

Co-Driver Profile

Risto Mannisenmaki



Date of Birth:	28 May 1959
Place of Birth:	Joupajoki, Finland
Lives:	Espoo, Finland
Marital status:	Lives with Varpu and sons Ossi and Ville
WRC debut:	1988 (with Tommi Makinen)
Hobbies:	Skiing, cycling
Driver:	Tommi Makinen

Career highlights:	2002 - Signed to 555 Subaru World Rally Team
	1999 - World Rally Champion
	1998 - World Rally Champion
	1997 - Won Finnish F2 Championship
	1988 - Co-driving debut with Tommi Makinen
	1981 - Started co-driving career - initially as hobby

The hugely respected co-driver Risto Mannisenmaki is one of the 555 Subaru World Rally Team's new recruits for 2002 and partners four times World Champion Tommi Makinen. As a youngster however, his future in world class motorsport wasn't always certain. Although he had been building his reputation as a co-driver since 1981 and was a leading figure in the Finnish Automobile Federation, a career as a forest foreman in his native Finland kept him busy until the late 1990s when he took the decision to turn professional.

A variety of drivers

Risto has co-driven for some of Finland's most successful drivers, including Sebastien Lindholm and Ari Morkkonen. But it was in 1997 that his career really moved up a gear when he joined Tapio Laukkanen to contest 14 events between the Finnish and British Championships in a works VW Golf, winning the Finnish F2 Rally Championship.

Joining Makinen

Risto and Tommi didn't team up full time until 1998, but they have known each other far longer. In fact their first rally together was Finland's 1000 Lakes in 1988 but it ended with suspension failure on their Lancia. But when the World Rally Champion was looking for a new co-driver to join him for the 1998 season, Mannisenmaki was the natural replacement for his renowned predecessor, Seppo Harjanne.

1998 – first WRC win and a bizarre title

Risto's renewed partnership with Tommi Makinen got off to an inauspicious start in Monte Carlo. Tommi had opened up a massive lead at the end of the first day, only to crash down a ravine on the opening stage of the second day. The pair made up for it by being unbeaten on the event for the next three years, a feat only twice achieved before. Risto got his first taste of WRC champagne on the next event, however, when he guided Tommi to victory on the Swedish Rally. It was the first of five wins that season but it is a year best remembered for the bizarre way that the new partnership won its first title. Having crashed out of the final round on oil left by an earlier competitor, Tommi and Risto had to wait for three days before discovering they had won the title after Carlos Sainz's Toyota blew its engine 500m from the finish of the event.

Risto guided Tommi to a fourth successive title the following season but although the duo stood on the podium five times in 2000, a fifth crown was beyond them.

Farewell Mitsubishi – welcome Subaru

At the end of last season Tommi confirmed that he was to leave Mitsubishi after seven seasons and would be joining the 555 Subaru World Rally Team. Once again Risto will partner Tommi but this time in the Subaru Impreza WRC. Although still recovering from injuries sustained in an accident in Corsica in October, Risto is making an excellent recovery and is expected to make his debut appearance for the team once again in Corsica which now takes place in March.