 2019 and 2020 on the most beautiful European circuits.

In terms of endurance, the years 2018 and 2019 were grouped together and qualified as the FIA WEC Superseason. Signatech Alpine then entered with an Alpine A470. This Superseason had the particularity of including the 24 Hours of Le Mans twice in the same season. Signatech Alpine would go on to win each of the two editions of this legendary race, and once again win the LMP2 Team and Driver World Champion title with the experienced Nicolas Lapierre, the Brazilian, André Négrao, and the driver/company manager, Pierre Thiriet.

In 2018, the partnership between Alpine and Signatech was strengthened, giving birth to a GT4 version of the A110. With more power and aerodynamic support than the A110 Cup, the GT4 would be the concrete expression of Alpine's return to the racetrack, alongside the most prestigious brands. All the A110 GT4s were entered by private teams but benefited from Signatech's factory assistance. In one of its first appearances at the end of 2018, Team CMR's A110 GT4 won the International GT Cup in Bahrain, with Pierre Sancinéna, first winner of the Alpine Elf Europa Cup and with Pierre-Alexandre Jean at the wheel.

During the 2019-2020 season, the Signatech Alpine team once again entered the FIA WEC championship with an Alpine A470 driven by Nicolas Lapierre, André Négrao and driver/company manager Pierre Ragues, and finished 5th in the championship in its category.

But there is still one discipline in which Alpine hasn't made a comeback yet, despite its rich record of nearly thirty victories in European and world championships between 1968 and 1975. With car racing being in the genes of the Arrow A, Alpine and Signatech therefore decided to launch the development of a rally car based on the production A110. It would be a car intended for the R-GT category approved by the FIA. This car was developed in the Signatech Alpine workshops in Bourges, and the dynamic tuning was carried out by driver Manu Guigou, who has won numerous French Rally Championship titles in the 2WD category. As with the Alpine Cup and GT4, the Alpine A110 Rally is part of a customer competition programme. Entered in early 2020 in a first rally by François Delecour, World Rally Vice-Champion in 1993, the car would get its first laurels in its second race in the French Rally Championship with Manu Guigou at the wheel. The driver and his A110 Rally would go on to repeat the feat in the third rally of this championship, and will end the season with a title of France 2020 champion. To conclude this year in the best possible way, Pierre Ragues, Signatech Alpine driver in WEC, enters an A110 Rally at the Rallye de Monza, and wins the R-GT category on the first outing of the Alpine Rally in the World Rally Championship. The car seems to be born to go for new victories on special stages all over the world.

In 2021, Alpine's motorsport programme will gain momentum with the brand's arrival in the Formula 1 World Championship under the name Alpine F1 Team, not forgetting the move up to the premier class (LMP1) of the FIA WEC Endurance World Championship, under the name Alpine Endurance Team.

VIII. ALPINE: A STORY OF PEOPLE

An automobile brand is naturally about cars, but it is also about the people behind those cars. Often unseen by the public, these engineers, technicians, operators, employees, executives, and managers all play a vital role. Knowing how to make the right choices during the car's design, knowing how to make it reliable during the manufacturing process, knowing how to make it attractive to potential customers, knowing how to make it desirable to everyone...such is their everyday challenge.

In addition to Jean Rédélé, Jacques Cheinisse, Etienne Desjardins and Roger Prieur, one must also note the racing team mechanics managed by Gilbert Harivel, the research department composed of Richard Bouleau, Bernard Dudot and André de Cortanze, the contribution of Marcel Hubert – the 'king of the wind tunnel and aerodynamics' – test-drivers, Mauro Bianchi and Alain Serpaggi (1974 European Champion in two-litre prototypes) who knew how to 'make the cars pleasant and enjoyable to drive' and Bernard Pierangeli, who looked after the development of the business.

In terms of factory drivers, the list is impressive and to name them all would be impossible. In no particular order, amongst them were Jean-Pierre Hanrioud, Henri Grandsire, Mauro Bianchi, José Rosinski, Jean Vinatier, Alain Serpaggi, Bob Wollek, Jean-Claude Killy, Jean Guichet, Philippe Vidal, Patrick Depailler, Jean-Pierre Jabouille, Jean-Pierre Jaussaud, Didier Pironi, Derek Bell, Jean-Pierre Jarier, Guy Fréquelin, Michel Leclère, Marie-Claude Beaumont, Patrick Tambay and many more. We remember in particular Jean-Claude Andruet, Bernard Darniche, Jean-Pierre Nicolas, Jean-Luc Thérier and Jean Ragnotti.

Jean-Claude Andruet, a driver of incredible raw talent and affectionately known as ‘Monsieur Bundle of Nerves’, remains active to this day. Nobody will ever forget his dual success in clinching both the French and European rally championship crowns in 1970, nor his victory in the 1973 Rallye Monte-Carlo, his triumphs in Corsica and his sheer enthusiasm.

Bernard Darniche was an extremely skilled driver when all was going well, supported by his co-driving sidekick, Alain Mahé. A multiple winner of the Tour de Corse and a Tour de France hero, Darniche was invariably hungry for more and always determined to win, even on unknown territory like in Morocco in 1973.

Jean-Pierre Nicolas was the calming influence, unflappable no matter what was thrown at him and always ready to seize a golden opportunity like in the 1978 Rallye Monte-Carlo. A driver with many attributes, he proved himself to be an excellent test-driver and knew how to win in all circumstances, with no great fanfare but with great efficiency.

Jean-Luc Thérier was perhaps the most intuitive of all rally drivers. With peerless precision behind the wheel, he possessed breath-taking car control, an audacity beyond compare and a marvellous sense of humour.

And not forgetting Jean Ragnotti, a true Renault mascot. In addition to being a stuntman and an acrobat behind the wheel, he was above all an excellent driver. Capable of driving anything, he entered rallies, rallycross events and endurance races (24 Hours of Le Mans) for Alpine. He maintained that same enthusiasm as he went on to enter historic VHC events at the wheel of an Alpine A110 Group IV and the Le Mans Classic in both an A442-B and an A443.

All these people perpetuate the memory of Alpine’s remarkable history, promote the image of the Dieppe-based constructor and harness the passion that brings the brand to life in France and elsewhere. Alpine clubs exist in Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, Norway, Sweden, the United States, and Canada.

IX: ALPINE PRODUCTION IN FIGURES

1. PRODUCTION OF ALPINE ROAD CARS IN FRANCE

A106	251	(1955-1959)
A108	236	(1960-1962)
GT4	112	(1963-1965)
A110	7,579	(1961-1977)
A310 4 cylinders	2,340	(1971-1976)
A310 V6	9,276	(1976-1984)
GTA	1,509	(1984-1989)
GTA Turbo	4,545	(1985-1990)
A610	818	(1990-1995)

TOTAL **26,666**

2. PRODUCTION OF ALPINES UNDER LICENCE OUTSIDE OF FRANCE

BRAZIL (INTERLAGOS)	1,500	(1962-1966)
SPAIN (FASA)	1,900	(1963-1978)
MEXICO (DINALPIN)	700	(1964-1972)
BULGARIA (BULGARALPINE)	50	(1967-1970)

TOTAL **4,150**

3. PRODUCTION OF CIRCUIT RACING CARS

3.1 SPORT PROTOTYPES

Prototype (4 cylinders in-line)	17
Prototype (V8)	8
Prototype (V6)	12

TOTAL **37**

3.2 SINGLE-SEATERS

Formula 3	26
Formula 2	112
Formula 1	2

TOTAL **140**

X: TITLES WON BY ALPINE

PROTOTYPE RACING

1963: FRENCH SPORT PROTOTYPE CHAMPION (J. ROSINSKI, M 63)
1964: FRENCH SPORT PROTOTYPE CHAMPION (R. DELAGENESTE, M 64)
1974: EUROPEAN MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPION (A. SERPAGGI, A441)
1978: LE MANS 24 HOURS VICTORY (D. PIRONI/ J-P. JAUSSAUD, A442 B)

SINGLE-SEATER RACING

1964: FRENCH F3 CHAMPION (H. GRANDSIRE, P.64)
1971: FRENCH F3 CHAMPION (P. DEPAILLER, A360)
1971: FRENCH FORMULA RENAULT CHAMPION (M. LECLÈRE, A361)
1972: FRENCH F3 CHAMPION (M. LECLÈRE, A364)
1972: EUROPEAN F3 CHAMPION (EQUIPE ALPINE, A364)
1972: EUROPEAN FORMULA RENAULT CHAMPION (A. CUDINI, A366)

RALLYCROSS

1977: FRENCH CHAMPION (J. RAGNOTTI, A310 V6)
1977: EUROPEAN CHAMPION (H. GRÜNSTEIDL, A310 V6)
1978: FRENCH CHAMPION (B. SABY, A110)
1979: FRENCH CHAMPION (J-P. BELTOISE, A310)

RALLYING

1967: SPANISH CHAMPION (B. TRAMONT, A110)
1968: FRENCH CHAMPION (JEAN-CLAUDE ANDRUET, A110)
1968: SPANISH CHAMPION (B. TRAMONT, A110)
1969: FRENCH CHAMPION (J. VINATIER, A110)
1970: EUROPEAN CHAMPION (J-C. ANDRUET, A110)
1970: FRENCH CHAMPION (J-C. ANDRUET, A110)
1970: BULGARIAN CHAMPION (I. TCHUBRIKOV, A110)
1970: ROMANIAN CHAMPION (G. PUIU, A110)
1971: INTERNATIONAL RALLY CHAMPION (EQUIPE ALPINE, A110)
1971: FRENCH CHAMPION (J-P. NICOLAS, A110)
1971: BULGARIAN CHAMPION (I. TCHUBRIKOV, A110)
1972: FRENCH CHAMPION (B. DARNICHE, A110)
1972: CZECHOSLOVAKIAN CHAMPION (V. HUBACEK, A110)
1973: WORLD CHAMPION (EQUIPE ALPINE, A110)

1973: FRENCH CHAMPION (J-L. THERIER, A110)
1973: CZECHOSLOVAKIAN CHAMPION (V. HUBACEK, A110)
1974: FRENCH CHAMPION (J. HENRY, A110)
1974: CZECHOSLOVAKIAN CHAMPION (V. HUBACEK, A110)
1974: POLISH CHAMPION (B. KRUPA)
1975: FRENCH CHAMPION (J. HENRY, A110)
1975: CZECHOSLOVAKIAN CHAMPION (V. HUBACEK, A110)
1975: HUNGARIAN CHAMPION (A. FERJANCZ)
1976: CZECHOSLOVAKIAN CHAMPION (V. HUBACEK, A110)
1977: FRENCH CHAMPION (G. FRÉQUELIN, A310)
1980: FRENCH CHAMPION (J. RAGNOTTI, R5 ALPINE)
1995: FRENCH VHC CHAMPION (J-C. REDELE, A110)

Beyond this extraordinary record of success, we should above all remember that Alpine Renault achieved more than a thousand victories around the world in the hands of amateur drivers in many different events in national and regional rally championships, hillclimbs and autotests. Alpine – the car of champions.