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Jutta Kleinschmidt

July 29, 1962-Present
Nationality: German
Started Racing in 1987

Origins: Born in Cologne, Jutta and her three sisters were raised by their single mother in rugged Bavaria. She spent much of her childhood keeping up with neighborhood boys, exploring the wooded areas and dilapidated houses nearby. She also showed an early interest in speed, competing in skiing, “skibob” (a winter sport that resembles a bike on skis) and luge, and reaching the top-level and competing in numerous championship races. Her interest in speed even extended into her academic life, as she earned a master’s degree in physics and took a job with BMW as an engineer in the company’s vehicle development department.

Early Influences: Kleinschmidt was introduced to racing in 1985 after seeing a motorbike desert rally. The unique blend of adventure, technical issues, and pure racing offered in cross-country rallies caught her interest and it wasn’t long before she bought her own bike, a HPN BMW and started attending races as a spectator. Jutta was not satisfied with sitting on the sidelines, however as she was probably the only “spectator” to follow the competitors on her own bike! A year and a half later, she officially started her racing career by taking part in the 1987 Pharaoh’s Rally in Egypt.

Racing Accomplishments:

- Jutta won the Ladies Trophy in the 1992 Paris-Dakar Rally, being the first woman to finish the race and placing 23rd in the motorbike class.
- In 1996, Kleinschmidt finished second in the Cross Country World Cup two-wheel drive class.
- Placed fifth in the 1997 Dakar-Agadez-Dakar Rally. During the race Kleinschmidt led two stages, becoming the first woman to do so in the history of the desert rally.
- First woman to win a stage in the grueling Paris-Dakar Rally. During the 2001 race, Kleinschmidt not only lead a stage, but made history by becoming the first woman to win the rally, finishing the 21-day, 10,000 km race only 2 minutes and 39 seconds ahead of her closest competitor.
- In 2001, Kleinschmidt placed second overall in the World Cup for Cross-Country Rallies after winning the Paris-Dakar and Baja Rallies, and placing second in the Morocco, Baja Portugal, Master, and Por Las Pampas Rallies.

- Jutta's third place finish in the 2005 Telefonica-Dakar Rally was the race's first podium finish for a diesel-powered car.
- Her team captured a first place in the S2 class at the 2008 Nurburgring 24 Hour Race.

Interesting Fact: At the beginning of her racing career, Kleinschmidt didn't have a garage to work on her motorbike, so she converted her apartment kitchen into a make-shift workroom. Jutta didn't have a problem filling her counter space with cylinders heads and seals, but ran into issues when she tried to bring the completed bike downstairs. Even after convincing her landlord to allow her to use the cargo elevator to transport her bike to street-level, she realized the bike still wouldn't fit until she removed one of the cylinders!

Life off the Track: Kleinschmidt currently lives in Monaco. Since 1993, Kleinschmidt has stretched her love of racing into a career by being a freelance cross-country driving instructor for major companies and her own programs, as well as making appearances to talk about her career and racing accomplishments.

Awards and Achievements:

- Awarded "Engineer in Motion" honor from German Engineering Association in 2001.
- Voted 2001 Motorsport Personality of the Year by the Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club, Europe's largest automobile club.
- Recipient of the Lord Wakefield Trophy for Outstanding Lady Competitor of 2001 by the British Women Racing Drivers Club.
- Voted 2001 Rally Driver of the Year in poll by Motorsport Aktuell (German motorsport magazine).

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Research and biography written by Hilary Resteck and Casey Schuster, graduate students at Indiana University/Purdue University Public History Department.