

Ford v. Ferrari (2019)



Ken Miles & Carroll Shelby consult about modifications of the engine design.

(c) 20th Century Fox

This is an exciting film about cars and race driving that, like any good sports film, is more about the people than the cars they build, test, and drive. It is also about adult friendship; rebellion against overbearing authority; blue collar opposed to “the suits;” proletariat against the patrician; and a father-son relationship. In short, a film that should please those who love action and thrills and those who appreciate more contemplative character studies.

Directed James Mangold and scriptwriters Jez Butterworth, John-Henry Butterworth and Jason Keller have no doubt boiled down the facts in this true story of the campaign of the Ford Motor Company to challenge the long-time domination of Ferrari cars at the prestigious The 24 Hours of Le Mans, so named because the race takes place over a 24-hour period. Speed is but a part of this race—the winning car is the one that covers the most miles in the period without breaking down.

The story begins with Henry Ford II (Tracy Letts) wanting to pull his lackluster company out of its slump by taking the advice of his executive Lee Iacocca (Jon Bernthal) to purchase the near-bankrupt Italian automaker Ferrari and thus add glamour to the American outfit. The haughty [Enzo Ferrari](#) (Remo

Girone) plays along, seeming to accept the offer, but then at the last minute accepting an offer from Fiat instead. Even worse, he upsets Henry by calling him a fat pig. The upset Henry Ford decides to get even by building a car that will take away Ferrari's championship crown.

The key persons in developing a new care are auto designer Carroll Shelby (Damon), who seeks out his friend Ken Miles, a British race car driver now living in LA with his wife Mollie (Caitriona Balfe) and son Peter (Noah Jupe). Miles is a superb auto mechanic with his own business, but not as successful as he ought to be due to his mercurial temper that alienates customers. Because the IRA has shut Miles down over a tax dispute, he agrees to Shelby's lucrative offer to work on the design and testing and to be the driver. Wife Mollie is upset with her husband at first because he does not bring her in on his plans at first, but is soon a fervent supporter, and of course son Peter is excited to get to see the testing and racing.

There is a villain at the Ford Motor Company in right hand man Leo Beebe (Josh Lucas) who worries that Miles, with his grease pit manners does not project a suitable image for the company, so Miles involvement becomes an on and off again prospect, which at one point threatens to wreck their friendship. The suits also impinge at times on Shelby's work. How all this develops makes for such an interesting viewing experience that the two and a half hours quickly flies by. The conclusion is different from the usual sports adventure tale, one that is as bittersweet as it is surprising.

No questions for this review.