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# Meet Milka

## The New Kid on the Racing Block

By Rosa Calvez

The Carl's Jr. commercial opens with a lone racecar speeding around the track. The colorful movement and swift sounds of speed capture the viewer's attention immediately. The driver's identity, though, isn't revealed until almost halfway into the commercial. The car races into the pits, the driver climbs out of the car, and removes the helmet. It is only then, as the driver's long brown hair waves in the breeze, that the viewer discov-

Introducing thousands of TV viewers to a groundbreaking Hispanic woman is always a reason for celebration.

Even though Duno is in uncharted territory for women, she has proven to be a worthy competitor, as good as the men.

"There just

aren't many women in motor sports to begin with. The ones that are in just don't progress to the top professional runs like Milka has," says Steve Knight, a fellow racecar driver. "The bottom line is Milka is a world class race car driver besides being very nice and very beautiful."

Duno is at the top of the sports car racing division, and she's rapidly climbing the European open wheel racing division.

"Racing at this level is not at all easy," Duno says. "It is very difficult and requires immense mental focus. It is a career that you must work at every single day."

Duno's need for speed started about six years ago when a friend invited her to a Porsche driving clinic in Caracas, and she was hooked. She says she was drawn to the challenge, intensity, and speed associated with professional driving. "When I'm in the car, it's like I become the car. It requires that



"When I'm in the car, it's like I become the car," Milka Duno says.

ers that the skilled driver is a woman.

She then bites into a perfectly placed snack: the Carl's Jr. Guacamole Bacon Six Dollar Burger. Then she looks into the camera with a smirk on her face.

Meet Milka Duno: the first female race car driver in Venezuela, and one of the few female racers in the world.

"We were hoping to get that sense of surprise from viewers," says one of the masterminds behind the Carl's Jr. ad, Anita Santiago, President of Anita Santiago Advertising. "At the shoot, I was very proud."

Santiago is giddy with pride.

all of your senses operate at the highest level. It's all-consuming, and very exciting," she says.

This year marks Duno's fifth season of professional racing. And it has become more than a weekend sport; racing is Duno's full-time career. She races internationally one to two times a month.

To date, Duno is the first woman in history to drive the world's fastest and most exotic class of sports cars – the LMP 900. She won at one of the most famous sports car races in the nation, the Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta. "This is a very prestigious race because it is a 10-hour endurance race," she explains.

She plans to continue racing until she reaches her goal: "to race at the highest level of open wheel racing, either here in the United States, or in Europe. I also think that NASCAR is very interesting too."

Could a Hispanic woman be the new face of NASCAR? Yes.