

Following one the blackest days in rallying with the death of Joaquim Santo's in a Ford RS200 and a number of spectators killed and others injured, a Renault 5 Turbo led the rally to a muted success with local celebrity Joaquim Moutinho at the wheel. The rally world was thrown into chaos by the end of 1986 with the tragedies of 1985 and then this incident. The end of Group B came with FISA banning the cars instead of sorting out the crowd control issues and perhaps limiting the cars performance in some way.

In North America a pair of 5 Turbo's based on Maxi 5's were hybridised into the IMSA Series and one of these was piloted by Patrick Jacquemart. It was the first car under 2.5 litres to be Turbocharged and produced 260 bhp from its 1430 engine. The car was considered to be under powered although it out handled most of the competition. Sadly he lost his life in the car and it was wrecked. It has since been rebuilt and is now in use again.

The Maxi ended up with a more modern looking GT turbo front end in 1987 for the French Super Production Race Series. Driven by Ragnotti (occasionally), Erik Comas and Jean Luc Bousquet, they took the title very convincingly. The Maxi went into retirement and Renault Sport carried on with the Group A 11 Turbo with some astonishing results. But that is another story.

Closer to home Britain's John Price has campaigned the cars for many years and as

long ago as 1981, he had imported a car, stripped it down and uprated it to Group B specifications. In 1984 and 1985 John won the Motoring News Tarmac Championship in his 5 Turbo and over the years won many

championship rounds including the Welsh Tarmac Championship in 1984. He went on to compete in the Irish Tarmac Championship and was consistently placed high up in the results with many a class win. He was seen on the RAC rally in 1981 where he finished 35th overall and competed in the Mone Carlo rally in 1983 but was unable to finish. Throughout the mid 80's he tirelessly competed in many foreign rallies including the Czech Barum rally with a 6th position and many Dutch and Belgian rallies. Cars driven included the Tour De Corse, Maxi 5, Cevennes and many other campaign cars.

In France and on the Continent the 5 Turbo continues to be used as a club racer and an effective rally car. When you consider that the car has been used over the last 15 years it is 11 hot surprising to learn that the total rally wins clocked up by the car is well in excess of 300. This is a very successful machine by any reckoning.

It does not stop there either as in the 1981 to 1983 period Renault 5 Turbo's backed by Elf Oils were involved in one make race series and were often seen supporting the F1 Grand Prix meetings. The 5 Turbo was used in 1981 at Hockenheim, Dijon, Paul Ricard, Monza, Zandvoort the Nurburging, Monaco,

Zolder and a couple of other circuits where it proved to be a superb tarmac racer. As many as 60 cars were seen at these races in various heats and the attrition rate was high with many spectacular off's. The cars were run as standard with the addition of the 185 bhp kit and safety equipment. The became a huge attraction and great publicity was produced especially when Jan Lammers and Alain Prost were seen at the wheel of Elf and Marlboro backed cars.

