

## COMPETITION HISTORY & SUCCESS

### THE EARLY DAYS

At the Paul Ricard circuit in January 1979 the black prototype was being developed for its debut in competition later in the year. The rear suspension turrets were much larger than on the later production cars. The bracing strut between them was akin to a cat's beam!.. Although the turbo was mounted to the left, above the gearbox, the exhausts exited on the right, as in the works cars later on. This was essentially to be the Group 4 car.

In the interests of weight saving, the research led to the use of fibre glass wings and bumpers, aluminium for the roof, door skins and tailgate. When compared to steel the saving was some 14kg, this was made up with the tailgate being 4kg, the roof 5kg and the wings 5kg lighter. Even the width of the fibre glass was reduced from 4mm to 3mm to save another 5kg overall. All these weight savings went towards getting as close to the minimum weight limit in its class as possible, with the future

Group B regulations ever present in the minds of the motorsport division.

The Group 4 Renault 5 Turbo in concept was way ahead of the opposition and only Audi's decision to go down the 4 wheel drive route (with their incredible budget) somewhat foiled what could have been a World Championship winning car.

What Renault did prove however over the following six years was that they had designed, built and developed with a very limited budget, arguably the fastest tarmac rally car of the era.

The key people in Renault Sport team namely Francois Bernard (Chassis and Transmission development), Patrick Landon

Calberson sponsored car (no 598) driven by Guy Freguelin, ran basically in Group 4 trim, running approx. 1.4 bar boost and produced 250 bhp. He managed one fastest time overall before retiring with engine trouble. A fair performance for a debut in the company of Rohrl, Villeneuve and Patrese and Alen in Lancia Beta's ! This was Freguelin's only competitive drive in the 5 Turbo despite being offered a further contract.

The team did not compete again until the Tour of France in 1980. This time the pairing of Ragnotti and Andre harried Darniche in his Stratos until the fuel vapours in the cockpit finally side-lined them.



(Renault's rally manager) and the Bozian brothers etc. all worked hard to get a prototype car together for the 1979 Tour of Italy rally. The rally had a class that allowed Renault to try the car, even though it was not homologated.

So during the dates of 20th -25th October 1979, Italian rally fans were treated to the first outing of the Renault 5 Turbo in public. The

the rally by 2.5 minutes over Darniche who was in a Fiat 131 Abarth until fan belt failure forced him into retirement. Fortunately Saby upheld honours by coming home in 4th place in his Group 3 car and was running approx. 100 bhp less than Ragnotti's car. The Group 3 car was not actually homologated until 1981 (no.3087), with a few disappointing retirements behind them the team prepared