

# Driver Profile

**Tommi Makinen**



<b>Date of Birth:</b>	26 June 1964
<b>Place of Birth:</b>	Puuppola, Finland
<b>Lives:</b>	Monaco, Jyvaskyla
<b>Marital status:</b>	Lives with Elissa and son Henry
<b>First rally:</b>	1985
<b>WRC debut:</b>	1987 1000 Lakes Rally, Finland
<b>Hobbies:</b>	Skiing, cycling, trial biking, hunting
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.tommimakinen.net">www.tommimakinen.net</a>

<b>Career highlights:</b>	2002 signed to 555 Subaru World Rally Team
	Five successive wins on Rally Finland
	1999 World Rally Champion
	1998 World Rally Champion
	1997 World Rally Champion
	1996 World Rally Champion
	1987 Finnish Rally Champion

Without a doubt Tommi Makinen can lay a strong claim to the mantle of the greatest rally driver ever. Four consecutive World Rally Champion titles and 23 outright victories (at the end of the 2001 season) is an achievement that few other drivers can match. Tommi came late to the championship but quickly established himself on all surfaces and his deceptively quiet exterior hides a fiercely competitive heart. Tommi joins the 555 Subaru World Rally Team for 2002 with every intention of further improving his already impressive track record.

## **Down on the farm**

Like so many of Finland's top rally stars, Tommi comes from a farming background. The family home at Puuppola, close to Jyvaskyla (where Finland's WRC round is based) saw the young Tommi learning his basic driving skills on his father's tractors. Tractors are a far cry from the machinery that allowed Tommi to make his mark on the global stage but they offered him his first brush with motorsport. Tractor pulling and ploughing are sports very closely followed in Finland and, at 18, Tommi won his first Finnish National ploughing championship before retaining his title the following year.

## **Going national and beyond**

Tommi first stepped aboard a rally car, a Ford Escort RS2000, to contest the Nokia Rally on 12 October 1985. Within two seasons, and with a switch to a Lancia Delta, Tommi had become Finnish Champion and made his debut on the 1000 Lakes Rally, effectively his local event. Unlike many drivers' WRC debuts, however, this one won't be so easily overlooked as the photo sequence of the roll that put him out is among the most spectacular in the event's history! Having won his home series in 1987, Tommi embarked on a programme of events around Europe. Initially this was in a Group N Lancia and he again showed promise by winning the category on the Hankiralli just two events into his programme.

During 1989 he scored outright wins on Lapland's Arctic Rally and the Conca d'Oro in Italy before 1990 saw him add a Group N programme to his European calendar. Now with a Mitsubishi Galant, and teamed with veteran co-driver Seppo Harjanne, Tommi won Group N in New Zealand, Finland and Australia before finishing third in the FIA Production Cup at his first attempt

## **Lows, highs and a place in history**

The next few seasons saw Tommi gaining experience but without the big break he needed. Works opportunities with Mazda and Nissan were cut short and by 1994 he was driving a 'Formula 2' Nissan Sunny on WRC and British Championship events. Then Ford gave him a one-off drive on the 1000 Lakes Rally and he won with ease. The rest is history. Tommi was signed by Mitsubishi for 1995 and the following year began the run of title wins than no other driver can match. With two World Championships under his belt, Tommi bid farewell to co-driver Seppo Harjanne (who had decided to retire) and renewed his partnership with Risto Mannisenmaki before winning two more titles without breaking stride.

## **And now to Subaru...**

Tommi and Risto bring unrivalled experience to the 555 Subaru World Rally Team for 2002 as Tommi bids for a record fifth title and to extend his run of individual event wins along the way. He has already proved more than capable of winning on all surfaces on all continents and is arguably the best all-round driver in the world today.