

FRISSELLE FAMILY TIES

Racing families are found in all facets of American motorsports.

A family new to many auto-racing fans may be road racing's Frisselles.

Brad Frisselle was a Camel GTU champion, Le Mans entrant and builder of the Frissbee, the car with which Al Unser, Jr. won the 1982 CanAm title. He didn't encourage his sons Burt and Brian to become racers, but they found the sport anyway. They

race for rival teams in the Grand Am Rolex Series — Brian

for Wayne Taylor's SunTrust Racing and Burt for AIM Autosport.

"Initially, he hoped that Burt and I would stay away from racing," Brian explained. "Dad tried to steer us clear, but he didn't realize he was leading us down a troubled path when he got us into snowmobiles. Now that we're in it, he loves to watch his two sons out there racing."

Burt, 27, is the older brother by two years, but it was Brian who first reached Grand Am victory lane, scoring back-to-back Rolex victories last season. Those wins were accomplished for AIM Motorsports with co-driver Mark Wilkins, the team for which Burt now drives.

Since their motorsports fixation took hold, they have raced as both rivals and teammates through snowmobiles, open-cockpit training formulas and even

NASCAR late models before landing in the Rolex Series.

For most teenagers, a family move from Southern California to New Hampshire would not be a liberating experience. For the Frisselles it was, for they discovered snowmobiling. "I actually started before my brother," Burt explained. "He wasn't as interested as me. We took out a lot of our automotive itch in snowmobiles."

"We went over the limit — him more than me. I remember him rolling a few sleds," Brian responded. Their arrival in the

Granite State also coincided with the arrival of NASCAR Cup racing at New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon, a short drive from their Gilford home. They were season ticket holders in the mid-1990s.

After the brothers trained and raced with the Skip Barber program, Brian allowed himself to dream what turned out to be the impossible dream. "During my Skip Barber career my eyes were on Formula One. I badly wanted to be in F-1," he said. "I wasn't quite as focused on Indy because the IRL was so heavily oval based and that wasn't where my passion was. My eyes were more on F-1."

Selected at age 19 to Red Bull's runoffs for drivers



CANDY AND AUTOGRAPHS: Burt Frisselle (right) and former Doran Racing teammate Ricky Taylor sign autographs and hand out candy during an autograph session in 2008.

couldn't get here quick enough." Burt immediately made his mark, finishing third in his debut at Homestead-Miami Speedway in February 2004, teaming with Oswaldo Negri, Jr. for Michael Shank Racing. It remains his career highlight. "Standing on the podium with Negri, it was a very special moment," he recalled. "At the beginning of the weekend, I was sitting in the room (at the drivers meeting) looking around and saying, 'Wow — Papis, Magnusson, Scott Pruett, what am I doing here?' By the end of the weekend, I was spraying champagne in Andy Wallace's face. How good does it get?"

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sharing those aspirations taught Brian a difficult lesson. "What sealed the deal for me was that I went to the shootout and I was the only driver in the top three in every session, but at the end they told me I was too old," he reflected.

Meanwhile, Burt had committed himself to a racing career in a different direction. "All the turmoil in the open-wheel series at that time and my dad's being in sports cars made it the perfect time for me to look at Grand Am," he said. "They have what I feel is the best formula in the country. Once I found a home here, Brian

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Racing.

"Being teammates was great, but both of us were very inexperienced. The longest race I had run was 45 minutes, so it was a big step up," Brian said. "It's so much in our mentalities to push all the time and try to get the most out of the car. When you go to a 24-hour race, you always have to make the smartest and safest decision. If you do something that's too aggressive, you can cost the whole team the race."

They finished 34th overall, 17th in the prototype class. They nibbled at success for a couple of years as teammates, first with Synergy Racing and then with AIM Autosport. For 2008, the brothers went their separate ways as Brian stayed with Toronto-based AIM and its Ford-Riley package while Burt became part of the Doran Racing team.

It was a breakout season for Brian, teamed with AIM veteran Mark Wilkins. After winning at Montreal's Ile Notre Dame circuit, the duo came back to post another victory on NASCAR Cup weekend at Watkins Glen (N.Y.) Int'l, leading every lap from the pole.

"It was my career highlight, the Watkins Glen race that we just walked away," Brian declared. "We won in Montreal, but we didn't dominate. We kind of lucked into it. To go to the Glen and kick everyone's butt was just awesome."

In one of those ironies that are such a part of motorsports, Brian accepted an offer to drive for one of Grand Am's premier teams this season — Wayne Taylor's SunTrust Racing — and Burt filled his seat at AIM.

Brian is now teamed with Max Angelelli and victory is expected.

"Working with Wayne and Max is phenomenal," Brian exclaimed. "There's such a wealth of knowledge between them. They've been racing for a very long time and they know exactly what they're doing."

Speaking of Angelelli, the standard by which he will inevitably be measured, Brian added, "If anyone gets

Learning In The School Of Hard Knocks

Before Burt and Brian Frisselle graduated from Skip Barber formula cars to the Grand Am Rolex Series full time, there was another curriculum to be studied, and it took the brothers to Radford, Va., for a 2007 season of NASCAR Whelen All-American Series action at Motor Mile Speedway.

"They drove, and worked in the shop to maintain, a pair of late-model stock cars owned by NASCAR Camping World Truck Series driver Stacy Compton. It wasn't an easy course, but they couldn't have picked a better place to gauge their progress. Motor Mile's champion, Philip Morris, has won the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series national title two of the last three years."

"You learn so much, like going out of the pits on completely cold tires and qualifying in two laps," Brian said. "It didn't always go the way we hoped, but it was a great experience and it helped us with our racecraft. They took us to school out there."

"Those guys are passionate and you don't want to spin them out. They have memories like elephants," Burt noted. "If you did something wrong last week, you'll find out about it next week."

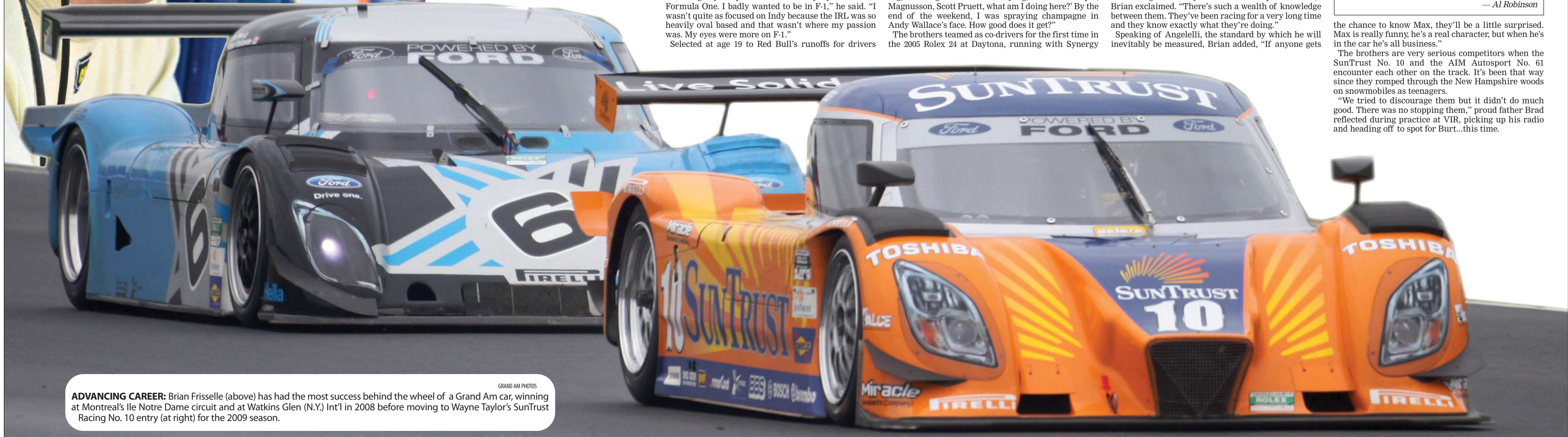
"Here (in Grand Am) we have a great team working all week on the car, but there it was just me. I tried to keep the body as straight as possible, but sometimes it didn't work out that way."

— Al Robinson

the chance to know Max, they'll be a little surprised. Max is really funny, he's a real character, but when he's in the car he's all business."

The brothers are very serious competitors when the SunTrust No. 10 and the AIM Autosport No. 61 encounter each other on the track. It's been that way since they romped through the New Hampshire woods on snowmobiles as teenagers.

"We tried to discourage them but it didn't do much good. There was no stopping them," proud father Brad reflected during practice at VIR, picking up his radio and heading off to spot for Burt...this time.



ADVANCING CAREER: Brian Frisselle (above) has had the most success behind the wheel of a Grand Am car, winning at Montreal's Ile Notre Dame circuit and at Watkins Glen (N.Y.) Int'l in 2008 before moving to Wayne Taylor's SunTrust Racing No. 10 entry (at right) for the 2009 season.