



How to drive at Le Circuit Mont-Tremblant

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Turn 1 – actually 1-2 and 3 which are a flowing sequence done as a combination. Usually done in 4th gear (3rd with a GT3). T1 is the signature turn of the track, and the combination, even when done correctly by an expert is highly “technical”.

On the front straight bring the car to the middle left. Braking should be finished by the white line near the end of the pit wall. After braking, continue at a constant speed down the hill. Approach the turn in point from the left side of the track, there are normally forcing cones on track to keep cars away from the wall – be close to them. This will allow you to initiate the turn on the way down the hill, to get some load on the left side of the car before you approach the actual turn-in point. Turn-in is usually marked with a cone and is located at a dip in the track surface where there is maximum compression. At turn-in or preferably even before, look up the hill and aim to crest it as close as possible to the right-hand side. If you are on the line, accelerate progressively up the hill, the car will be more stable under acceleration. **IMPORTANT** – be very close and parallel to the red and white curbs on the right at near the top of the hill. After the crest, the track falls away on the other side and your trajectory will place you on the left side of the downhill portion, perfectly placed for the entry into 3. If you are wide of the apex at the crest of the hill you’ll be headed for the grass at high speed with the car feeling very light.

The crest is called turn 2. If you carry good speed up the hill you won’t have to unwind the steering, slip angle will carry you to the left side of the track, going down the hill. A novice will have to unwind the

steering a little, and I mean a little. Watch for cars entering the track as pit out is just before the crest. CARS ENTERING THE TRACK HAVE PRIORITY BECAUSE YOU ARE IN THEIR BLIND SPOT.

Going downhill stay left and look for the apex of three. Slight braking, or a gentle lift off the throttle prepares you for turn 3. NOTE at the crest your car will feel light and if going fast, it will hop a little, quite disconcerting but normal. Softly sprung cars will hop sideways – be careful not to let a novice go too fast as the resulting “hop” may scare them into an abrupt correction!

T3 is a high-speed turn leading to a short straight before the Esses. From the preceding downhill section turn in with constant speed and stay very close to the curbing on the right side. Aim for mid track – there is usually a cone on the far left hand side to indicate the turn-in point for the Esses, do not go all the way over, the correct entry to the Esses is from mid track. As soon as the car is straight, use strong braking to prepare for the Esses and down-shift to 3rd. Hint – from the turn in point near the bottom of the hill, think of the correct line as being a slightly curved diagonal ending at mid track in the short straight following 3. You can go fast through 3 and the limit is your ability to brake enough for the entry to the Esses. If you are going too fast, brake before turn in to T3 or, take a longer diagonal aiming for the left hand side of the track (where the turn-in cone is) to give yourself more space to brake in a straight line. RESIST the temptation to brake while still carrying lateral G's – it's been tried and does not work.

Turn 4 is the right hand turn of the Esses, which are a combination of two 90 degree bends. T4 is a very late apex. As a guide, enter the turn with constant speed, putting the joint of the pavement halves under the middle of your car. Turn your head and look into the corner. Exit close to and parallel to the curbing so as to get the best possible line through turn 5, the left hand Ess. Cars with supple suspensions will prefer a lift or even a touch of the brakes before turning in for 5. Everyone should avoid accelerating before the apex of either 4 or 5 as the car will run wide. This is a common beginner mistake. It pays to look left before the turn in point of 5. Most drivers get caught by surprise and turn into 5 too late. Stay very close to the apex to maximize the room for acceleration as you exit.

This takes you to a short straight leading to turn 6, a fast left-hand sweeper. T6 is a 4th gear turn for most cars and you are well advised to short shift to 4th just before the turn-in point for 6. In a GT3 3rd gear is usable. The line is visible and obvious. Be wary of cross winds here, blowing left to right, and deer, which may be present. Exiting six, you'll be at the rev limit in a GT3 if you use 3rd gear. Bring the car back to the left to prepare for T7, a fast right hander which is downhill (way more than it looks!) and off camber with a blind apex. It pays to brake early for the entry to Seven and finish with a very smooth release of the brakes and seamless transition back to a constant speed. You want to enter with a bit of power – constant velocity, coasting in or trail braking will make the rear end feel light. Progressive acceleration after the apex will make a 911 more stable assuming that the car is on the proper line. After the exit follow the white line on the left through no-name bend - a slight kink to the left. A GT3 will shift to 4th for the straight leading to turn eight, the Carousel.

Eight is a 180 degree sweeper to the right. After braking, downshift to 3rd gear for entry. The standard line (there are at least three) is to take a single late apex. As a guide, place the pavement joint under the middle of the car and follow it with constant speed 'til about half way into the corner, look for the second (late) apex curbing and aim to pass close to it. You can accelerate well before the apex if you are on the line.

As you climb the hill and upshift to 4th, let the car come right to about mid track. Plan to crest the hill heading slightly to the left to pass close to the curbing on the left. This will make your car more manageable in strong cross winds which blow left to right quite frequently. This is another place to watch for deer, often on the right side of the track and occasionally on the left.

Continue down the back straight towards turn 10. Ten is a right hander done in 3rd or 4th gear. I teach it in 4th but a downshift to 3rd is acceptable. Brake early enough to enter with a bit of throttle, coasting in will make the rear end uneasy. Don't think about trail braking in a 911. Like Seven, Ten favors a very gentle release of the brakes and a seamless transition to a bit of power. Proper entry speed will cause your car to track out almost to mid track, more than this and you did it wrong. Bring the car to the right, brake slightly and downshift to 3rd for 11. Be careful not to turn in too late, a common mistake. The combination of Ten and Eleven can be thought of as kind of a long "ess". Advanced drivers on R compound tires will not need to brake for Eleven, although this requires considerable skill and practice. A novice should brake before turn in. Eleven is a left hander which is off camber and unforgiving. After the exit, brake going up hill to 12 or Bridge turn. Bridge is tight 2nd (expert) or 3rd (novice) gear turn with a blind apex. A hint is to turn in so that as you enter the section under the bridge, your car is in the middle of the track. Be careful on exit, a novice will want to accelerate too hard and not unwind to take advantage of the full width of the track. Even instructors have (to their shame) spun here.

Exiting the bridge, stay right for the Kink or turn 13. From the kink, take a curving diagonal approach towards the entry of Fourteen, Namerow's hairpin. It is important to brake going up hill as the track crests and then falls away. If you brake too late, it is too late and the grip is poor.

Namerow is a throw-away "U" turn. Use 2nd (expert) or 3rd (novice) gear. The correct line will place your car parallel to and very close to the white line on the right side of the track as you exit. DO NOT take a line that takes you out wide after the hairpin because you will be unable to execute turn 15, "Paddock Bend" which leads to the front straight. Look into the corner early to get it right. There is usually a cone marking the turn-in point but it is often too far down the track. Looking at cones is a bad thing, see the track itself and not someone's idea of an apex. Remember that cones get bumped around and cannot be used as an absolute reference.

Paddock bend is taken in 3rd and turn-in will be right after you shift from 2nd to 3rd (if you do Namerow in 2nd). Most drivers turn in late for Paddock Bend and cannot carry as much speed onto the front straight as the more experienced. Done correctly, you shift from 2nd to 3rd and accelerate (in a GT3 anyway). If you try this make sure you are on the line and have sticky tires. I suggest you work up to this. A novice will be in 3rd gear and you need to prompt your student to turn his head and look for the apex early since he or she will be too late otherwise.

At the exit, bring your car back to the left about one third of the way from the pit wall, prepare for gentle braking at the white line coming up. Then look for the forcing cones coming up on the left and aim to pass close to them to prepare for the entry to turn 1.

In the Rain

Tremblant is paved with a fancy hi-tech polymer coating which offers excellent dry grip and great tire wear. In the wet, things are different. Firstly if you are using the popular Pilot Sport Cup R compound tires, be aware that they have very poor grip when it is damp or wet. This may not be the case at other tracks, but the instructor corps at Tremblant are unanimous – the Cup tire "sucks" in the wet.

After the renovation and repaving, a number of spots will accumulate standing water. The exit of 15 Paddock Bend will have a large puddle. So will the apex of 10. In the spring, a stream will wash across the track the left to right on a diagonal on the uphill approach to Namerow. The flow is deep enough to cause hydroplaning.

By far the most dangerous spot is turn 6. There will be puddles halfway through the corner and they are deep enough to cause a loss of control even on tires with decent water evacuation. Worse, after a heavy rain, there will be an even coat of water about 6 mm deep which is so uniform that it simply looks wet. This has already claimed several cars.

As of the 2005 season, Tremblant has accumulated enough miles that grip is better off line when it rains. This is very apparent at T6 and T12 (bridge) but generally true everywhere.

Other Hints

Le Circuit is a fully enclosed park with the Devil's River on three sides. There is a small lake near the paddock. The park is home to a variety of animals, notably deer. Every year, one or two deer are killed in collisions with cars.

Deer are often seen on or near the track on the downhill section between 2 and 3 (on the left usually), at turn 6 (either side – and they cross the track), near the apex of turn 7 (on the right usually) , and in turn 8 all the way to the crest of the hill. Be wary! Rennsport flaggers will show a combination of a yellow and a white flag to indicate deer. They also carry whistles and will attempt to chase them away from the track. Notwithstanding, we manage to collide with one or two a season.

Noise

Le Circuit is a noise limited track. Sound measurements are made from the balcony of the control tower (although sometimes measurements are made elsewhere too). Cars at 90 dBA will get a warning, at 92 dB on the A scale you get a black flag. Note for the 2006 season, Le Circuit is in court with the City. They will be extra vigilant about noise and if any car is too loud they will stop the session. Repeat offenses and the event will be cancelled!

Pit Out – cars are staged at the far left as you look at the control tower from the paddock. Entering the track, accelerate up the hill making sure that you do not cross the blend line which should be on your right. On track, the line will be on your left, do not cross it.

Pit in is located just after Namerow. Make the pit in signal as you climb the hill to Namerow and stay on the outside, i.e., left to enter the pits. Speed limit in the pit lane is 40 KPH or 25 MPH.