

Having the last name “Pasteryak” attaches a lot of history to a racer. After all, being the son of longtime modified racer Charlie Pasteryak and nephew of longtime modified racer Carl Pasteryak puts you in legendary company.

Carl Pasteryak first started racing in 1976 at Stafford with brother Charlie turning wrenches. Charlie started his own driving career in the early 1990s at Riverside Park Speedway. Both brothers had success racing both locally and on the Whelen Modified Tour.

For Chris Pasteryak, like so many other racers, it all started on the sidelines. “My earliest memories of being at the racetrack were probably during the 1984 or 1985 seasons at Stafford, Thompson and Waterford” says Pasteryak. “I was only around 4 or 5, but I can remember sitting in the grandstands with my grandfather. At every track he would sit in the very front row. We watched a lot of races together. I also remember that MRN used to broadcast the modified races from Martinsville around that time. A local station would air the broadcast. I remember riding in the car with my grandfather while we listened to the race. We wouldn’t get out of the car until the race was done. We’d be sitting off the side of a back road somewhere listening to the race.”

For a kid growing up in a family of racers, there comes a time when the decision is made to either accept or reject the family’s racing legacy. “My Dad and uncle never pushed me towards racing” says Pasteryak. “I think it was kind of natural that I gravitated towards racing because of how I grew up, but not once do I ever remember either of them saying that this was something that I had to do. When you grow up around something I think that you either end up loving it or hating it, and I ended up falling in love with it. It became a huge part of my life growing up.”

Chris began his racing career in quarter midgets at Thompson Speedway. It was a memorable first outing for Pasteryak. “My first memory of driving a car was my first day at the quarter midget track when I was six years old” says Pasteryak. “It was a day I probably should forget, though. I tried to pass one kid four times during the Junior Novice race and ended up just driving into him all four times and spinning him out.”

Even though the young Pasteryak was discouraged with his first attempt behind the wheel, he stayed in the quarter midget ranks at Thompson’s Little T and worked on his skills. Quarter midgets became the first part of his racing education.

In 1997 he graduated to Legends cars. “My first bigger track experience was a Legends car at Waterford Speedbowl in 1997” says Pasteryak. “I raced Legends cars at Waterford, Riverside Park, Stafford, Seekonk, Lime Rock, Monadnock, Oxford and Beech Ridge.”

Pasteryak raced in Legends competition until the end of 2002, grabbing nearly two dozen wins and earning points titles at Waterford Speedbowl.

2003 saw another step in his racing development as he began racing in the SK division at Waterford. “I won four races at Waterford along with rookie of the year and had points finishes of 4th, 4th, and second the three years I ran weekly there” Pasteryak says.

In 2006 Pasteryak graduated to a tour-type modified and attempted to run partial schedules with both the Whelen Modified Tour and the True Value Modified Racing Series. A rookie in a full modified as well as a rookie in both series, it put stress on the team taking on such an ambitious schedule. It became clear that they would have to decide between the two series. "Running with the TVMRS meant we'd be able to run a complete touring series without it taking a major toll on our family business. The series went to a lot of nice tracks, the racing was excellent, and my father, my uncle, and I were all having fun doing it. TVMRS was what worked for us at that time."

Pasteryak dropped his Whelen Tour attempts altogether in 2007 and focused on the full TVMRS schedule. He finished ninth in points at year's end despite failing to qualify for two events. Even though they did not finish at the top of the heap that year, Pasteryak knew that he and his family had found a good place for their race team. The championship groundwork was being laid.

In 2008, Pasteryak finished in the top 10 in all but one race and grabbed two wins by the end of the season. In storybook fashion, he earned his first TVMRS victory at Waterford after battling series dominator Kirk Alexander. The win was big for Pasteryak, as he brought the series that he now calls home to the track that he used to call home. It also showed that he could beat a veteran like Kirk Alexander.

Chris Pasteryak became the 2008 TVMRS champion in only his second year of competition. The feat was the culmination of nearly three decades in a racing family and more than two decades for him behind the wheel of a race car. It was the first touring series championship for anyone in the Pasteryak family.

When people ask Chris what the title means to him, he immediately shares the achievement with his family. "Dad and my uncle Carl started racing in 1976 at Stafford and it had been until 2008 with no championships" Pasteryak says. "It's been my Dad and uncle and now me. We've been running so long and had some success, but never like this. This is really special. Being a champion is something we certainly didn't expect coming into this year. 2008 was the most fun we've ever had racing."

It is Chris's choice of the pronoun "we" that so clearly indicates that this is a family affair. "My Dad and uncle are, first and foremost, the car owners and pay all of the bills, so I certainly wouldn't be driving anything if they were not involved" he says. "The biggest thing that they help me with is wisdom and knowledge both on raceday and during the week. They both have been involved in racing for over 30 years. I would be a fool not to listen to what they say. Sometimes I can be a bit stubborn about things. Looking back, every time I was a hardhead my life could have been a lot easier if I just shut up and did what they told me. They have taught me a lot already. My only regret is that I didn't listen to everything that they had to teach me."

Charlie, Chris's father, says his son has taught him a thing or two as well. "Chris is a good driver, not a wrecker or a crasher" Charlie says. "He's not rough. Chris is very smooth and good on our equipment. There have been a few times when I thought he could be more aggressive, but then about 20 minutes into the ride back home I realize that his way was the best way. We're

usually always bringing home a race car that doesn't need repairs done to it."

For 2009, Pasteryak is doing two things he has never done before; racing for a team other than his family and running the whole Whelen Modified Tour. Pasteryak will run half of the WMT schedule with his father's car and the other half for Wayne Darling. "This was a harder decision than you could imagine because I really do love running the True Value deal" Pasteryak says. "It's just one of those deals where if we didn't take this opportunity I'd be kicking myself for the rest of my life for not doing it. Running the entire Whelen Series is something my family could never do from a time and money aspect. Thanks to Wayne, he's giving me a chance to go do it."

Pasteryak will continue to run with the TVMRS as well in a new Troyer car out of the Pasteryak Racing stable. The combined TVMRS and WMT schedules present only three races during the season where Pasteryak would have to miss a TVMRS race. Although a dual championship is a long shot, winning at least a few races in each series is not.

For a racing legacy that started in the 70's, the torch has now been passed to a new generation of Pasteryaks. "I guess they didn't know what they were getting into" says the reigning TVMRS champion about his father and uncle and their racing. With more than 30 years in racing, though, it is certain that Charlie and Carl Pasteryak knew exactly "what they were getting into." After decades of racing all over the northeast, the Pasteryak name now has a championship to add to their already legendary racing history. With any luck, 2009 could bring home two more championship trophies to the Pasteryak Racing shop.