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1968/1969 BRABHAM BT26/BT26A

1968-69 Repco Brabham BT26 / Brabham-Cosworth B26A, ex-Jacky Ickx and Jochen Rindt

- Driven by the great Jochen Rindt for late-1968 season
- 1969 Canadian Grand Prix winner with Jacky Ickx
- Earned Brabham and Jacky Ickx runner up in 1969 Constructors' and Drivers' Championships
- Spaceframe design with stressed panels by Ron Tauranac
- Repco 860 V8 for '68 replaced by 3L Ford-Cosworth DFV V8 for '69

Associated with two legendary grand prix drivers, this Brabham-Cosworth B26A was raced successfully by Jochen Rindt in 1968 and Jacky Ickx throughout 1969, including victories at the Canadian Grand Prix and more – it represents the ultimate in Brabham's line of world-championship winning spaceframe Formula One designs.

The BT26 represents the final and the ultimate multi-tubular spaceframe chassis design by Ron Tauranac, the "T" in Brabham's BT chassis designations who was also responsible for the 1966 BT19, in which Jack Brabham became the only driver to win in a car with his own name, and the world-championship winning 1967 BT24. A hard man to please and apparently unbearable before his 10 a.m. coffee break, Tauranac's stock phrases included "no, no, no, no" and "naaa, that won't do."

The BT26 featured a multi-tubular spaceframe chassis with stressed panels, allowing lighter-gauge frame tubes, and widened track relative to the prior year's car, achieving even better turn-in performance. When rivals had adopted stressed skin monocoques, the spaceframe remained lightweight, easy to repair, and superbly responsive. "It worked quite well, but might have been cheaper to build a monocoque in the long run," said designer Ron Tauranac.

The search for more power proved the Achilles heel for the prior 1968 season – the Australian-made Repco type 860 4-cam V8 turned out to be very unreliable, even if the package was exceptionally quick. Jochen Rindt put his BT26 on pole at the 1968 French Grand Prix, but the only time a 4-cam RB 860 finished a race that difficult season was at the rain-soaked Nürburgring, when Rindt and team principal Jack Brabham splashed home.

Chassis BT26-3 had four late-season Grand Prix starts in 1968 with the superlative Austrian Jochen Rindt, at Oulton Park and the Canadian, United States, and Mexican Grand Prix and was used in practice by Rindt at the German and Italian Grand Prix – all before Rindt's fateful departure for Lotus for 1969 and 1970. While still Repco powered, reliability was the issue not speed; various ailments saw the B26 retire in every race.

Re-engined with the Cosworth-Ford DFV V8 for 1969, the reborn "B26A" was transformed, returning Brabham to runner-up standing in the World Constructors' Championship, and chassis 3 earning Belgian Jacky Ickx to runner-up standing in the Drivers' Championship, to Jackie Stewart in the Tyrrell Matra MS80.

With Ickx throughout 1969, chassis 3 became indelibly linked with the six-time Le Mans winning legend. In addition to the victories in Canada (qualifying on pole) and at Oulton Park, Ickx placed 2nd at the Mexican Grand Prix (setting fastest lap), 3rd in the French Grand Prix, 5th in the Dutch Grand Prix and 6th in the Spanish Grand Prix with chassis 3. She was also used in practice at the British Grand Prix and at the German Grand Prix.

Rule changes in 1970 saw the B26As sold into private ownership. Purchased by American Doug Champlin, chassis 3 ran in the SCCA L&M Continental Championship series for 1970 in the USA and Canada, and was retained by him for many years. Roger Meiners acquired this Brabham in 1985, restoring it to its 1969 Canadian Grand Prix form. Later with Bob Baker of Paragon Racing of Nebraska, today she is offered from a private collection.

Epitomizing Brabham's double-world championship winning ways for the 1960s, this BT26A is rich in history and highly attractive in appearance, still wearing her Canadian Grand Prix race number, and even signed on the wing by Jack Brabham. One of just four constructed in addition to a spare frame, she is offered with 3 Litre Ford-Cosworth DFV V8 – in this 1969 form, she proved highly competitive with the contemporary Lotus 49 and Matra MS80.

A grand prix winner with such strong links to heroes multiple Le Mans winner Jacky Ickx and world champion Jochen Rindt, this B26A will appeal to purchasers with an appreciation for outstanding history and for design – symbolizing Brabham's first great decade of accomplishment.

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