

ONTARIO GT: ROBERT GAY

By James Neilson

The 2004 CASC-OR GT champion, Bob Gay, attributes his title to an "accident."

Along with his wife Sandra, who finished seventh in the final standings in the CASC-OR GTA class, Gay, who drives a BMW E36 M3, was embarking on his first year of competitive, driving.

"Sandra and I had decided to go out for our first year of racing. We've participated in a lot of BMW driving school events in the past," Gay said. "We wanted to do something different so we planned to show up to as many races as possible."

All those years of driving school paid off—as his competitors ran into trouble, Gay kept his nose clean, had reliability on his side, and ran consistently for much of the season to beat out Allen DeWolfe in his BMW E30 to take class honours.

"For us it really was an accident. DeWolfe had the faster car. If he had finished more races DeWolfe would have beat us handily," Gay said. "Halfway through the season our competitors were having reliability problems and by two-thirds, all we had to do was

finish races. We just ran them out of luck."

Bob wasn't the only member of the family to benefit from a turn of good fortune. At CASC Ontario's 40th Annual Awards Banquet, Sandra Gay was the recipient of the Ladies Sporting Award, the Knap Trophy.

"That was the most enjoyable part of the year. When Sandra won that award she was bouncing up and down for days," said Gay.

A humble champion, Gay would rather focus on the fun he and his wife had meeting new friends and enjoying a hobby they



PHOTO BY BRAD BUCKLER

have been involved in for years.

"We're going to keep it on a hobby level and just keep enjoying ourselves," Gay said. "We went out to drive fast but be as courteous as possible. We plan on coming back and doing the same thing next year."

ONTARIO TOURING: MICHAEL THORNLEY

Acura Integra Type-R driver Michael Thornley had big plans for the 2004 Touring Class championship. Nothing short of first place would allow him to walk away from the season with a sense of accomplishment.

"I really wanted to win the championship. I missed out on the title in 2004," Thornley said. "I had a meeting with my crew chief and I asked him very seriously 'do we want to do this?' We put together a good car with a good team, let's win this thing."

Thornley was not only the fastest driver, but also the most consistent. The gap between him and Hyundai Tiburon driver Jeff Lorrinan could have been even larger had Thornley not been forced to miss a round to attend a wedding.

In the end Thornley scored 2436 points to Lorrinan's 2110. Lorrinan narrowly secured second place finishing a scant 78 points clear of Nick Krikorian and his Honda Prelude.

Out of the top six five were Honda drivers dominating a class that has been owned in recent years by less powerful but lighter Volkswagens.

"This title has been in the hands of Volkswagen for a long time," noted Thornley.

Given the marque's success in the class it is no surprise that Thornley sees a Volkswagen driver as his main rival in 2005.

"Ian Madden is going to be hard to beat,"

observed Thornley. "He had nothing but problems this year."

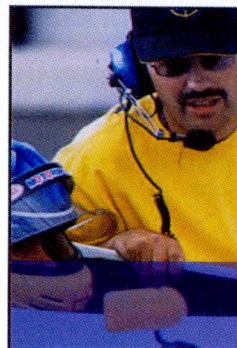
Making things even tougher in 2005 is the fact that Thornley and his team will be campaigning an Acura TSX in the Grand-Am Cup as well as running their Integra in CASC-OR's touring class. Thornley admits the busy schedule could lead to a few weekends where fans won't see the Integra in action.

"We're running a full season of Grand-Am," Thornley said. "We have time in the season to do selected races as well as the World Challenge."

By James Neilson



PHOTO BY BRAD BUCKLER



**AIM Autosport's
Championship winning
expertise is now
available**

- trackside engineering
- driver coaching
- race weekends
- test days



Be sure to visit the "Services" section at our website for further details!

35 Siltan Rd. Woodbridge ON
905.851.1968 • aimautosport.com