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and image enhancement  
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mcXclusiveMix for  
eurodragster.com

Visited my friend Anita Mäkelä recently and read "Tommi will drive our TF in a week at Kauhava. This is just for fun!" It was easy to imagine her smile as she added, "We're having fun with the team."

Those words put a big grin on my face, three images flashing through my mind's eye; then I saw a portrait of Tommi, resting on the rear slick of the team's fueler and framed by its roll cage, pushed 'em to the bottom of the page and fired up my APS. What an image, Tommi rubbing his hands with glee, seemingly on cloud nine at the thought of being turned loose in Anita's FIA Championship Winning, 10,000HP Top Fuel car - his first NitroFueled ride in more than six years!

Kauhava images courtesy



For starters, we're mixing these pages Manga style; right to left and kinda upside down by showing that power launch first! FHRA's Timo Aartomaa shot at right is stunning; Tommi walkin' tall before smokin' 'em in Pekka Rouvinen's shot below...



Pekka Rouvinen photo



Pekka Rouvinen's AA awesome shot shows Tommi really nailed it, giving fans at Kauhava's Blåkläder Summer Nationals a first taste of NitroThunder this year! Sadly, unless you live in my kind of fantasy world, things are never quite that simple.



Pekka Rouvinen photo



Timo Aartomaa photo



Timo Aartomaa photo



mcSnip courtesy  
Hanna or Matilda

Timo's set to take the image at left, Pekka's down track, goin' for our powerful lead image down track; we can almost feel the ground shake - thanks guys! Only a check-out pass maybe; but Tommi, Anita, the team and fans loved every second of ChickenPowered NitroThunder!



Photo courtesy Matilda



Tommi's 2nd pass was aborted after the burnout; the car pushed back to the pits to fix things, "just for fun!" The team dedicated Friday to thoughts and prayers for Dom Lagana, their injured NitroNinja soul brother; get well soon Dom, we all miss you...

In 2018 Anita and Tommi won their third FIA Top Fuel title by qualifying at the Euro Finals; her 3.870 pole position a new FIA record - at only 297.02mph!

Cool

mcPix  
But they wanted more, and this powerful warm-up told us they were loaded for bear! Sadly things ran late, it got dark - and cold; the Santa Pod person watching Tommi and crew make final adjustments is wrapped up! But it was too late, this my last shot before leaving to catch a plane; and for the crew also! Someone just oiled the track and when they ran the track was gone, Anita alone in getting power down; clicking off at the eighth for a 4.004/266.24!

On 100% CalNitro even my AA Fuel Zippo has problems!

Santa Pod



mcPix



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This Q4 race was used to introduce the SantaPodCast series; click it and see Anita in episode one - naturally!

Anita was 5.4seconds quicker and 170mph faster than anyone else in Q4, showing why she's #1 and the Queen of Santa Pod...



mcSnips courtesy SantaPodTV



While the team work here's Anita in Championship winning action; at left it's her Q3 FIA record setting 3.870 blast at the Euro Finals



Photo by Wojtek



Anita had problems; Stig Neergaard took pole and won 2016's Man Event

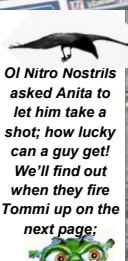
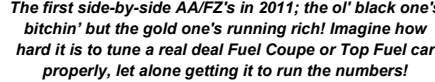


Love this camera crop from my pal Wojtek, a powerful image of Anita setting top speed of the meet in E1; at right Anita gets a hole-shot in the final over India Erbacher for the win. Now we're going back to 2016 when Tommi and Anita won their 2<sup>nd</sup> FIA Top Fuel title, a scant 13points ahead of Danish Speed King Stig Neergaard,



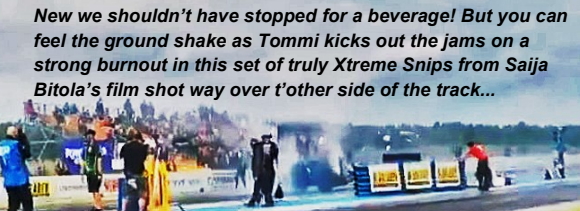
mcSnip courtesy SantaPodTV

the first European to run over 300mph in FIA's 1,000ft title race. She wasn't so lucky at the Main Event; having problems here in qualifying while Stig went on to win. Her Euro Finals that year were more than a tad exciting for her fans and yours truly in particular; Saturday is my preference as you get to see all the NitroWarriors twice, but heavy rain was forecast and the Pod offered to swap our tickets for race day, something that to this day rates as superb service! Anita also got lucky, banging the motor in first round one when her opponent Steve Ashdown failed to make the stripe after his motor quit, giving her crew some hard work while I just enjoyed lunch in the Pit Stop Cafe. Happily, I'd just topped up my beverage and must've been dreaming, when the first pair fire-up, running into the stands and shooting Anita and Duncan Micallef burning out; thinking "This could be a race for the ages," putting my Nikon on deck and pulled out a Canon IXUS 8115 bought used, from my pal Warren for a tenner a couple weeks earlier - crazy or what! Apart from switching to movie mode not knowing it was set at 10seconds, it was the luckiest thing I'd done in awhile as the engine let go right in front of its wide-angle lens! Even on full power Warp Drive Auto; no way would my Nikon 've caught the sheets of fire as, even in ultra slo-mo, they last less than a millisecond and it took forever to Snip the frames, a task that tried to fry my mind!; this Mix was done for Anita and Tommi; the original 25 shot race sequence is in [50 Years of NitroThunder](#), a review of the 2016's Top Fuel season, my first Eurodragster Xclusive. The clip, [The Razor's Edge!](#), is on YouTube; be warned, RFM'S Duncan Micallef ran PB's of 3.896 at 312.18mph and a tad more that 5seconds of staging's been edited out to the start at an amber lit tree, so it's about a tenth longer than Duncan's pass; hit the loop button! Duncan also blew a motor, the Finals being won by Sweden's 2-time FIA TF champ Micke Kågered who sits just 228points behind Anita's who continued her reign as leader of the FIA Top Fuel pack with a fourth title coming back-to-back. The image bottom left is her 3.93, 296.83 first as 2019 champ in E1 over Stig Neergaard's 4.06 in the closest race of the day, Stig's 254mph faster than all but Anita's speed on Sunday! Her domination of race day was stunning; she'd the only 3-second car, set Low ET and Top Speed each round as other cars limped home, thundering to a blistering 3.82, 313.52 ahead of FIA's new Queen of Speed, India Erbacher who'd set a 318.96 mph mark in August at Tierp. And let's not forget the quickest babe in town; RFM's Maja Udtian, 2<sup>nd</sup> in points, who took pole with a new FIA mark of 3.806 at 315.52mph!



But enough of this NitroNostalgia, let's get back to Kauhava where the team's fully booted and spurred after a long night, the fueler gleaming in the early morning sun, Tommi chillaxin' an' gettin' in the zone before he gets to go make some more NitroThunder...

New we shouldn't have stopped for a beverage! But you can feel the ground shake as Tommi kicks out the jams on a strong burnout in this set of truly Xtreme Snips from Saija Bitola's film shot way over t'other side of the track...



But this is no half-track check pass; we've got NitroThunder at the hit and NitroFire w-a-y beyond the tree...



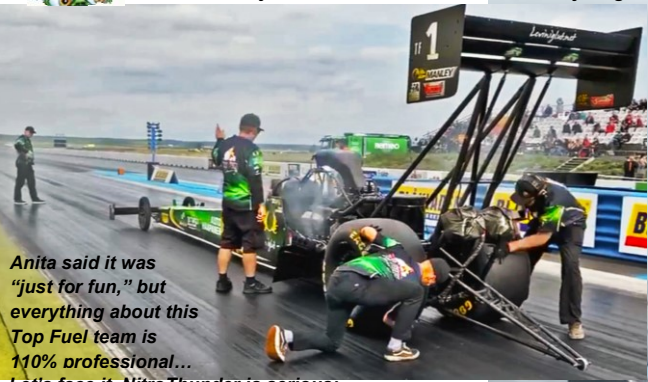
mcSnips courtesy Jarkko Niemivaara

Love these Snips from Jarkko's film; it's a great view, and that the front and NitroFire getting higher from the hit – it certainly caught my eagle by surprise, and that dude at right was feeling the noise all the way down track! Thing is, there's some confusion in my mind as to whether the lower images are from the day's first or second run!

As you can see, this confession has my lil' green pal totally bemused – me too!



Hopefully we'll find out after you've enjoyed these in y'face Snips from the team's film...



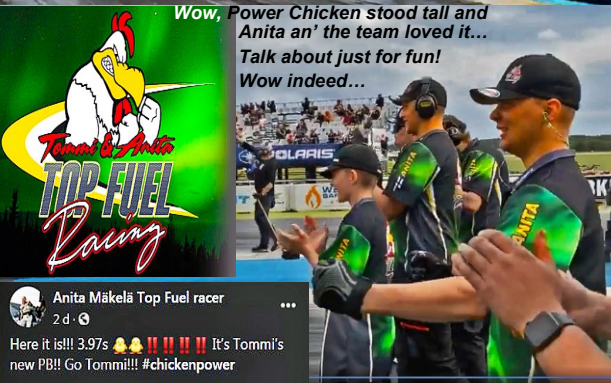
Anita said it was "just for fun," but everything about this Top Fuel team is 110% professional... Let's face it, NitroThunder is serious; but it was ultra-cool, after staging the car, seeing the dude give Tommi a huge grin and double "thumbs up" in passing the cockpit!



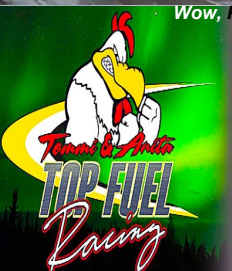
At the hit before 10,000 horsepower kicks in...



...then NitroFire's up and Tommi's on a pass!



Wow, Power Chicken stood tall and Anita an' the team loved it... Talk about just for fun! Wow indeed...



Anita Mäkelä Top Fuel racer  
2 d · 6

Here it is!!! 3.97s 🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆 It's Tommi's new PB!! Go Tommi!!! #chickenpower

Anita told me "My daughter Hanna and Heikki's girlfriend Matilda filmed us over the weekend..." As Hanna's here, I guess these are from Matilda's film, nice work too. Anita kept a watchful eye open, almost looking kinda lost outside the car! However, once it began to move into stage, she left the guys to it. As ever, they looked fine, but Cloud coverage kept the temperature down so some of 'em and both gals wore long sleeve (maybe even thermals!), 'neath the team shirts much-loved by all fans... Oh yeah, Tommi ran the 2<sup>nd</sup> ever three at Kauhava, his 3.978's a tick ahead of Anita's 2019 Nitro Nats' 3.987 #1Q, and he's got the team a new track ET record!



Over the moon or what! Anita's hands held high over son Heikki, while Hanna's were out of frame; but the Xtreme crop shows just how excited Anita and the gang all were, and you ain't seen nothing yet folks!

Okay folks, my deadlines now closer than Santa Pod ever was, and it seem the first sets of Snips are from Tommi's ET record setting 3.97 at around 290mph; his second pass was a tad slower at 4.002 but he hit 304.39mph, his fastest ever speed I do believe... Either way, fans at the track, and yours truly, went wild on learning Tommi was goin' to make a third surprise run; talk about excited, you could feel the energy as the team moved out to the start line..



Anita looks radiant here, while Tommi knows he's set for a special ride.

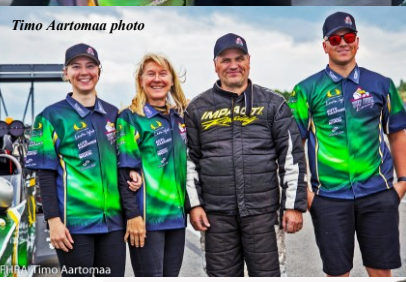
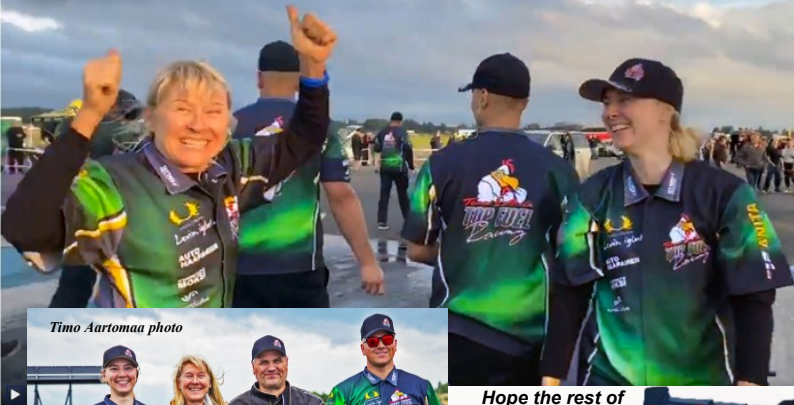
The team seem really amped up, me too actually; just mixing these images gives me Goose-bumps, even more so than when making the Snips...



This time we see Tommi getting the double thumbs up; Then NitroThunder's unleashed again...



Suddenly it's over and the team went bananas; Tommi had a pair of threes; a 3,986 at 489,760k, just .11k slower than Anita's NitroNats' track speed record!



Timo Aartomaa photo

Hope the rest of 2020's as good for you as this race was...



What a stunning set of runs for NitroFans and a string of totally AA awesome drives for Tommi to break his six-year dry spell with! Although the shot at left of Anita's smile après winning her second FIA title a dozen years after her first is really radiant, never have I witness such unbridled joy from any driver who's not been in the driver's seat! It was wonderful to see on screen, but to 've been track side at Kauhava - mind blowing! Thanks to the folks that shot the films for providing stunning images for us to enjoy...



Thanx again; see you at the track next time...