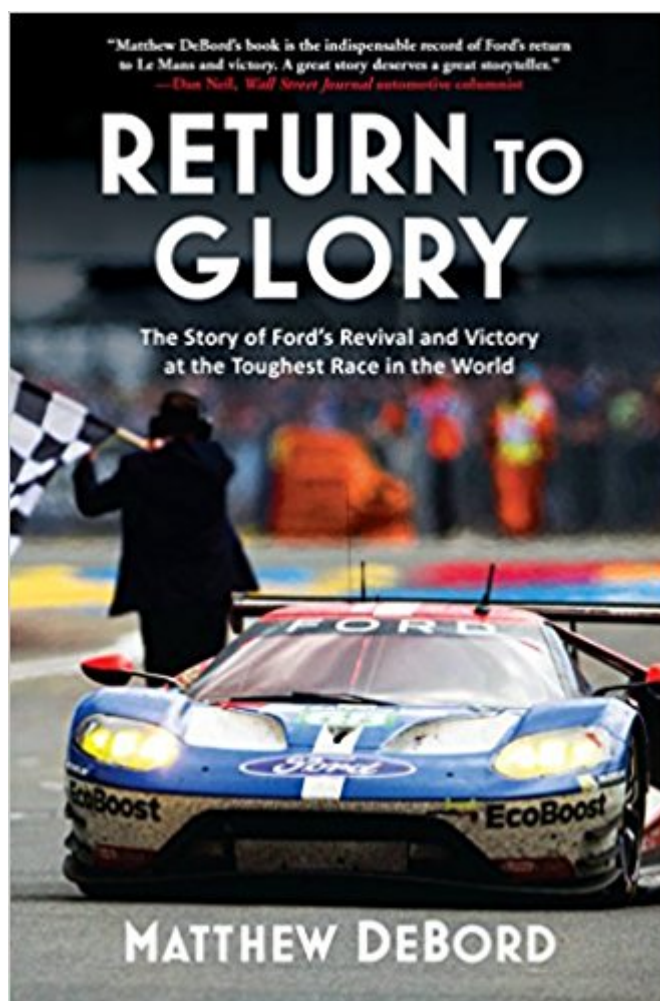


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# Return To Glory: The Story Of Ford's Revival And Victory In The Toughest Race In The World



## Synopsis

In January 2015 at the Detroit Auto Show, Ford unveiled a new car and the automotive world lost its collective mind. This wasn't some new Explorer or Focus. Onto the stage rolled a supercar, a carbon-fiber GT powered by a mid-mounted six-cylinder Ecoboost engine that churned out over 600 horsepower. It was sexy and jaw dropping, but, more than that, it was historic, a callback to the legendary Ford GT40 Mk IIs that stuck it to Ferrari and finished 1-2-3 at Le Mans in 1966. Detroit was back, and Ford was going back to Le Mans. Journalist Matthew DeBord has been covering the auto industry for years, and in *Return to Glory* he tells the recent story of Ford. A decade ago, CEO Alan Mulally took over the iconic company and, thanks to a financial gamble and his "One Ford" plan, helped it weather the financial crisis and a stock price that plunged to \$1 a share, without a government bailout. It was enough for the company to dream of repeating racing history. DeBord revisits the story of the 1960s, details the creation of the new GT, and follows the team through the racing season, from an inauspicious debut at Daytona where the cars kept breaking down, to glimmers of hope at Sebring and the team's first victory at Laguna Seca in Monterey. Finally, DeBord joins the Ford team in Le Mans in June 2016. This fabled twenty-four-hour endurance race is designed to break cars and drivers, and it was at Le Mans, fifty years after the company's greatest triumph, that Ford's comeback was put to the ultimate test.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for *Return to Glory*: A New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice "Like

Ford, DeBord has triumphed . . . His assured technical knowledge, supercharged by the enthusiasm of an aficionado, brings home the beautiful, brutal realities of endurance racing. Return to Glory is a spirited celebration of American initiative, perseverance and creativity that tells a story no less dramatic for its happy ending.

—New York Times Book Review

“This page-turning combination of business book and adventure saga tells the tale of the Ford Motor Company’s triumphant return to championship competition at the endurance race called the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

—New York Times (10 New Books We Recommend This Week)

“An upbeat, feel-good business story . . . Car enthusiasts will savor the insider information, including DeBord’s interviews with key members of the new GT’s design team . . . Readers from the business side will enjoy this snapshot into how an American industrial titan flourished by going back to its past as part of its future.

—Publishers Weekly (starred review)

“What a great book! It’s the first time I actually enjoyed a car book all the way through. [DeBord] managed to combine racing with great historical insights about the consumer car industry, and why racing and the consumer car industry [are] connected . . . I truly enjoyed this book . . . Amazing writing, captivating, educational, but in a new cool way. I stopped reading books for awhile, but this book wants me to start again. It’s the exact right length too.

—Henrik Fisker, founder and CEO Fisker Inc. and founder of VLF Automotive

“Whether you’re a car-lover or not, Matt DeBord’s Return to Glory is a fun, lively read and also a powerful story of American ingenuity and innovation. It couldn’t come at a more timely moment.

—Sheelah Kolhatkar, staff writer at the New Yorker and author of Black Edge: Inside Information, Dirty Money, and the Quest to Bring Down the Most Wanted Man on Wall Street

“Matthew DeBord’s book is the indispensable record of the Ford’s return to Le Mans and victory. A great story deserves a great storyteller.

—Dan Neil, automotive columnist at the Wall Street Journal

“This is more than a story of a Le Mans win. It’s a fast-paced lesson in Detroit’s history over the last decade, the mortgage crisis, the market collapse, and Allan Mulally’s brilliant leadership. The well-documented path to the GT’s brilliant Le Mans win is fascinating, and properly viewed as a fitting symbol of Ford’s, and Detroit’s, return to success. A great story, well told.

—Bob Lutz, former vice-chairman of General Motors

Matthew DeBord is a Business Insider senior correspondent, covering transportation. He has written for the New York Times, Slate, Washington Post, Huffington Post, CBS Interactive, and has

appeared regularly on radio and television to discuss the auto industry. He is the author of The New York Book of Wine and Wine Country, USA. He lives in Montclair, New Jersey.

I have virtually every book about the original GT40, the '05-'06 GT (I actually owned one of those briefly), and the few that have been published on the 2016 GT. This book was not what I expected from the cover. It was written by a business writer about Ford the company, with the 2016 Ford GT and the Le Mans effort woven into that business narrative. (There's even an entire chapter about Tesla.) This book was ok, but if you are looking for a book detailing the 2016 Ford GT Le Mans effort, you want "The Big Ask, The Story of Ford's Triumphant Return to Le Mans" by motorsport writer David Phillips. A Big Ask: The Story of Ford's Triumphant Return to Le Mans

This book is a must for anyone interested in the great Ford - Ferrari battles at Le Mans. It is also a very good insight to how Ford came back from the brink after the great recession. Unfortunately these stories are well known so there are no big surprises except in the details. Well written, without the "car" attitude that turns off those who do not understand automobile racing. This book works for everyone, car enthusiast or not.

In 1966, Ford Motor Company took on Ferrari- essentially on Ferrari's home turf, the 24 hour endurance race of LeMans. Widely thought to be an act of revenge because of Enzo Ferrari shunning Ford as a merger partner, Ford's victory was one of the more amazing stories of motor racing. In 2016, after a long absence, Ford attempted to return to LeMans and again defeat Ferrari on a race it had long since made its own. This is the story of that effort.=== The Good Stuff ===\* Matthew DeBord evidently had good access to Ford and its racing partners, and tells much of their story. To anyone not a part of the auto manufacturing and racing industry, it is hard to imagine the level of risk and effort a factory LeMans team really costs. While silent on the actual amount, the book hints that Ford's total effort, including the development of a new production vehicle, team support and salaries was well into hundreds of millions, if not billions. Certainly a number of careers were put on the line.\* The book is written in a lively style, and is a relatively quick read. I ended up reading it in a couple hours in a single sitting, and it held my interest throughout. You can't help but get caught up in Ford's determination to unseat Ferrari.\* If you are not a dedicated fan of LeMans style auto racing, there is still enough material contained in the book to give you a feel for the difficulty and challenges presented. The author relates what it is like to take a blind corner at 200mph, at night, in the rain, and provides a look at the mechanical

challenges of keeping a machine running for 24 hours at full performance. You can't help but get involved in the narrative.\* In the end, the book is about more than racing. Between 1966 and 2016, Ford (and other American automakers) went through some serious changes. Indeed, Ford nearly followed its competitors into bankruptcy, and was absent from most forms of factory-sponsored racing for many years. While LeMans is nominally the book's subject, the rise of American auto companies from their nearly down-and-out position just a few years earlier is also a strong theme. And it does have a nice feel-good quality about the story.=== The Not-So-Good Stuff ===\* I am a bit of a technology buff and a racing fan. For me, the book came up a little short on the technical side of the sport. For example, much is made in the book about the Ford EcoBoost V6 engine which powered the 2016 GTs. But other than knowing it was turbocharged and its basic horsepower ratings, there were precious few details of the engine, its innovations, or the pains in bringing a new engine from prototype to LeMans capable technology. Similarly there was little discussion of setting up a vehicle for a race, or the details of Ford's racing simulator technology.=== Summary ===I enjoyed the book, and found it to be a fun and rewarding reading experience. It did come up a bit short on a few areas, but DeBord clearly intended upon limiting the scope of the book to a higher-level discussion. From that standpoint, it is a successful effort and was well worth the time to read. The book would be appropriate for anyone with an interest in either automobile racing or the auto industry itself.=== Disclaimer ===I was able to read an advance proof through the courtesy of the publisher and NetGalley.

The subject matter here is great -- the decision by Ford to challenge the field in the 2016 Le Mans endurance race and how these factors mirrored Ford's previous try at endurance racing from 1966. DeBord explains what makes LeMans different from other races and what is required to win, and explains how the racing of 2016 differed from 1966, and how Ford differed from the other firms sponsoring race cars. The book should appeal to those who appreciate automobile racing and to those looking for information about business, especially the use of flamboyant projects to advertise mass market products from the same company. There's also some entertaining travel writing as DeBord visits the race himself. The book includes many excellent photos of both the 1966 cars and their modern incarnations. "Return to Glory" is not perfect however. Teams of people with disparate skills -- engineers, scientists, manager, financiers, etc., working together towards a common goal can be inspiring stories that transcend their genres. Tracy Kidder's "Soul of a New Machine" isn't

just about a computer. Richard Rhodes's "The Making of the Atomic Bomb" isn't just about weapons development. These books and others like them are ultimately about the ability of humans to create extraordinary things, far more impressive than what any of us could do alone. "Return to Glory" never quite gets there -- the CEO says "do it", the engineers say "ok" and the racers drive fast. The larger narrative is lacking. And there's a chapter about Uber and Tesla that seems like padding, as though it was dropped in from another book.

Nicely written, but maybe what Mr. Trump would call "false news." This book is a stirring, exciting, nicely crafted story about how Ford "won Le Mans" in 2016 with its new GT racecar. The fact is, however, that a Porsche 919 hybrid won that race, and the Ford GT finished 18th. The Ford won its class. The Porsche won the race. Ford's class victory was huge, but DeBord overinflates it. There are just a few sentences in the entire book devoted to the car that actually won Le Mans, when DeBord relates the stunning tale of how the Toyota that was about to win the 2016 Le Mans race had an engine failure with five minutes of the 24-hour race left to go. Ford's class victory was real, but read this excellent book with the truth in mind, and dial back some of DeBord's selective enthusiasm. Having said that, I highly recommend the book as an exciting and well-informed read.

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