



A blend of raw speed and impressive consistency enabled Jimmy Vasser (*left*) to claim the PPG Cup championship for team owner Chip Ganassi (*below*).

Far left: Vasser received vital support from managing director Tom Anderson, who looked after his race strategy, and engineer Julian Robertson (*below*).

As the season developed, it was the second Target Reynard-Honda of Alex Zanardi (*below center*) that set the pace. Benefiting hugely from the experience of veteran race engineer Morris Nunn (seen bottom center on the left, chatting with Reynard's Bruce Ashmore), the talented Italian (*bottom right*) took the Rookie of the Year crown in style.

Target/Chip Ganassi Racing

Base: Indianapolis, Ind.

Drivers: Jimmy Vasser, Alex Zanardi (R)

Sponsor: Target Stores

Chassis: Reynard 96I

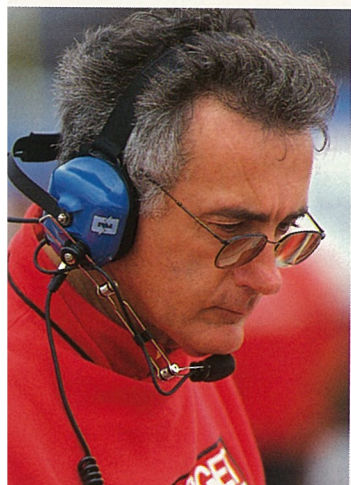
Engines: Honda Indy V8

Tires: Firestone

Wins: 7 (Vasser 4, Zanardi 3); Poles: 10 (Zanardi 6, Vasser 4)

PPG Cup points: 286

Vasser 154 (1st), Zanardi 132 (3rd)



Everyone on the well-drilled Ganassi team played a role. The respective crew chiefs, Grant Weaver (Vasser) and Rob Hill (Zanardi), performed almost flawlessly, and both crews were superbly marshaled by Mike Hull. Tom Anderson, who gained new responsibility at the beginning of the season as managing director, did a fine job. He also took charge of calling the strategy on Vasser's car during the races.

The team was extremely well prepared prior to the first event at Homestead, and therein lay the key to its success. The only problems seemed to occur on the short ovals, where race engineers Morris Nunn (Zanardi) and Julian Robertson (Vasser) never did secure a consistent balance for their drivers. They were perhaps fortunate that due to the IRL conflict, only Milwaukee and Nazareth remained on the schedule. Nevertheless, on every other type of circuit, the Target cars were always a force to be reckoned with. The drivers took full advantage.

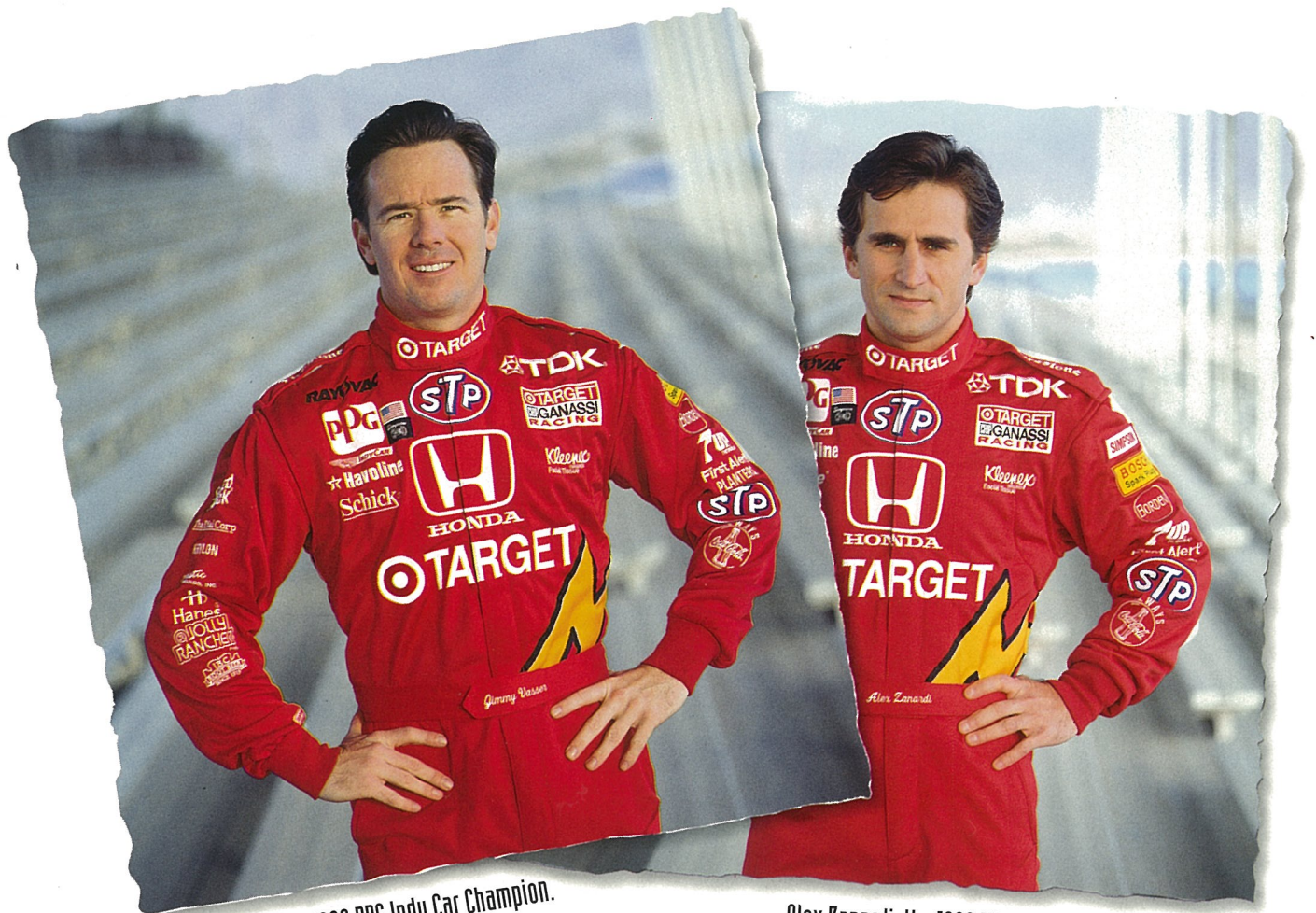


while never a totally dominant force, rattled off four wins in the first six races. He also demonstrated his raw speed by winning four poles during his championship year. Zanardi, meanwhile, was on the pace pretty much right away, although he did suffer a variety of misfortunes in the early part of the season.

Between them Zanardi and Vasser led a total of 772 laps – or 38.5 percent – during the 16-race season. Vasser, furthermore, was a paragon of consistency. His #12 Target Reynard-Honda finished every single race, comfortably leading the categories for most laps and miles completed.



Congratulations to the best Sunday drivers in the world.



Jimmy Vasser, the 1996 PPG Indy Car Champion.

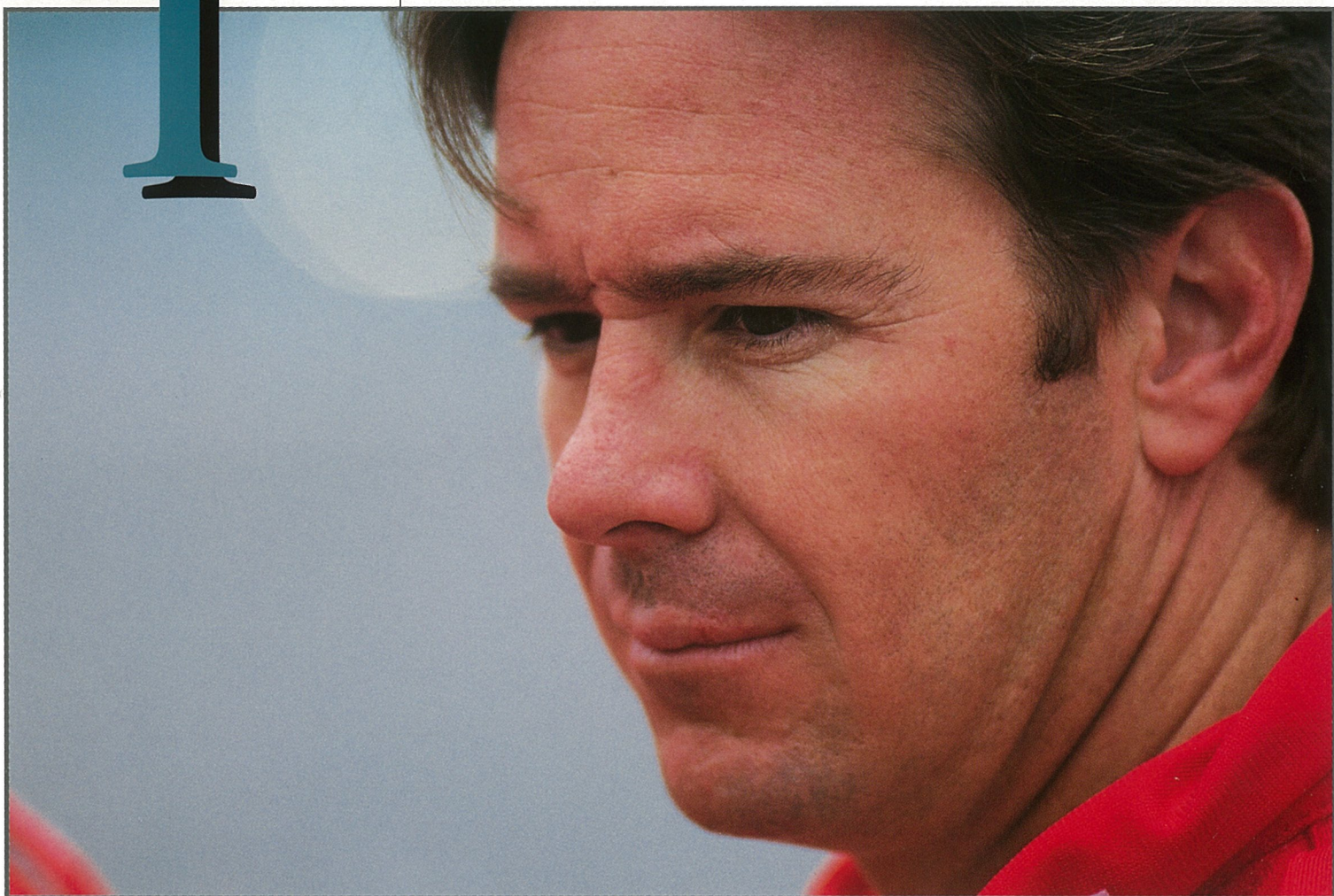
Alex Zanardi, the 1996 PPG Indy Car Rookie of the Year.

10 poles. 7 wins. First and
third in the 1996 PPG Indy Car
Points Championship. They all
add up to the best team in
Indy Car Racing. Congratulations,
Target/Chip Ganassi Racing, on
a spectacular season.

TARGET

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jimmy vasser



Jimmy Vasser

Date of birth: November 20, 1965

*Residence: Las Vegas, Nev.,
and San Francisco, Calif.*

Indy Car starts in 1996: 16

PPG Cup ranking: 1st

Wins: 4; Poles: 4; Points: 154

Jimmy Vasser came of age in 1996. He relished the stability within Target/Chip Ganassi Racing and further cemented his rapport with race engineer Julian Robertson, crew chief Grant Weaver and strategist Tom Anderson. He took the lion's share of responsibility during a winter test program made all the more crucial by the switch to Honda engines and Firestone tires. He benefited, too, from the relationship he was able to develop with new teammate Zanardi.

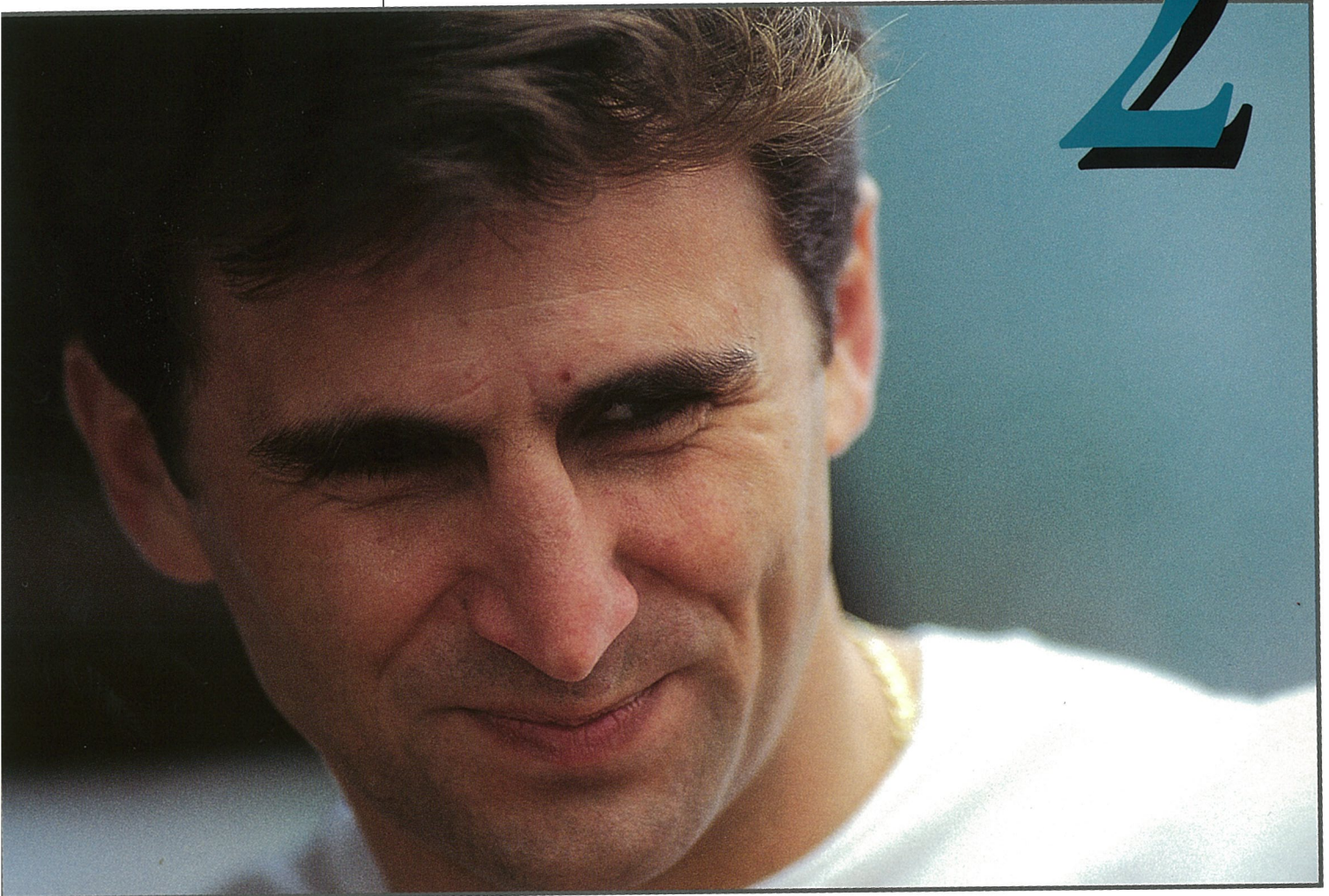
Consequently, Vasser began the season with his confidence at an all-time high. He duly reaped the benefits.

Vasser displayed his maturity during the first race at Homestead. He was always within striking distance of pace-setter Tracy, and following the Canadian's demise, he was able to overtake de Ferran on a restart and run away to a well-earned maiden victory. In Australia he was in a class of his own, winning from the pole. He added two more wins at Long Beach and the U.S. 500.

There are critics who insist Vasser 'backed into' the PPG Cup. I disagree. He did exactly what it takes to win. In the first six races he never qualified lower than third, including at Nazareth where the Firestone tires were no match for the Goodyears. He made only one obvious error, spinning in the wet at Portland. Yes, he was out-paced toward the end of the season by Zanardi; but Vasser retained his focus - and the points lead - despite intense pressure from a couple of vastly more experienced campaigners in Unser and Andretti. He displayed his speed by claiming four poles. Even when his car was not a front-runner, Vasser made sure he finished - all but once among the points. Which is precisely how championships are won.

alex zanardi

2



Many people questioned Chip Ganassi's wisdom when he replaced the promising Bryan Herta with Alessandro Zanardi. The Italian, like de Ferran, who joined Jim Hall's team one year earlier, had been highly recommended by Reynard managing director Rick Gorne, with whose help he finished a close second to Christian Fittipaldi in the 1991 European Formula 3000 Championship.

Once again, Gorne - and Ganassi - hit the jackpot. Zanardi's season began inauspiciously when a wheel fell off following a pit stop at Homestead, but he rebounded in Rio by qualifying brilliantly on the pole. He led strongly on race day until an unfortunate strategic call cost him a chance at victory.

In almost every other race, apart from the two short ovals where the team (and especially Firestone) failed to find a good setup, Zanardi was a serious factor. He led the U.S. 500 until his engine blew and was out front in the Marlboro 500 before crashing. He erred also at Nazareth, Milwaukee and Detroit when he hit the wall during practice and/or qualifying, and perhaps a lack of patience contributed to his downfall in Vancouver where he crashed while attempting to pass an unnecessarily obstructive P.J. Jones.

Zanardi was spectacular in qualifying, as evidenced by his sequence of eight front row starts to complete the season. He led 11 of the 16 races, including each of the last eight, and headed the field an impressive 30.42 percent of the time. He won only three times but could have added another handful of victories. Not bad for a rookie . . .

Zanardi was equally impressive out of the car. His mixture of honesty, humility and humor endeared him to the media as well as to his team. In 1997 he will be hard to beat.

*Alex Zanardi**Date of birth: October 23, 1966**Residence: Monte Carlo, Monaco, and Indianapolis, Ind.**Indy Car starts in 1996: 16**PPG Cup ranking: 3rd**Wins: 3; Poles: 6; Points: 132*