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# 1976 MCLAREN M26

## 1976 McLaren M26 Formula One Ex- James Hunt / Jochen Mass

- Historic first chassis M26/1 ex-Hunt and Mass
- Six Grand Prix starts for McLaren, 4<sup>th</sup> at famous '77 British G.P.
- 2021 Monaco Historic Grand Prix winner
- The only M26 eligible for Monaco Series E
- Offered from 24 years ownership and historic racing

The first McLaren M26, raced in period by both Jochen Mass and Britain's beloved world champion James Hunt – retained by McLaren into the 1990s, and offered from nearly twenty-five years' of ownership and prolific success in historic racing.

Successor to the championship-winning M23 and also designed by Gordon Coppuck, the M26 was McLaren's final pre-ground effect Formula One chassis, lighter and lower than its predecessor, with a smaller frontal area and narrower aluminium monocoque. With its iconic Marlboro livery, the M26 gave James Hunt his final Formula One victory at the 1977 Japanese Grand Prix, and his final McLaren drive at the 1978 Canadian G.P.

Chassis M26-1 is the exceptionally historic first M26 chassis, indelibly linked with Britain's much-loved world champion James Hunt, and driven by the versatile Jochen Mass of Germany, later the 1989 Le Mans winner with Sauber Mercedes and remembered as the "great survivor." With a 9<sup>th</sup> on her racing debut with Mass at the 1976 Dutch Grand Prix, M26-1 had six grand prix starts across three seasons with Hunt and Mass, latterly serving as a practice and reserve car into 1978.

A highlight for the M26 was James Hunt's thrilling victory from pole in the 1977 British Grand Prix before an adoring crowd – that day M26/1 ran to a strong 4<sup>th</sup> with Mass in its best period Grand Prix performance. The result pointed to the eternal rivalry among teammates, recalling their memorable coming-together at Mosport in 1976 prior to Hunt decking a hapless marshal. "I'd started to snuggle up to Emerson's pace when he left and I was chucked in with James," said Mass, "It was a difficult pill to swallow...But we were team-mates and I wanted to help McLaren to win the title."

M26/1 finished in the points with Mass with a 6<sup>th</sup> in the Australian Grand Prix of 1977, and made further 1977 appearances with Mass at the German Grand Prix and Fuji. As newer chassis were completed, she became a practice car and spare used by Hunt in 1977 and 1978, making a final fateful race appearance with Hunt at Monza in 1978. In the melee off the start, Hunt had his sadly fateful touch with Ronnie Peterson after swerving to avoid Riccardo Patrese – who Hunt blamed bitterly for the incident that claimed his friend.

Passing into retirement from front-line competition, M26-1 was cherished by McLaren who retained her well into the later 1990s, preserving her for posterity. She then passed to McLaren Sales Director David Clark, around the time of his departure after production of the roadgoing F1 supercar ceased. Dedicated racer and a partner in JOTA group, it's believed Clark raced M26/1 briefly before she passed to the present owner in 2001.

Offered from nearly twenty-five years ownership, M26-1 has enjoyed a prolific second competition life in historic racing. Most recently appearing in the 2024 Monaco Historic Grand Prix, she won her race in the Principality in 2021 highlighting at least nine other appearances at Monaco, as well as countless other appearances at racetracks around the world, including trips to New Zealand, Estoril, Barcelona, Silverstone etc... Stabled alongside a large collection of single-seater and other Formula 1 racers and maintained by a dedicated in-house team ever since, she is the only M26 eligible for Series E at the Monaco Historic Grand Prix and is an extremely competitive entry at that.

With outstanding links to James Hunt and Jochen Mass and the first M26 ever constructed, M26/1 is a charismatic racer from a heroic period in McLaren's history. As the team rises again in modern Formula One, M26/1 represents a highly competitive package for historic racing, eminently suited for notable collections as a symbol of one of Britain's most idolized and beloved Grand Prix drivers ever.

**POA**



























