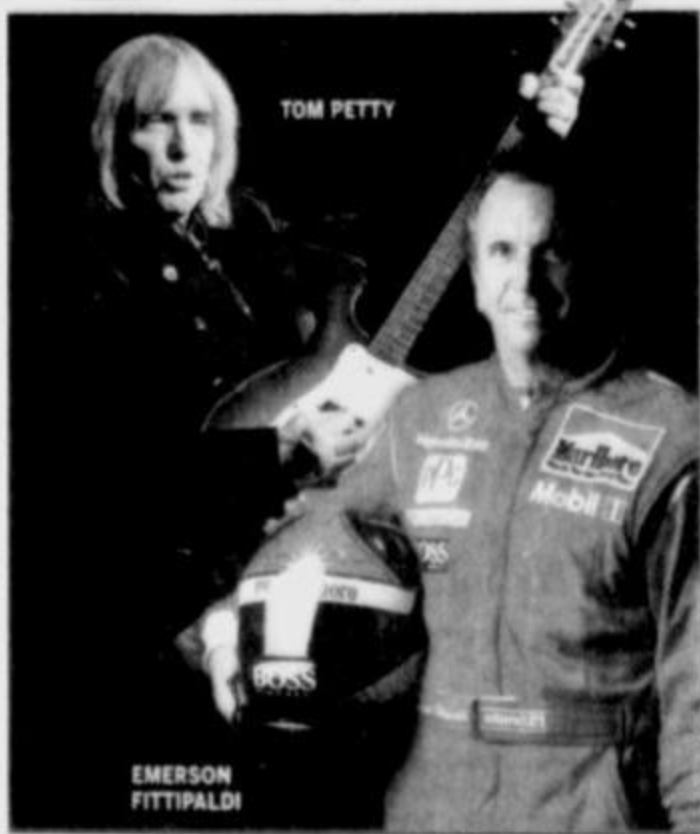


2-MINUTE

DRINK



ANOTHER SIDE OF . . .

EMERSON FITTIPALDI

Racing fans know him as the father of the Brazilian migration to American racing, a Formula One world champion who won two Indianapolis 500s. Others may remember him as the guy who drank the orange juice instead of milk. But to musician Tom Petty, Fittipaldi serves a preconcert inspiration. Petty explains in 2006's "Conversations with Tom Petty," describing a trip with George Harrison to the Long Beach Grand Prix:

"We were backstage, and I watched him getting ready and into his racing suit. I thought, this is heavy (stuff). This guy is going to be going really fast for a long time. And if you (mess) up you are dead. So it's a heavy gig.

"So I said to him, 'How do you prepare for this?' And he goes, 'What I do is I go through the entire race in my head before I go out there. Because I know the track, and I think it through, and I think what I'm going to do, where I'm going to be, and I see myself doing it.'

"And I took that advice, since then. I'll look at the set list, see how it's going to go. I can picture what we're going to do, and that kind of puts me at ease. It's, like, 'OK, I know what I'm going to do. And I can see it working. And now I'm just gonna forget it all and relax. And go up there and have a good time.'

So millions of concert-goers have Emerson Fittipaldi to thank. And by the way, Petty is a terrible driver, by his own admission.

Bob Wolfley