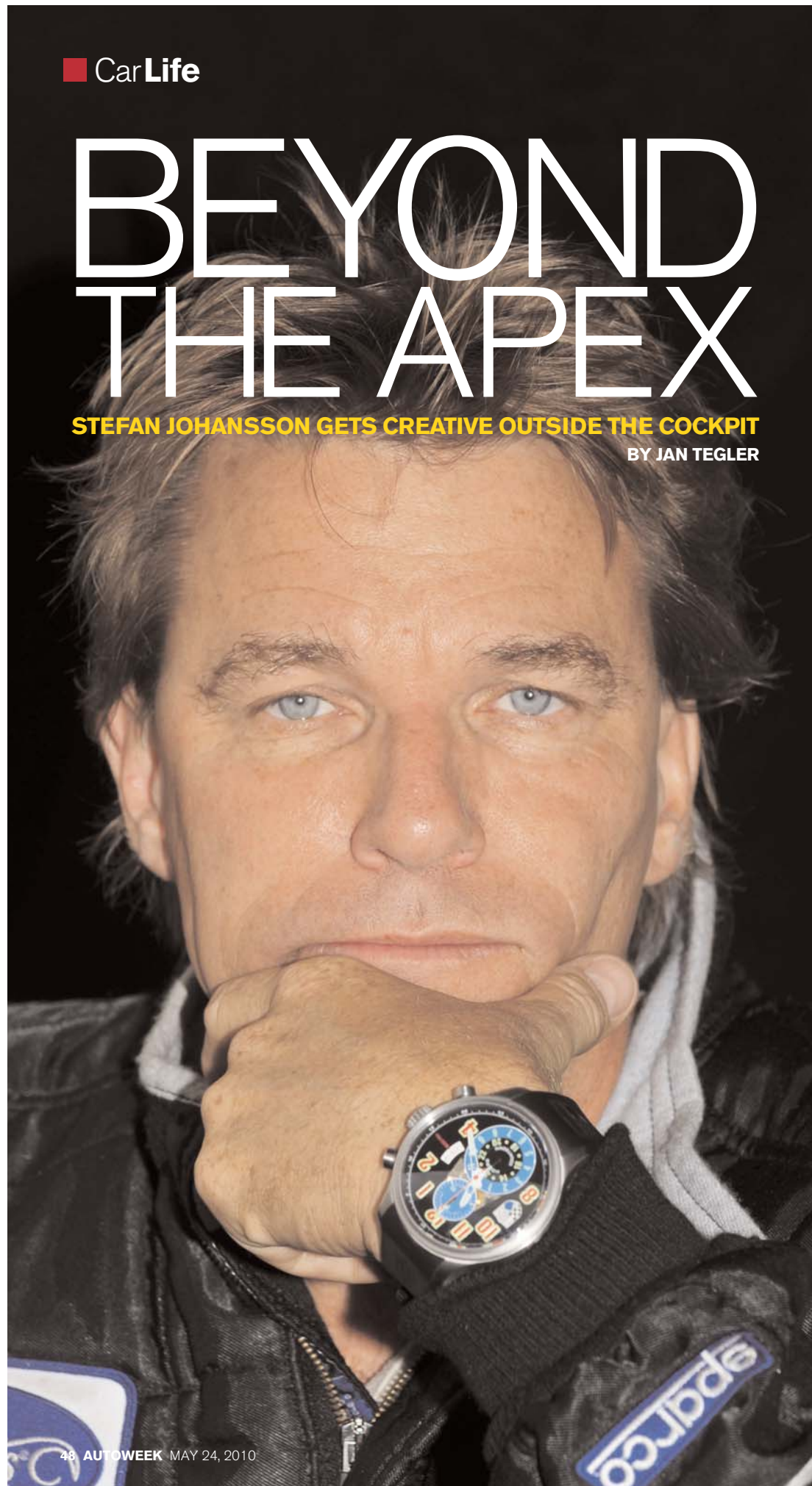


BEYOND THE APEX

STEFAN JOHANSSON GETS CREATIVE OUTSIDE THE COCKPIT

BY JAN TEGLER



» IT IS A CLICHE THAT race-car drivers have little to say away from the racetrack. But you can talk to Stefan Johansson about a wide array of subjects beyond just horsepower and clipping apexes. More than that, you can enjoy and even use the products of his varied passions. That's because throughout his 30-plus-year racing career, the affable Swede has engaged in interests outside the cockpit.

"I still love racing, but I've always had an interest in art and design, anything that's creative, really," Johansson says.

Best known on this side of the Atlantic for his exploits in the CART series with Bettenhausen Racing (1992-96), Johansson spent eight seasons in Formula One before racing in the United States (1983-91), including stints with Ferrari and McLaren. During his time in F1, Johansson found an outlet for creativity away from the track. Inspiration came in part from the loss of a friend.

"The true story is that it happened when Elio de Angelis got killed," Johansson says.

Popular on the 1980s Grand Prix circuit, de Angelis was one of the sport's true characters, a skilled classical pianist and sketch artist as well as a double Grand Prix winner. He died after an accident in testing at Paul Ricard in 1986, driving a Brabham BT55.

"Elio and I were really good friends," Johansson says. "It was a pretty difficult time for me. I still don't know why, but for some reason, it led me to get some equipment, and I started to paint."

During the following years, Johansson painted whenever time permitted, developing his style. "It's hyperrealism with a bit of tongue-in-cheek" he says. "I like to render things in large scale, because I think it can bring ordinary objects into completely different context."

Although he has painted less

RICK DOLE

