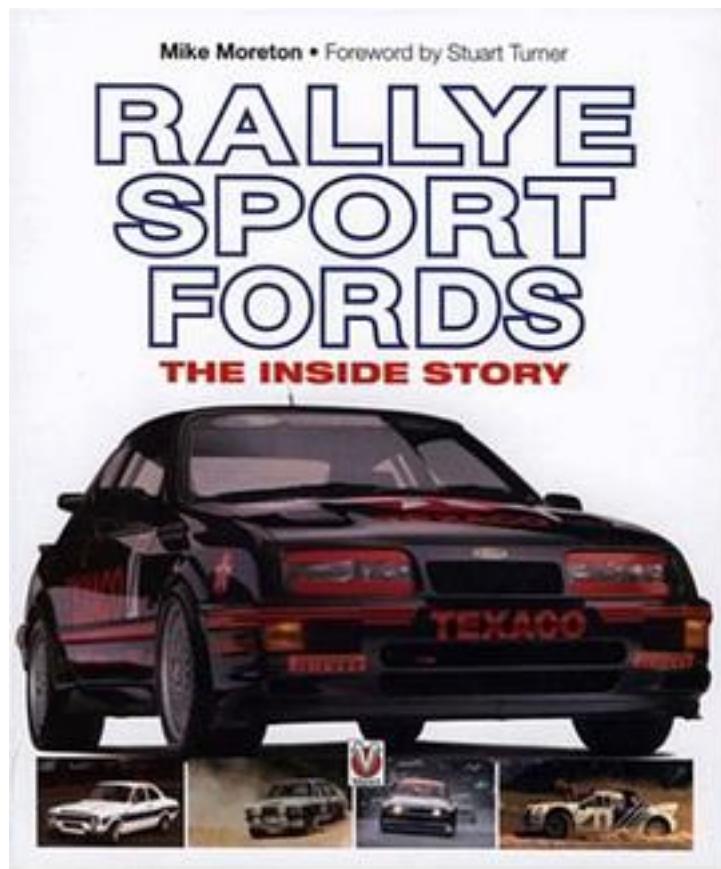


Rallye Sport Fords



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The inside story of the creation of Rallye Sport Fords in the 70s and 80s. Popular with enthusiasts, essential for works teams and private owners to compete in motor sport, these affordable performance cars achieved phenomenal success in rallying and racing. In the 60s Ford built the sensational Le Mans-winning GT40, started making high performance production cars the Lotus Cortina and Twin Cam Escort, and

recognizing how motor sport success had improved the company's image, sponsored Cosworth in Formula 1. Two Motorsport works teams were developed: Boreham, Essex for rallying and Cologne, Germany for Touring Car racing. In 1970 they established Advanced Vehicle Operations (AVO) in the UK, with 350 people, to produce limited volume sporting Ford cars. The first was to have been the GT70, a two-seater sports car for rallying, but it was never made. All subsequent AVO Rallye Sport cars were based on production Fords. They sold to thousands of customers and in the UK, created the Ford RS and AVO Owners Clubs. Most significant was Escort RS1600/1800, with its Cosworth engine, the mainstay of many rally teams, while Escort Mexico and RS2000 were used by enthusiastic Clubmen. The Ford Escort won more competition events than any other single marque in motor sport history. There was also the Capri RS2600 in Germany, winner of many Touring Car race championships. In 1975 the Energy Crisis and company politics caused AVO to close, but its design principles evolved later into Special Vehicle Engineering (SVE), since responsible for many sporting derivatives, starting with the Capri 2.8i and Escort XR3i. This story moves to Ford Motorsport in the 80s, behind the scenes of a second breed of motorsport inspired Rallye Sport cars. The Clubmen's Escort RS Turbo, the sensational Sierra RS Cosworth, the technically advanced RS200 four-wheel drive International rally car, the World Touring Car Champion Sierra RS500 Cosworth, the Escort RS Cosworth four-wheel drive International Rally Car, and other projects that never made it. Mike Moreton, car enthusiast, engineer and 23 years at Ford, was in the frontline, working for Stuart Turner as Product Planner and Project Manager, making it all happen. First at AVO and subsequently at Ford Motorsport, working with talented and dedicated people, negotiating with industry giants, and meeting celebrities. This is his story behind the Rallye Sport cars, from dream to reality, how and why they happened, the political arguments, the failures and successes.

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