Welcome to the world of Michel Vaillant. You’re holding in your hands the eighth episode of his New Season, translated into English to allow you to discover this icon of the Franco-Belgian culture.

Created in 1957 by French author Jean Graton, the Adventures of Michel Vaillant represent a unique work in the history of graphic novels and motorsports. Unique, because if the Adventures of Michel Vaillant are all fiction, they invite the reader into the real world of motor racing that both Jean and now his son Philippe Graton have been acquainted with for the past 60 years.

Unique, because Michel Vaillant has revealed the world of motor racing to readers of all ages. Some even admit their passion began with Michel Vaillant books. These include five times F1 World Champion Alain Prost, and Tom Kristensen, who holds the record for the most wins at the 24 Hours of Le Mans with nine, or Luc Donckerwolke, the most renowned car designer of his generation.

You may encounter in the Michel Vaillant saga other well-known characters that span from Fangio to Michael Schumacher, including Jackie Stewart, Mario Andretti, Ayrton Senna, Damon Hill, Lewis Hamilton and even Dan Gurney who once stated that « inclusion in one of Graton’s novels is considered the highest recognition for a professional racing driver ».
This imaginary hero, recognised by the world of racing (Henry Ford II and Enzo Ferrari personally wished him a happy 20th birthday), defends the fundamental sporting values that have survived all the different trends. Michel Vaillant has been adapted into a television series, several animated pictures and, in 2003, into a feature movie written and produced by Luc Besson. But it is in its original form, graphic novels, that the saga weaves its magic. The realistic drawings constitute an exceptional encyclopedia of sixty years of motor racing.

In 2012, the most famous of the French graphic novel heroes entered a new season. Scriptwriter and photographer Philippe Graton was joined by Denis Lapière, one of the best writers of the Franco-Belgian comic book arena. The drawing is the work of the young and talented Benjamin Benéteau who depicted, with Vincent Dutreuil for the first time, the totality of “13 DAYS” work: characters, cars, sets.

Let’s hope this album will entice you to read the previous books, and to get into the race as Michel Vaillant allowed several generations of readers to do.

Thanks to Jean Graton for creating this inspiring hero, and congratulations to Philippe, Denis, Benjamin and Vincent for bringing fresh horsepower to this mythical saga!