

# Keep The Dream

*The 'Get Well Cup' Released—Alex Balanesko on Sergio Bustamante ...*

## GPLegacy

**SERGIOBUSTAMANTE**

Images courtesy of  
Alex Balanesko,  
Hermmie and  
GPLegacy



It's a great pleasure to be writing my first article in name of GPLegacy, although the circumstances could be better: The 'Get Well Cup', you see, is dedicated to GPLegacy's leader Sergio Bustamante, who has not—as regular leaders of this magazine will by now no doubt have guessed—been well for a good portion of this year.

Together with my friend Hermmie, I decided to create something to cheer Sergio up, and the result is the 'VW Golf V GTI Cup Mod' for *rFactor*, nailed down in just three weeks by hard-working hands. The mod includes both a street and a cup version of the car: The street car is available with nine official body colors, including two pearl-effect paints, ten different rims available as upgrades, three gearbox types (standard six-speed manual, H-shifter six-speed, and DSG six-speed gearbox, to be used with auto-clutch), three stage engine-tuning, and three exhaust upgrades, while the cup version comes with ten racing skins, and the same ten rims upgrades as the street car.

You will also notice a special symbol on the cup car's bonnet: A green hand thumbs up, coming with a 'Get well, Sergio!' phrase. Those three words on the Golf's bonnet are much more than just a logo for me: If you're interested—and you have the time—I want to tell you a bit about what friendship in the sim-racing community is all about.

### **Behind The Scenes: What's The Matter With Sergio?**

Sergio Bustamante, founder of GPLegacy and one of the boldest leaders in sim-racing, discovered me through well-known 3D-artist Sergey Poltavsky while the latter was working on the Ferrari 599 (codename 'Fiorano') PaceCar for the *A1GP* sim that was previewed on these pages earlier this year. We hit it off immediately, and Sergio—as is his habit—spared little time in assuring me that I was showing some of the strongest skills on importing and working with gMotor materials for *rFactor* that he'd ever seen. While I worked on the *A1GP* 'Fiorano' safety car, everything was on target with preparation of the *A1GP* Project. But as many of us know, when all is going according to schedule, it's time for something to go seriously wrong.

Without any warning, at thirty-four, Sergio suffered a brain stroke. It came from nowhere earlier this year and, since then, the team has been rudderless without its leader. Sergio's inability to lead has had serious consequences for the team: Many lost faith in the project, and in GPLegacy itself, and even a large Mexican league turned their backs on him while he battled his illness. People crucial to the project suddenly seemed to melt away and were nowhere to be found at the Beehive, where all the work—and believe me, there's a lot of unknown projects going on all year long at GPLegacy, and the Beehive is where it all happens—is done.

But the strongest ones, like Stuart 'Madcowie', Lou Magyar, Paul Harwood, Scott 'Uly' Groom, James Burroughs, Piddy, Sergey, Shane Johnson, and I have remained, and we are slowly finding our feet again, with the *A1GP* sim a priority and back on the front burner.

### **The 'Get Well Sergio' Cup**

While Sergio has been dealing with his health—walking with a cane, memory-gaps, and so forth—and usually and against doctors' orders, he has kept his dream alive and shown that when there is a will there is a way. And Sergio's will is bigger than life, and bigger than anything that life can throw at him. He has been working so hard that ninety percent of the work we thought would take ages to complete he has completed in record time, leading—as is always—by his own example. His iron will has been an inspiration as I went about learning and improving my 3D, gMotor, and sound-making skills. Sergio also opened a personal '*rFactor* Mods For You Project', where anyone can request a mod for himself within our group. And that gave me an idea ...

Together with my friend Hermmie—a very talented physics specialist and 2D-artist—I began working on the VW Golf Project. A project that was built for no other reason other than expressing my friendship with Sergio: Using our combined skills, Hermmie and I made all this come true in just three weeks thanks to the origin of the body mesh—taken from *Need For Speed*.

On the bonnet is written: 'Get well, Sergio!' with a hand, thumbs up. This cup was my idea, as were the three words that, for many, will be just a useless logo on the bonnet ... but for others—for those of us intimately involved with Sergio—those three words represent an inspiration that digs as deep as our souls, bringing the smile and belief back to our faces. Every time I launch the mod, I remember the tough times we have had, and that we are getting through it all together, supporting each other not only in our modding adventures, but in our real life, because when you're going through what Sergio is suffering through, those who are still with you are not just modding-mates anymore—they have become friends. Sometimes people in the community forget that we are a community—and a small one at that—and we should do more sharing and less criticising. Because sometimes our cyber-lives cease being just numbers and words and instant messages, and suddenly become a life experience, a legacy, if you will ...

Get well, Sergio, we all miss you.





## **Madness And Method**

Sergio Bustamante has been with *AUTOSIMSPORT* since almost the beginning of our little adventure back in 2005, but if there is some sort of method to Sergio's madness, I have yet to find it.

Typically, the way he works is as follows: Three days after deadline, when the magazine is in layout stage, I will get a desperate MSN from Sergio informing me that, 'I've just uploaded all my articles! I'm not too late, am I, because I promised (insert some multi-national company or racing series such as A1GP, Bridgestone, Intel, ISI, etc.) that it would be in this month's issue!'

At which point the articles will start coming into my inbox. Now, the thing you need to know about Sergio is—he is a whirlwind of creativity and nervous energy, resulting in articles that come in a format that is sure to reduce anyone to tears ... five articles, all in one Word doc., separated by little dashes, and comprising no less than twenty formatting changes, dozens of fonts, randomly capitalized words, and sentences—sort of like this one but far, far worse—that just continue into the ether expressing fifteen disparate names, events, thoughts, dreams, fantasies, and all highlighted by captions to photos that, once you check the attached .RAR file, do not actually exist. 'They don't?' Sergio will then exclaim two days later when he finally shows his avatar again on MSN, 'Oh, you're right—wait, here they are!'

And in the meantime, the magazine is five days late, and the photos will come with yet another article ('you can get it in, right, Alex, because I promised ...') ...

Sergio will send me an article of 500 words with fifty photos and then, once the magazine comes online, will send me an outraged message bemoaning the fact that I missed that one photo that *really* had to appear in the magazine. 'Can you re-do the magazine, Alex, that photo, I promised so-and-such that it would be in there ...'

For the last six months, I have been spared this frenzied madness. And I confess I never thought—even in my most deluded states of mind—that I would miss it. But I do—I miss it dearly, and I miss Sergio's hurricane-like energy, and Bob misses me sending Sergio's photos of our portly Mexican buddy posing with yet another beautiful girl on yet another grid somewhere in Mexico ... I miss our chats about nothing and everything, and I miss those days of levity when we could just talk rubbish.

When Sergio was struck with his illness, he was in the midst of two projects that would have been life-defining for many of us: An impending TV show, and an officially licensed simulator. That alone would have hurt a man of lesser courage, of smaller heart: Instead, Sergio has battled on, keeping what he calls 'the dream' alive.

Sergio is a good man, and I am proud to call him a friend. And I say this simply because, somewhere in the world, a friend of his name Erica has a cover of *AUTOSIMSPORT* signed by Mika Hakkinen. And just so that you know, Sergio, ain't nothing happening to you until I get my hands on that photo.