

Lawyer's Racing Hobby Keeps Family Life on Track

November 27, 2018 David Staab

PRACTICES Restructuring

Like a fresh set of tires gripping a dry track, car racing grabbed ahold of [David Staab](#) when he first got behind the wheel of a Lamborghini Gallardo at MotorSport Ranch near Fort Worth in 2011.

“That first day at the track was epic – pure excitement. It was something I had wanted to do for so long,” said Staab, a fifth-year associate in the Restructuring Practice Group at Haynes Boone and amateur racer. “I knew within the first lap that I wanted to pursue racing as a hobby.”

Since that day, Staab has excelled as an amateur racer who has won several races.

Picking up Speed at the Track

Staab had his first track day in the summer between graduate school at Baylor University and law school at Vanderbilt University.

“During law school, I didn’t get to spend much time at the track, other than a few manufacturer-sponsored events when I was working in Texas between semesters,” he said. “My time at the track started picking up in April 2015 when, after saving up for a few years, I finally acquired a car of my own that could be driven on the track.”

Staab developed his driving skills with the help of Apex Driving Academy, a high-performance driving school at MotorSport Ranch. Designed for motoring enthusiasts, the ranch offers multiple tracks for different driver experiences.

“I started out in the novice group and worked on improving from there. Once I was in the advanced group and I could see that my lap times were competitive, I felt I was ready to start racing,” he said.

Staab began racing competitively this year. On his opening race weekend at MotorSport Ranch, he drove his Mazda Global MX-5 Cup race car to victory, finishing first in his class in three races.

“It’s very challenging. The conditions are different every time you go on the track,” he said. “Each time, you are trying to get the best you can out of whatever conditions are present.”

On a good or bad race day, “You are completely 100 percent focused on that moment and not thinking about anything else.”

Most recently, he raced a 2016 Élan NP01 lightweight prototype racecar at the National Auto Sport Championship event at Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas, in September. He was forced to retire the car after suffering rain-induced mechanical problems.

“Unfortunately, that’s part of racing sometimes. The race didn’t go as planned, but I got to spend quality time with friends and family that traveled to the race. I’m looking forward to my next opportunity to race at Circuit of the Americas,” he said.

Staab is planning to race with a team at the World Racing League U.S. Endurance Championship at Circuit of the Americas in early December.

Fun for the Whole Family

Racing also has gripped the Staab family – including his wife Melanie, brother Michael, sister-in-law Abby, mom Kerry, and dad Ken – all of whom have since taken to the track for fun and friendly competition.

“Melanie, my parents, my brother, and Abby come out to events to cheer me on and provide all kinds of support. Eventually, they thought it would be fun to try for themselves,” Staab said, adding that the family now goes to the track one or two weekends per month, and it has become a tradition for them to spend time at the track together on holidays such as Thanksgiving and Mother’s Day. When the family isn’t at the track, they often practice on a racing simulator that resembles a video arcade machine, with a racing seat, pedals, a gear shifter, and the option of three wrap-around screens or a virtual reality headset. The simulator came in handy for Melanie when she was pregnant with their 10-month-old son, William.

“Once William was on the way, she had to hold off on driving on track during the pregnancy,” Staab said. “This was a big part of why we initially decided to get a simulator for the house.”

Melanie’s interest in track driving started when she rode in the passenger seat with Staab during a member day at MotorSport Ranch and “had a blast.”

“She’s also a Formula 1 fanatic, so I think that was probably part of what made her want to give it a shot,” Staab said. “Once she decided to go for it, she signed up for a track day and had fun and did really well.”

Since racing seems to be in the family’s blood, an obvious question is whether the couple expects William to want to race cars.

“I guess we’ll have to wait and see, but he seems to get really excited at the track and when we watch racing on TV,” Staab said. “He knows the theme music that plays before every televised Formula 1 race. When he hears it, he stops whatever he’s doing and makes a bee-line for the TV.

“One of his favorite things to do is zoom around the house in his racecar walker.”