

Interview

An Interview with SimBin

by **Jens "McGonigle" Lindblad**

SimHQ recently talked with the developers of **FIA GT Racing (GTR)**. We discussed GTR, setups and driving the FIA GT cars and we tried to get SimBin to reveal some of their future plans. After reading this, perhaps you will be a little wiser — as we were, but SimBin certainly know how to raise our curiosity by coming up with answers that pose a lot of *new* questions. And from the answers we received, it looks like SimBin has got a lot of exciting plans for the future.

Participating in the interview were:

MJ: Marcel Jung (PR, 10Tacle studios AG)

JR: Johan Roos (Marketing, SimBin)

HR: Henrik Roos (FIA GT driver and CEO SimBin)

IB: Ian Bell (Head of Development at SimBin)

SimHQ was represented by Alex "Zander" Keep, Doug "guod" Atkinson and myself.

SimHQ: First of all, thank you very much to 10Tacle and SimBin for taking the time to answer our questions. We really appreciate it! Fueled by the reports in the community about the reception of the German language version, a lot of SimHQ's readers are very much looking forward to the international release of GTR, so without further ado, let us move directly to the questions and answers.

Q: This is the question I have to ask first of all: Most importantly... When does the world release arrive and will it be truly "world"?

JR: We have no specific date till now because it depends on so many things — but it will be in the next few months.

Note: As we're going to print with this interview, word arrived that the European release date for **GTR** has been set for March 11, 2005 according to the publisher 10Tacle.

Q: I've seen the date February 24, 2005 mentioned. Is that date correct?

JR: No, unfortunately we can't confirm any date at the moment.

Q: Will there be any extra features available to the English language versions?

JR: Yes indeed, as we have been working on the product since it was released in the German territories. One feature that has been implemented upon requests is a "Save Game" feature which allows you to save your current status at ANY point in the game. Another one is the RE>>>FUEL Expansion Pack of Proximus 24 Hours of Spa with 16 more



opponents, day and night racing, light effects and so on. We can also mention that there are a few more surprises to come with the release in our RE>>>FUEL section. Stuff that will for sure give added value for all GTR gamers out there.

Q: Clearly a lot of attention has been devoted to making GTR as authentic and realistic as possible. Will there eventually be a season 2004 or 2005 to download off the web site? Any plans for season updates?

JR: Hmm, who said we are not working on new technology and totally new games. ;)

Q: Will tracks in the FIA 2004 schedule (e.g. Imola, Dubai, Zhuhai) make it into GTR and if so, when?

JR: GTR is licensed for the FIA GT 2003 season only.

Q: The Motec interpreter is really heavy hard-core stuff and I love it. Is there a Motec Manual included with the game, or are there other plans for introducing newbie's to all the secrets of using this great utility?

JR: It's mentioned in the manual that comes with the game, but you can also get support directly from Motec personnel In our forums both in FAQ and in direct questions if the answer is not to be found.

Q: What, in GTR is the most notable achievement, it's greatest asset, if you will?

JR: Difficult to mention just one thing... the cars, the physics, the sound or maybe the online play. Actually it's impossible to choose cause most of it is actually bloody good in our opinions.

Q: Are the setups in GTR "beginner-friendly"? I noticed that in the preview version the brake-balance was set far towards the front thus indicating beginner friendly setups.

JR: The pre-loaded setups are more "beginner" friendly, but with a race or qualifying setup you gotta stay on the edge.

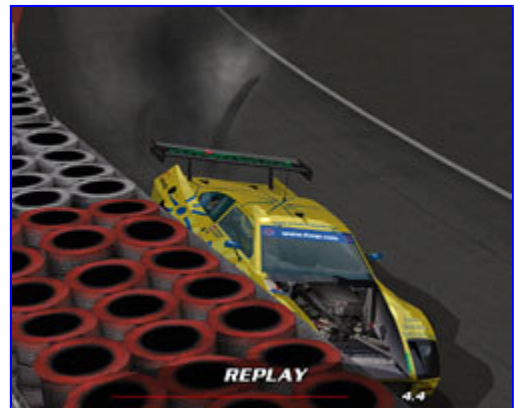
Q: I experienced that especially the Porsche GT2's and GT3's seem very docile on the throttle, even when in simulation mode and with all driving aids switched off. When I disengaged auto clutch the car seemed to become more lively. Is there a difference in how the car handles with / without auto-clutch?

IB: The clutch help auto feeds in the power, like a soft clutch.

Q: There has been some confusion about the correct weight for some of the cars in the German retail version. In-game the Saleen is 1200 kgs — on the web site, the Saleen is 1100. Which is the correct weight? Same for the Lamborghini — I've seen it quoted at 1170, then 1100 — so, what are the actual "game" simulated weights for both cars? Will that issue be corrected in the international release?

IB: The Saleen is in a class with minimum weight to 1200 per the FIA GT rules.

Q: Henrik Roos is quoted on some sites to have said that in his opinion GTR is more realistic with some of the driving



aids switched to "on". If that is indeed the case, which driving aids are they?

HR: Today we don't have force feedback in the normal retail versions of the pedals. So the driver can have some problems giving the brakes the right pressure and so also with the gas pedal. I drive with low ABS and low traction control. But nevertheless the real pros of GTR sim racing have already adapted to this and can already control this better than me. But beware I am learning. ;)

Q: Henrik also mentioned that the AI was very much like the real drivers. What AI settings, in Henrik's opinion, are the most realistic?

HR: It's that sometimes you can predict what your competitor will do in the next corner as in real life. But sometimes you cannot predict the opponents' actions at all. Same goes for in the game and real life — and then you hit the opponent by your own mistake not the AI's.

Q: As I tried the preview copy of GTR, I found out that cars were very tricky to get a feel for, especially in terms of feeling and working the slip-angle. Either I was not close enough to the slip-angle, or I went beyond it and spun out. I would like Henrik's opinion on whether the real cars are equally uncommunicative?

HR: The problem here is the g-forces and at your normal desk or home simulator you can't *feel* the g-forces. In real life you feel when the car starts slipping and the engine revs up just a tiny bit faster and can immediately lift the foot from the throttle and control this.

Note - a comment post interview by Jens: The Porsche GT-2 is very communicative in the form of giving feedback to the driver through the steering wheel, with the Lister it's harder to tell what it's up to. Perhaps the difference is down to the fact that the version of GTR we had access to was a preview copy.

Q: What changes to the car's setups would Henrik recommend, in order to get more feedback from the car in this area?

HR: A car is most of the time faster if you have a little understeer instead of oversteer, both in the game and in real life. So personally I like good grip in the rear end in slow corners. This also helps on power oversteer. So I would soften the slow bump in the back. Possibly also soften the anti roll bar. A tip though is to do one thing at a time and test the results so you don't get completely lost in your settings.

Q: It seems that the multiplayer suffered with the patch 1.2.1. Then patch 1.2.3 corrected that for some but not all. Is this a sign of SimBin reworking the multiplayer code, or were there other issues?

JR: We are constantly updating a refining the product, all feedback is considered.

Q: Do you plan to have your own multiplayer server such as Sierra does with NR2003?

JR: We can tell so much that we have some really interesting plans for a future on-line platform, but at the moment we can't tell anything in detail. Online is considered as VERY important for us and that should be answer enough I think.

Q: Will you be presenting at E3?

JR: We are aiming for this!



Q: Have you thought about going to the States to SCCA races to show GTR?

JR: No, at least not at this point.

Q: Have you identified areas that would receive special attention in a GTR-2? And will there be a GTR-2? What are the chances?

JR: Of course we have a lot of new ideas and the technology evolution will go on... so we are talking about it.

Q: Will SimBin use ISI's new gMotor2 (as developed for **rFactor**) for future products and if so, which products might they be? GTR-2 perhaps?

JR: We are constantly moving forward and implementing, and experimenting with new technology. gMotor2 seems promising and we have had a good cooperation with ISI.

Q: Does the year 1977 feature in SimBin's future plans (hinting at Formula 1 1977)?

JR: Why?

Q: What will be SimBin's next project?

JR: We are working on some titles, and yes, I use plural.

Q: As you are probably aware, the issue about the delay has resulted in many sim racers asking the question, "why the delay by months of an English language versions"?

JR: We are aiming for a simultaneous release for the international version.

Q: Rumors have it that certain well-known mod teams are working on add-ons for GTR. Is this the case and if so, could you tell a bit more about who they are and what's in store for us?

JR: I can not confirm or deny these rumors! Have never heard of it before!

Q: My last question is always the same — are there any areas we have not yet discussed that you would like to add?

JR: SimBin is a "new kid on the block" and considered an "underdog" in the genre, but rest assured when I say that we are here to stay.

Q: Thank you very much for your time and we look forward to seeing GTR in the shops everywhere as soon as you can possibly manage it, as well as seeing more of your work.





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