



Pictured (left to right): Bobby and Al Unser, Indianapolis 500 and Pikes Peak Hill Climb Legends

“The best part about meeting Al and Bobby Unser is that they are true “grass-roots” racers whose love for the sport was not driven by money, sponsorships, or big company endorsements. Their love for racing comes from their passion to win and the thrill of the chase.”

Racing Legends, Bobby and Al UNSER

There’s only one place, first place,” say Al and Bobby Unser, two brothers who are just as incredible off the racetrack as their legendary days on it. To give you a bit of history on the Unser family, Al has won the Indy 500 four times, his last win coming at the age of 47. After his retirement in 1994, Al’s resume consisted of eight 500-mile victories, 39 career wins, and a ranking of third on the all-time Indy Car victory list. He was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America.

Bobby Unser has three Indy wins under his belt and is the “undisputed king” of the famous and historic Pikes Peak Hill Climb in Colorado Springs, with 13 wins. He ranks 5th on the all-time CART list with 35 career wins and was the first driver to go more than 190 MPH at the Indianapolis 500. He has been inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame, National Sprint Car Hall of Fame, and the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America.

My introduction to the Unsers started months before this current issue of Senior Magazine. Through a mutual friend, I was introduced to a man by the name of Dan Kane, founder of the Rocky Mountain Concours d’Elegance. One afternoon after being introduced to Dan, we met in his office to discuss a possible cover story to highlight the Concours d’Elegance and the wonderful non-profits in El Paso County which are the recipients of its proceeds. When I asked about a cover photo shoot to tie into the story he said “Josh, why don’t we just go talk with Bobby and Al, I’m sure they would love to be on your magazine and they are the guests of honor this year.” Well, you know those meetings you walk out of and scratch your head and say to yourself, “I’ll believe it when I see it.”

Jumping forward to June, I’m standing in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the Unser Racing Museum personally meeting Al and Bobby Unser. What incredible men! Al’s passion in life is to run his museum, which is filled with historic race cars, memorabilia and education for the next

generation. Bobby is as big as life. Specializing in accident re-creation for large legal cases, he uses his expertise in engineering and racing to determine the cause of accidents in some of the largest cases in the United States.

Anxious to meet these racing legends, I was graciously welcomed by Al and Bobby and they were glad to share their stories and experiences with me. One that I found particularly funny was about the famous 1959 open-wheel Pikes Peak Hill Climb car. Al was ready to get his first taste of victory at Pikes Peak. Unfortunately, regulations at the time prohibited drivers from racing prior to the age of twenty-one. At the time of the 1959 race, Al was two weeks shy of turning twenty-one, but in typical Unser fashion, a false birth certificate was drawn up, and Bobby personally took out a large amount of debt to build a car just for Al. The day of the race, the judges were tipped-off that Al was not twenty-one; surely this was to be a disaster. Bobby had the debt of the car, plus his own car to race, no way could he pay off the debt without Al getting a first place win. What did Bobby do, he jumped in the newly built car, drove it to first place, and paid off the car! This beautiful piece of history still sits in Bobby’s garage in New Mexico on the historic Route 66, of all places. You could see in his face, his passion for this car and all of the hours he spent hand-building it from front to back.

The best part about meeting Al and Bobby Unser is that they are true “grass-roots” racers whose love for the sport was not driven by money, sponsorships, or big company endorsements. Their love for racing comes from their passion to win and the thrill of the chase. Seeing Bobby’s original shop at his home where he began working on Jaguars at the age of sixteen to fund building his race cars was inspiring. It’s not everyday you get to spend time with people like the Unsers. They remind you of the way things used to be, how passion was more important than a paycheck, how you do things you love despite the costs and struggles along the road. These men love racing and everything about it. 