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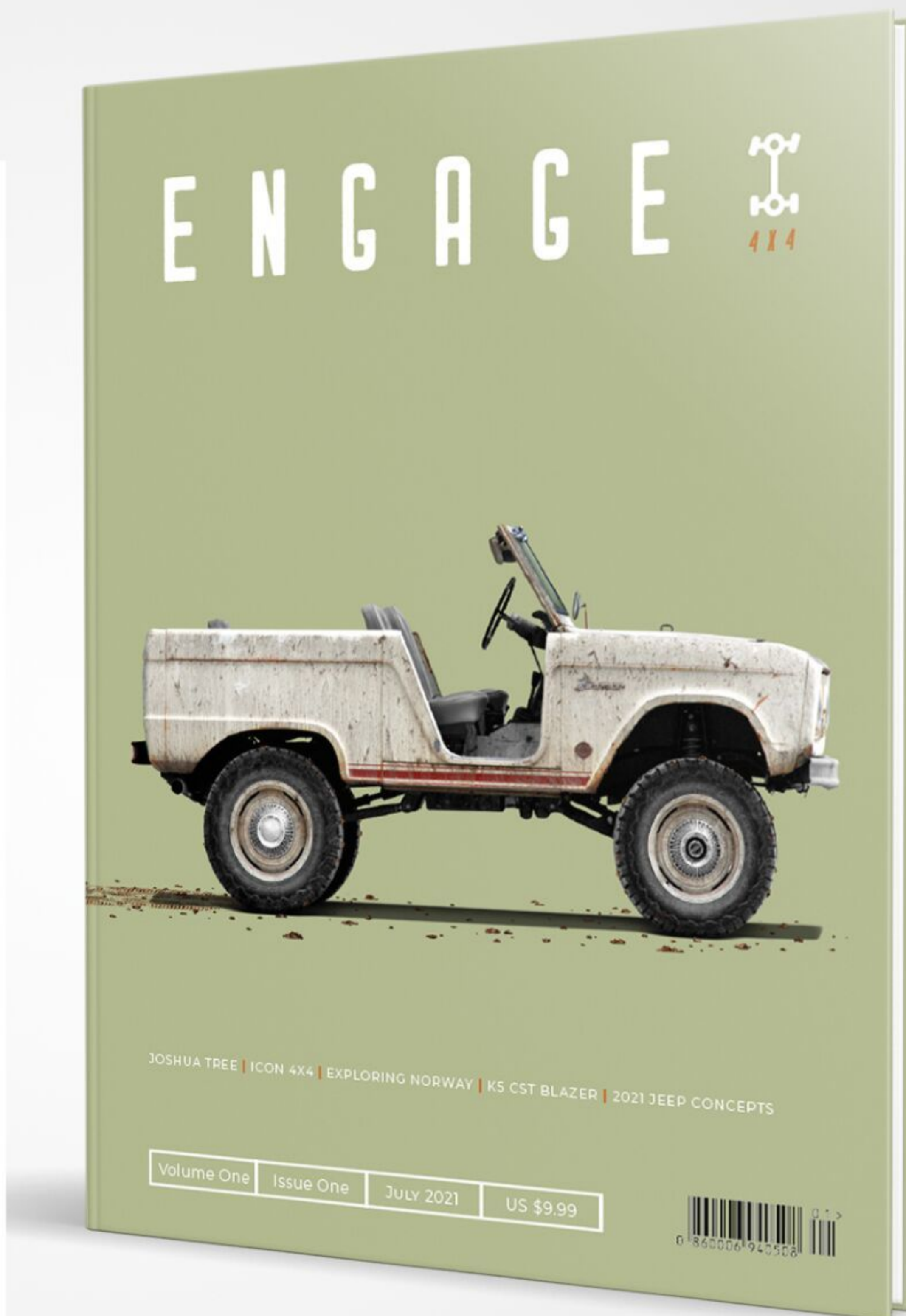
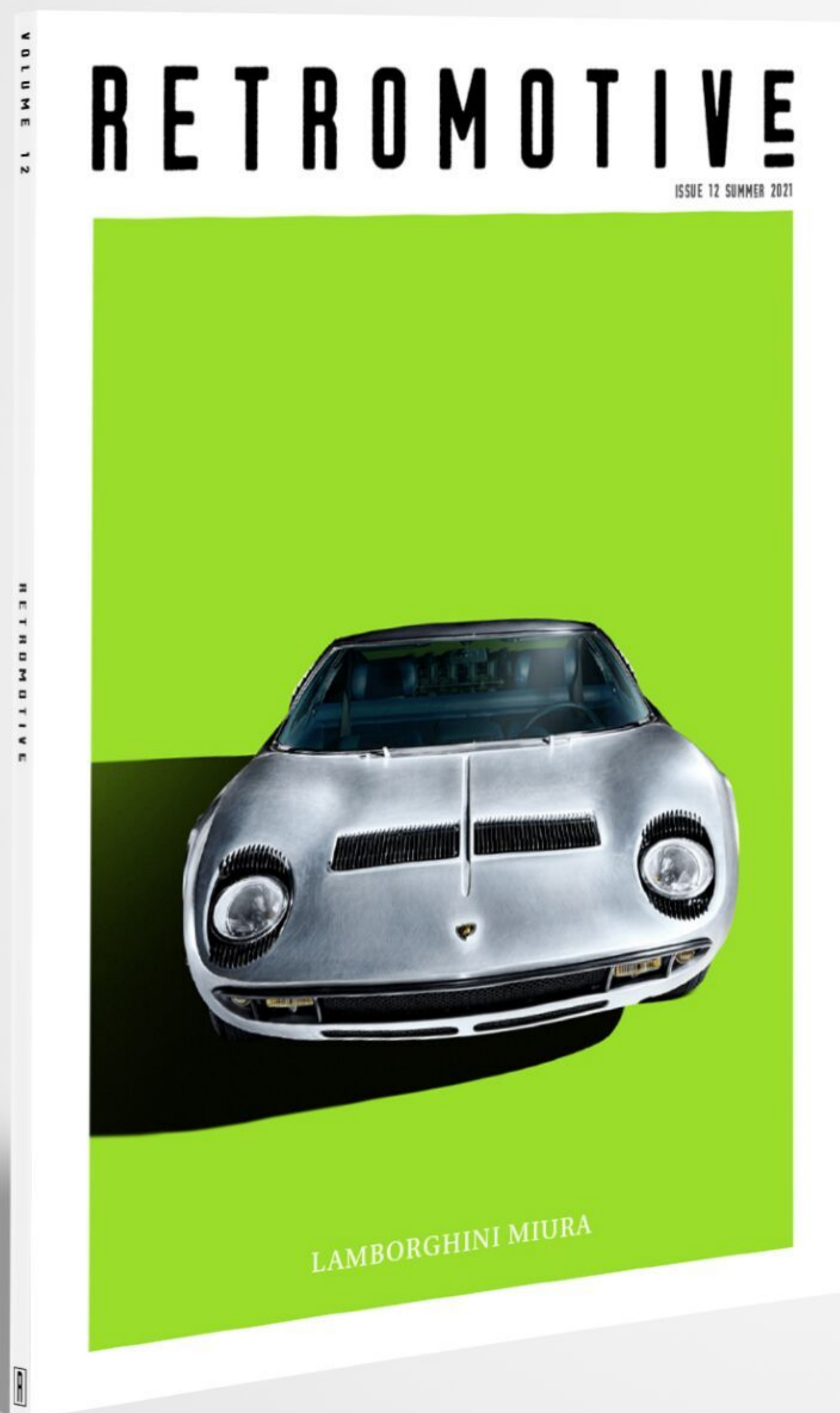
ISSUE 13 2021



PORSCHE GT1

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PORSCHE GT1 EVO



PUBLISHED BY

Retromotive PTY LTD

EDITOR

Nathan Duff

PHOTOGRAPHY

Ian Wood

Canepa Motorsport

Davide De Martis

Jonathan Fleetwood

GM Australia

Alejandro Arretureta

Marco Annunziata

Tim Scott

Nathan Duff

Federico Ciuffolini

Zach Brehl

COPY EDITOR

Yvette Staphanie Hallam

WORDS

Bruce McMahon

Iain Curry

Justin Jackey

Colin Fabri

Paul Mathers

Nathan Duff

Emma Woodcock

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Yvette Stephanie Hallam

ART DIRECTION & DESIGN

Nathan Duff

SPECIAL THANKS

Julie, Jimi, Jesse & Johnathan

CONTACT

contact@retromotive.co

retromotive.co

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There are first cars – the one where you scrape everything together to buy, so that your mobile and have a way of escaping the olds. Then, there is the first car you fall in love with. Back in 1994, I had a thousand dollarydoos to buy my first car at 16 years of age. To be fair, at the time, I was planning on becoming a Rock Star and was waaaay more into the 1990s grunge movement than I was cars. Either way, I still wanted a holden TX Gemini coupe, but decent models were around two-and-a-half grand: So it was a KE70 Carola for me. Hey, it was not the coolest car, but five dollars of petrol got me around for almost a week – we had an understanding.

However, the first car I fell in love with about four years later was a 1998 Subaru WRX. By this time, I was still pursing my Rock-Star dreams, but had to take a job at an auto parts store to pay the rent. Living in a share house with two-minute noodles providing the bulk of my nutritional needs (ironically, I married a dietitian) meant that I had enough spare cash to buy a new car. The Corolla was long gone, and I was rocking a 1966 XR Falcon with a 200-pursuit motor. Funnily, I cannot remember how I came across the WRX,

but the memory which sticks with me most is sitting down with the Finance guy at the dealership. He looked over the paperwork, shuffled it one side, peered over this bifocals, and said, matter of factly, “You know you can’t afford this car, right?”. Before my brain could stop my mouth, I blurted out, “I don’t care!”. He sighed and signed the finance agreement: I was off quicker than you can say “loan default”.

I kept the WRX up until my wife became pregnant with our first child: where the very daunting reality of being a responsible parent came crashing down on us. We were a one-car family; and, for all intents and purposes, I had to say goodbye to the love of my life and hello to the practicality of an SUV.

Three kids later, and nailing the responsible-parent thing, I thought it was high time to revisit my first love. I broke the news gently to my wife and she seemed to understand ... until I rolled into the garage with a stunning 1999 WRX RA JDM import. “Nathan... that’s exactly the same as your last one.”

“I know! isn’t it beautiful?”

We’d love to hear about the first car you fell in love with – get in touch at contact@retromotive.co



When he is not out shooting classics or putting the magazine together, Nathan likes to pretend that he’ll actually finish the series 3 Land Rover that still sits in his garage gathering dust. Follow Nathan on Instagram @retromotive_editor





PORSCHE 911 GT1 EVO

★ WORDS IAIN CURRY ★ PHOTOGRAPHY TIM SCOTT FOR RM SOTHERBY'S



It is hard to spot under the giant rear wing – but it is there. Off-center and low down in the shrouded, sculpted aero rump you see the license plate: P1 POW. Small detail, big impact: this thing's road legal. You recognize the Porsche 911 rear lights. They are the 996 shape – the one from the late 1990s. Between them, and above that street-legal plate, it says GT1. Small number – but, once again, big impact.

It is still recognizable as a 911 – but looks longer. Flatter, massively wider, and more purposeful, too. It's a race car, right? Just missing its sponsorship livery. Yet that plate suggests it is just as entitled to cruise the highways, do school dropoff, or rock up to the nearest Sunday morning Cars 'n' Coffee as your daily-drive Toyota. It takes some doing, but here is the wildest 911 to ever come out of Porsche's dream factory.

In the world of uber-rare Porsches, a mid-engine 1997 911 GT1 Evolution out-ubers just about everything. Porsche made road-going Straßenversions of these GT1s to meet homologation requirements (more on that later) – but it's not even one of those. It was born a race car and holds a glittering palmares – reckoned to be the most successful of all 911 GT1 racers with 13 wins from 31 starts.

When it hung up the racing boots, chassis number GT1 993-117 was restored and converted for road use. Adding to its enigmatic status in the secretive world of ultra-rare Porsches, it is believed to be the only road-legal GT1 race car in existence. It sold at RM Sotheby's Monaco auction in May 2016 for a chunky 2.77 million Euros (\$3.38million); and, in 2020, collectible-car retailer, Dutton Garage (in Melbourne, Australia), took delivery of this unique GT1 Evo. It was bought by a South Australian collector, who wishes to remain anonymous, and you can bank on it costing far more than it did a few years ago.

It made a demonstration appearance at the region's The Bend Classic in 2020, but spectator numbers were low – due to coronavirus – but let's hope the too-few who witnessed this monster-in-action realized what a sublime unicorn was wailing past.

As a little history, in the mid- and late-1990s, we had the first Group GT1 era of endurance racing. Homologation requirements meant road-going versions were required: hence, the Porsche GT1 Evo Straßenversion and Mercedes-AMG CLK GTR – the priciest road-going Benz in existence. Throw in the McLaren F1 –

that was never supposed to go racing, but ended up winning Le Mans outright anyway – and we had not seen an era of such bonkers road racers since the homologated street-going versions of Group B rally cars from the early 1980s.

To go racing in the GT1 class, there was the loose “promised-production” clause: meaning the manufacturer assured organisers that they would eventually build 25 road-legal versions of the race car. In 1996, Porsche built a couple of road-legal GT1 prototypes featuring the 993-version of the 911's headlights and taillights; then, ultimately, 21 GT1 Evo Straßenversions between 1997 and 1998 – with the later 996-version's styling. To own one back in the day, let's just say you had to be pretty high up on Porsche's Christmas-card list – and ludicrously wealthy.

Imagine, if you will, that the street-version GT1 Evo is not mad enough. The 18 factory race cars were the real wildchilids. The Straßenversion used the race car's mid-mounted water-cooled twin-turbo 3.2-liter flat-six, but de-tuned from around 590 horsepower to 535 horsepower. The race car was also 200 pounds lighter (at 2,315 pounds): helping it achieve a top speed of 205 miles per hour on the Mulsanne Straight at the



1996 Le Mans 24 Hours race – where 911 GT1s finished second and third outright.

It was a track-version British-based historic racer that Chris Wilson set his heart on. Wilson's 1965 Ford GT40 Mk1 race car – that he has campaigned with success at the Goodwood Revival and elsewhere – is cared for by the UK's Lanzante Limited. It is a race team you want in

your corner: scoring overall victory at Le Mans 1995 in a McLaren F1 GTR. Lanzante's been road converting McLaren F1 GTRs for many years, and discussed with Wilson what other potential projects were out there.

Dean Lanzante (company boss) said: "At the time, prices of a McLaren F1 GTR versus a Porsche 911 GT1 were wildly apart. A Porsche GT1 was

massively undervalued; and I explained you could buy a race car, do the same thing we do with the F1s, and put it on the road. The biggest challenge was it being the first of its type we'd done – but we love a new challenge. The GT1 is a really fantastic car, brilliantly executed in its design. In 1995, our team ran a Porsche GT2, so we were familiar with the GT1 when it launched in 1996. The



design approaches Porsche took with the GT1 and McLaren with the F1 in the same year were quite different, but both very effective.”

Chris Wilson managed to find the racing GT1 himself, the enthusiast taking great enjoyment from sourcing the car to being involved in Lanzante’s preparation. Lanzante said: “Chris is a proper car guy. He’s not someone who just presents

a cheque when the work’s done; he’s interested in the complete process.”

Wilson had picked the most decorated GT1 in existence. According to the RM Sotheby Monaco 2016 pre-auction listing, Chassis GT1 993-117 was sold as a bare tub by Porsche Motorsports North America to privateer team Bytzek Motorsports of Toronto, Canada, in 1997. The

team installed the drivetrain and suspension components from one of its previous GT1s (this had been damaged at Mosport Park), along with new components and an Evo-upgrade package.

The honors list? It was three-time Canadian GT Championship winner – 1999, 2000, and 2001 – taking 13 victories in those years, and lined up at the 2001 Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona. It







qualified 12th, but after dramas late in the race requiring a replacement transaxle, dropped to finish 41st. Okay, the factory-entered 911 GT1s that finished 1st and 2nd in class at the 1996 Le Mans 24 Hours may boast a more historically-significant record, but none took the chequered flag first as often as this car.

Between 2014 and 2015, Lanzante fully restored the now race-retired GT1, while

performing the necessities to make it – somehow – wonderfully street legal. Lanzante said: “It was heavily used after doing several seasons. There was thankfully no accident damage to the tub, but some of the carbon bodywork had been quickly repaired – that is totally normal for any modern carbon race car. We did a lot of tidying up to the carbon to make it more aesthetically pleasing.”

Key was preserving the car’s racing heritage and feel. Lanzante did not want this race GT1 to be a facsimile of a GT1 Straßenversion, nor change anything to make things irreversible – potentially harming the value of the car. It retains the feel of the race car from head to toe. There is a passenger seat fitted, but it is a version of the genuine Recaro race seat: same materials, same Willans harness. Some



stickers were deleted; but, inside the cockpit, there is the same very racy dashboard with digital readout, and none of the analogue gauges seen in a GT1 Straßenversion. Hop in one of those and the view from the driver's seat is, well, a bit normal 911.

So what about that highly-strung race engine? Again, it is stayed the same and not detuned for road use. In 1996, Motor Sport magazine said

Porsche rated the GT1's engine life at 30 hours: enough to see it through Le Mans qualifying and twice around the clock racing. Lanzante said: "There's been no change. The engine is full race spec with original ECU. With engine lives and the life of any race component, once you put it on the street the life can be expanded significantly. On the street, the race engine won't be on the redline the whole time; while bushes,

wheel bearings, driveshafts, suspension, everything, won't go through the same loads."

Lanzante completely rebuilt the engine and five-speed manual gearbox because they had no idea about the retired race car's maintenance schedule. They had to assume the worst: so replaced the conrods and crack tested everything as part of the major overhaul – meanwhile rebuilding driveshafts, adding new radiators, and replacing the



fuel cell.

More everyday aspects to make it road legal included adding door locks, a Porsche 993's mechanical handbrake, moving to a conventional fuel filler, and ensuring things like fans cut in at the right temperature – just in case your GT1 gets stuck in the city snarl. Note the conventional key in the dashboard ignition to start the thing, right beside a button for the horn and a pull-out headlight knob familiar to anyone who has driven an original VW Beetle.

The finished result is the only road legal GT1 Evo race car in existence. But, be under no illusion, this is a ground-up purpose-built race car which now happens to have license plates. Two KKK turbochargers, a roof-mounted scoop to feed air to that mid-mounted engine, double-wishbone pushrod front and rear suspension, steel-tube chassis, its coupe body of sheet steel and carbon fiber, full-width fixed rear wing, 380mm ventilated brake discs, and mighty 18x13-inch rear wheels shod in 335/30 tires. It reaches 60 miles per hour in 3.7 seconds; and 120 miles per hour in 10.5 seconds – ludicrous speeds for a quarter of a century ago.

Dean Lanzante recalled exactly what it was like to drive this converted GT1, while strapped in the Recaro race seat –

gripping the suede Momo steering wheel, and surrounded by a sea of carbon-fiber trim. “It actually drives really nice. I was nervous because I thought it was going to be a laggy car because of the [turbocharged] engine, but it was actually pretty linear. It has a synchro gearbox, so on the street it's actually quite usable. A sequential gearbox is far clunkier: you need to make sure you're in the right gear at the right time. But, with this, you can pull up to a junction in fifth, take it out of gear, put it in first, and away you go.”

Lanzante had been given spring rates from an owner of a GT1 Straßenversion: Meaning they were quickly able to get the right suspension settings, right spring rates, and set the same ride height as the road cars. The biggest compromise here was due to the GT1 race car's steering lock and front uprights. “The more ride height we gave it, the more restriction there was to the steering lock. If we did another, we'd make a bespoke front upright. You can drive it on the street, but a manoeuvre is a bit difficult. It's right on the limit of being practical.”

Owner, Chris Wilson, piloted it at the 2015 Goodwood Festival of Speed, street drove it for a magazine photoshoot, and had “a few little jollies in it out on the road” before putting it to

auction. Why? He wanted to move on to the next project – this time using Lanzante to road convert one of the 17 Ferrari F40 LM race cars. Also, the GT1 Evo was finished to such an immaculate standard, and it gained value so rapidly – that risking it on one of those “little jollies on the road”, let alone the track – may have taken some fun out of it.

But what an experience to use on public streets. If you took a GT1 race car to the track, you need a truck to transport it, a team of mechanics, and hire a circuit – plus, not everyone can drive a car on slicks with a huge amount of aero either. But this GT1 can be experienced on the road with a friend along for the ride. Lanzante said: “You go out for a blast, maybe do [20 miles], have a good time, and you've experienced it.”

When it went to auction, there was a wonderful picture of the car – license plates attached – parked outside The Deers Hut pub, in the leafy village of Liphook in the South of England. Can you imagine the thrill of sitting in a beer garden knowing you'll be driving it home after a soda? Strap in, fire up that screaming race engine, set boost to level three, and go shake the scenery. Then, thank the supercar gods this car somehow exists.



PORSCHE 911 GT1-109

✦ WORDS EMMA WOODCOCK ✦ IMAGES JONNY FLEETWOOD





Subtle curves swell over the wheels, reaching up to the body-width rear wing as they dance from road to racer and back again. The Porsche 911 GT1 Evo looks alien, grafting 996 Carrera details onto a shape designed for circuit-racing victory. It plays with perspective. Huge, yet tiny. Contemporary, but already classic – somehow. Finished in the PlayStation livery, it wore to its final races. Chassis GT1-109 encapsulates the 1990s movement to build the fastest road-based GT racers ever conceived.

Porsche entered the GT1 category to win. In 1994, the manufacturer developed the Group C 962 prototype into a technically-compliant GT racer to win at Le Mans, but their real focus lay elsewhere. Norbert Singer and his engineering team wanted to create a 911 which could compete at the forefront of international motorsport. While other privateer teams grappled with converted Ferrari F40 LM and McLaren F1 road cars, Porsche created a homologation special: that coupled carbon-fiber bodywork, a mid-mounted engine, and 962 prototype technology with the basic frontal construction of a contemporary 993 Carrera. The result could be made road legal, but that was not the point. Porsche designed

the 1996 911 GT1 as a racing car first and foremost.

Journalists, and other drivers, objected: arguing that the GT1 could never be called a production-based GT racer. Its distended bodywork, horizontally-mounted pushrod dampers, and rear spaceframe construction shared far more with sports prototype machinery than any other 911. Porsche replied that customers could order a street legal 911 GT1. A pair of prototypes were road registered, in early 1996, followed by a run of 23 Straßenversion the next year; then, a single roadgoing GT1-98, in 1998.

Porsche entered two factory GT1 racers for the 1996 24 Hours of Le Mans – the first competitive outing for the new model. The pair staked fourth and fifth on the grid, just half a second off pole position. The fastest McLaren F1 GTR – Porsche's closest GT1 competitor – languished in eighth. There was even more to celebrate by Sunday afternoon, with the two 911 GT1s placing second and third overall – alongside the top two spots in their class.

Combined with three decisive wins in the BPR Global GT Series, the Le Mans performance increased other teams' interest in the 911 GT1. Porsche responded and sold







*NORBERT SINGER AND HIS ENGINEERING TEAM
WANTED TO CREATE A 911 WHICH COULD COMPETE AT
THE FOREFRONT OF INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT.*

nine customer racing cars, later supplying a further spare chassis after one GT1 was crashed. Sequentially numbered from GT1-101 to GT1-109, the nine initial customer chasses were all constructed to the original 993-style GT1-96 design between late 1996 and 1997. The car in our photos is the final complete customer 911 GT1 racing car built. GT1-109 made its debut at the 1997 Le Mans pre-qualifying weekend, much like the factory cars had the year before. Campaigned under the eponymous Konrad Motorsport banner of team owner – and long-time Porsche racer – Franz Konrad, the car ran 29th to qualify for the race. During the 24 Hours, it retired after completing 138 laps. Konrad also raced his GT1 in the FIA GT championship – a new for 1997 development of the BPR Global GT Series – achieving a best result of seventh in the Helsinki street race.

Running near the front in a World Championship is no mean feat. Mercedes-Benz and BMW had adopted the 911 GT1's winning strategy from the season before, leaving Porsche to fight back with the updated GT1 Evolution at the 1997 24 Hours of Le Mans. Incorporating a new front axle, a

wider front track, and revised aerodynamics, the latest GT1-Evo was designed to find even more speed. Plus, it was re-styled by Porsche designer Tony Hatter to echo the new 996 Carrera road car. Porsche offered GT1 customer cars an EVO upgrade package by mid-season – but only two customer-team GT1s were returned to Porsche for conversion. One has since been restored back to 993 spec bodywork, the other is GT1-109.

Lee Maxted-Page said: “That’s what makes this car unique.” His company, Maxted-Page Ltd, cares for some of the most historically-valuable Porsches ever built, including GT1-109. “Konrad no longer had a use for 109 after the EVO upgrade, though. So, it was sold to JB Racing. They’d been running the GT1-96 specification GT1-101 under Marlboro sponsorship, and wanted the latest and most competitive package available for the remainder of the season.” Then, GT1-109 appeared at Mugello, Sebring, and Laguna Seca in the famous Marlboro livery.

It was even harder for privateers to compete in 1998. The same regulation which permitted the 911 GT1 had now been exploited by factory teams from Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Panoz,





*THE GT1 HAS BEEN IN STRONG ASCENDENCY FOR THE
LAST FIVE YEARS, THAT IS DRIVEN BY THE
INCREDIBLY LIMITED SUPPLY*

and Toyota; while Porsche had abandoned the GT1-Evo in favor of the radical all-carbon chassis GT1-98. The new 911 took pole at Le Mans, lapping ten seconds quicker than the original GT1 managed two years previously. A day later, Porsche finally won the 24 Hours overall with a GT1. Now owned by Larbre Competition, and resplendent in PlayStation livery, GT1-109 passed pre-qualifying – only to be side-lined before the race by a faulty clutch.

Two final FIA GT races brought GT1-109's career to a close, the car competing at the Hungaroring and Dijon. The French event would be a career highlight: With Bob Wollek at the wheel, 109 came home eighth overall. Retired to the Larbre Competition workshops, the GT1 slumbered until it was discovered in 2005 by Porsche road-car fan Gerry Harrison, who used the car on British track-days. He found the GT1 too overwhelming to exploit and asked his friend Mark Sumpter if he would like to buy it.

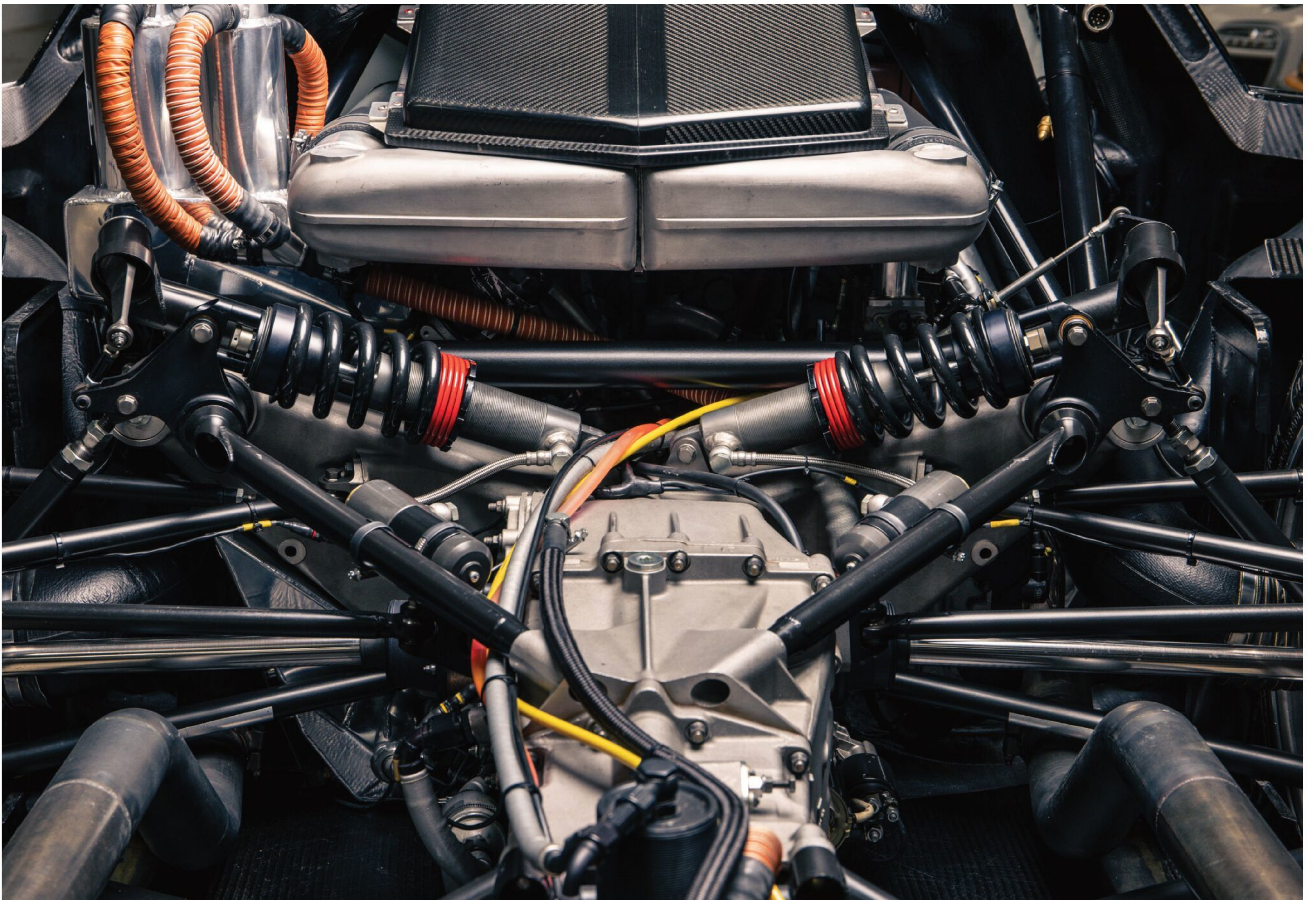
Mark said, while grinning: "We agreed to the deal in two minutes. I hadn't thought about owning a GT1 before, but they definitely held my interest, especially in the PlayStation livery. That's my generation! I knew 109 had

pure unbroken provenance, too; that gives it unparalleled originality." As Managing Director of Paragon Porsche – and a keen historic racer – Mark also has the capacity to keep GT1-109 in track-ready condition. "I'd learned about GT1s while helping Gerry run the car, and Paragon was racing 962s, too. So, I was confident we had the mechanical skills needed to run the car." After an initial outing at Brands Hatch, he stripped it down for closer examination.

The car came apart quickly. Its 1998 livery was aged, and the paint had been heavily applied, rendering the underlying carbon-fiber weave invisible. So paint specialists Normandale rubbed down the Larbre and underlying Marlboro colors, before conducting a full respray. FIA regulations meant the date-expired driver's seat, and fire extinguishers, had to be replaced. The flat-six was feeling tired, too; and the period TAG engine-management system threatened to cause problems, prompting Mark to send 109 to Xtec Engineering for a full driveline rebuild.

"We could buy almost everything from Porsche Motorsport. So I decided to build up the very best engine, while we still had the





*WARM UP THE SLICKS, GIVE IT FULL BOOST, AND IT
REALLY GETS YOUR ATTENTION! THE TURBOS
SOUND AND FEEL LIKE THEY'RE RIGHT
THERE IN THE CAR WITH YOU*

chance.” Modern MoTeC electronics are also installed, rendering the car safer and easier to run. Custom-fabricated carbon brake discs and replacement BBS wheels also ensure the entire car can be driven like it is intended.

It is an experience unlike any other Porsche. Mark said: “GT1-109 is the most exhilarating car I’ve ever driven. Warm up the slicks, give it full boost, and it really gets your attention! The turbos sound and feel like they’re right there in the car with you.” Everything else the car does is equally intense. “It’s so direct and completely connected to the circuit. So it needs ever more concentration as I come up to speed. Compared to the Porsche 962 Group C car I had been racing, the GT1 has less downforce and drag, that makes it feel faster. The gearshift is so direct, I’d swear the lever went straight into the gearbox. It’s the ultimate 911.”

Collectors and enthusiasts around the world are beginning to agree. The GT1 was just an outmoded racing car when 109 left Larbre Competition – now, Porschephiles will spend up to \$12m to secure the best examples. Lee said: “The GT1 has been in strong ascendency for the last five years, that is driven by the incredibly limited supply.”

Recently, Lee’s company sold the tenth chassis – GT1-117 – to a buyer in Australia. “Only six of the 10 customer racing cars still exist. They’re currently the best Porsche a collector could buy. And now, they can also be raced again in Endurance Racing Legends to fully experience them. Any GT1 is an extremely desirable car, but I can see the racing car values rising further to \$15m for cars which have good period race history, famous liveries, and known provenance.”

Researching the story of GT1-109 has brought Mark as much joy as driving his GT1 Evo; and its history file now overflows with photos from every one of its competitive outings. “I love images of the car in pits and with the team around it. You can see the stress of the pit stop, the enthusiasm and expectation before the start, the personalities of everyone involved.” He has carefully preserved the period markings throughout the car, too. He said: “The factory scratched ‘109’ under the bonnet in chalk and the scrutineering logos are still in place. I’ll just sit in the GT1 sometimes and think of all the great guys who raced it. I really love that.” GT1-109 was born as a racing car – it lives on as a legend.





BMW - M6

★ WORDS COLIN FABRI

★ IMAGES ALEJANDRO ARRETURETA | CARPHILES





BMW's can be awfully confusing when it comes to their badging. Back in the day, a 323i simply meant that it was a 3 Series body with a 2.3-liter engine. A 535i was the 5 Series body with a 3.5-litre engine – simple, right? M3s were all two-door coupes; except, they are four-door sedans now; and the M4 is now the M3 coupe; the 320i may have a 2.2-liter engine; and the 323i could have the 2.5-liter – confused? Me, too. (And, perhaps, so is BMW!)

Whether it be the 3.0 CSL – that was never badged as an M-car – or the M3 – where every iteration was badged as an M-car – they all share a common DNA. In the case of the 6 Series M-car, it is both: badged as the M635CSi in European markets and the M6 in US and Japan. However, no matter what is written on the outside of the box, so to speak, the BMW M635CSi / M6 is 100% M-Car in every way that counts.

The BMW M division does not need much of an introduction. And most would be aware that it is a division of BMW tasked with producing performance models. Established in 1972, the first project was the 3.0 CSL – then, onto the first M-badged vehicle, the M1, in 1978. Ever since then, the division has created the hot M version of nearly every model BMW has produced.

The M635CSi, or M6 (let's call it the M6 for ease), was developed using the E24 6 Series coupe produced from 1976 to 1989. The 6 Series was released with a variety of engine sizes and performance: from the 628CSi using a 2.8-liter engine, up to the 635CSi with its 3.5-liter unit. In 1983, the BMW M Division was tasked with waving its magic across the 6 Series platform – subsequently, releasing the M6. The M could well have stood for “mighty” in this context



*THE M-SERIES ENGINE, DESIGNED BY
PAUL ROCHE, COMES RIGHT FROM THE M1
SUPERCAR AND IS TRULY GLORIOUS.*

because the M6 car was a leap forward in performance and handling over its lesser brethren.

First up, and the heart of the M6, was the 3.5-liter engine. It was an upgraded version of what was used in the mighty M1 race and production models. M Division upgraded the straight six from a single overhead camshaft to DOHC, also doubling the valve count to 24. The mechanical Kugelfischer injection system of the M1's engine was replaced with Bosch's Motronic electronic injection. The tuned intake system was matched to six visually-stunning throttle bodies; and the exhaust – a series of intertwined headers flowing into a dual-exhaust system. The European model had no catalytic converters and made 286 horsepower, as opposed to the US version which had a modified engine strangled by catalytic converters and a lower compression ratio – effectively de-tuned to 256 horsepower. Nevertheless, a significant output from 3.5 liters in the 1980s. Today, while most modern engines' components are hidden by covers and shrouds, back in the M6's day, exposing a set of six throttle bodies all connected by levers and rods and functioning as one was sheer mechanical art – and six perfectly synchronised butterflies opening in perfect harmony was a joy to hear.

The M-series engine, designed by Paul Roche, comes right from the M1 supercar and is truly glorious. Roche's other engine designs include gems such as the 1500-horsepower Brabham-BMW F1 engine, and the V12 6-liter masterpiece in the original McLaren F1. Roche was one of the century's great engine designers and can be compared to such luminaries as Vittorio Jano (Ferrari, Fiat, Alfa Romeo) and Hans Mezger (Porsche).

The M6 engine was well developed and strengthened where needed. Reportedly, bombproof – it was well matched to a toughened Getrag close-ratio five-speed and trick LSD, capable of locking up to 25%. A revised braking system with four-pot callipers, a sports Bilstein dampers, and uprated roll bars rounded



*PRODUCTION OF THE M6 CEASED IN 1989;
AND IT WASN'T UNTIL 16 YEARS LATER,
IN 2005, THAT THE M6 BADGE
WAS RESURRECTED.*

out the performance makeover. The battery was relocated to the rear for better weight distribution. Side skirts, a rear spoiler, a front lip spoiler, wider 15-inch BBS wheels, wheel-arch extensions, and a central free-flowing exhaust were all added: giving the M6 a stylish and sporty appearance. The body styling of the 6 Series coupe was led by BMW's chief designer at the time, Paul Bracq. One owner's perspective on the design came from Martin: "My favourite details are the obvious shark nose, the Hofmeister kink, and all the fine body details." Martin explained that the true mastery of Paul Bracq's design is in its coherence: it looks stunning from every angle, and has perfect proportions. "That's very rare in the automotive world; and, especially, rare with bold and passive-aggressive baselines – also it's one of the few classic cars which look better with a factory spoiler."

In a previous life, Bracq was responsible for the design of some very beautiful and influential Mercedes-Benzes; including the "Pagoda" 230/250/280 SL, and the magnificent SE Coupes of the 1960s and early 1970s. The 'Hofmeister kink' design – adopted by Bracq for the 6 Series – at the base of the rear pillars, is a throwback to the early 2000CS models originally designed by William Hofmeister. Internally, an angled gauge pod and front fascia was a design which developed the concept of the driver-angled dashboard. The driver's position is rewarding with a unique M steering wheel, gear lever, pedals, and electrically-adjustable sports seats: all this adds up to ergonomic perfection. It's clearly a high-end, prestigious vehicle with similar pricing to a Ferrari – while employing a softer suspension setup for grand touring.

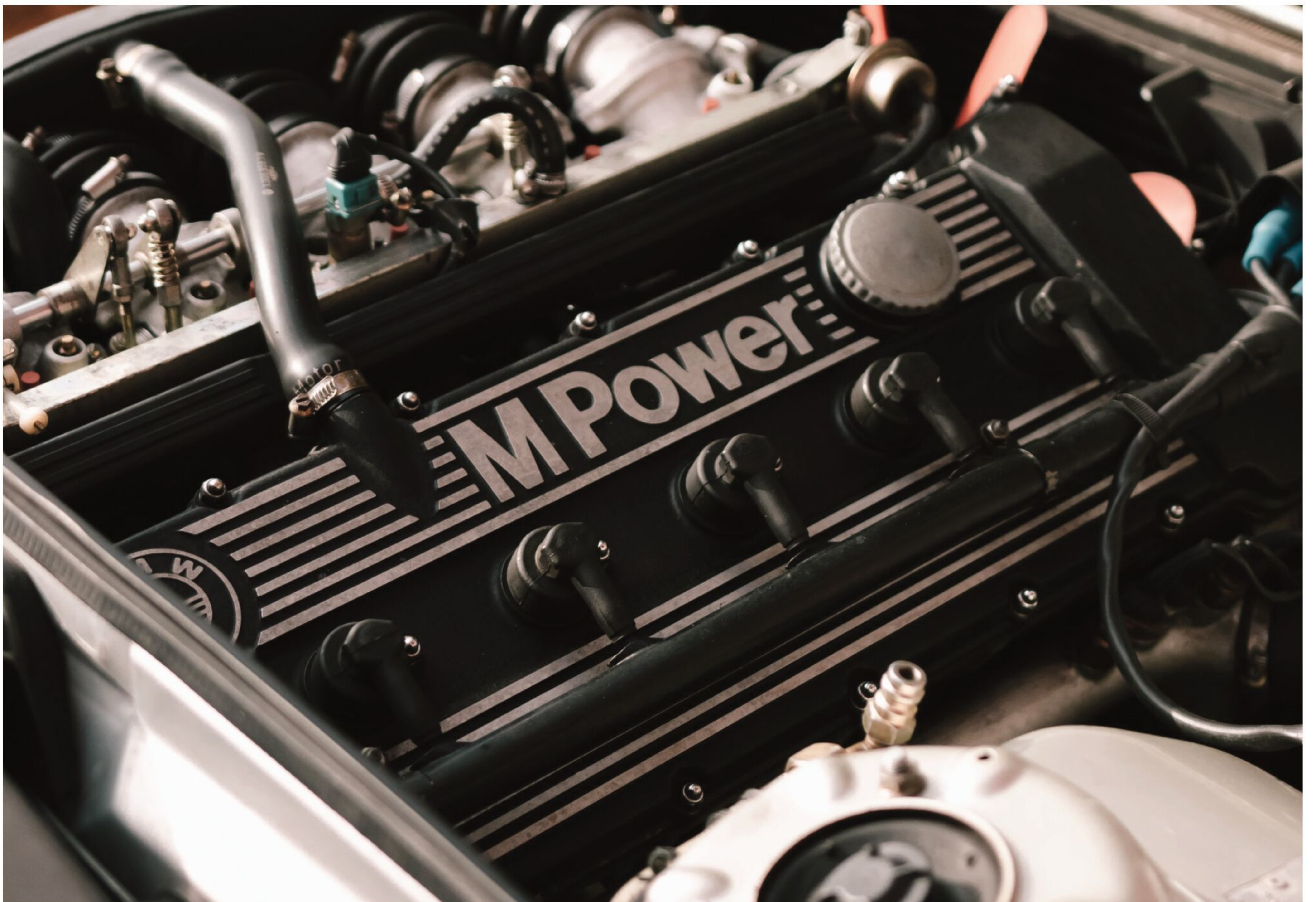
Model variations over the M6's lifetime were purely cosmetic iterations. The "Shadowline" model sported blacked-out chrome trim on the full exterior. While a later "Highline" model with a minor facelift came in 1987: featuring luxurious Nappa leather on most interior surfaces. In total, 5,855 M6s were produced: 1,677 of which went to North America, and the majority sold in



Europe. Right-hand-drive models are rare with only 524 being produced for the Japanese, English, and Australian markets – and, no doubt, a much smaller number survive. Production of the M6 ceased in 1989; and it wasn't until 16 years later, in 2005, that the M6 badge was resurrected.

The non-M version 635CSi was used for motorsport; and, prominently, run by well-marketed teams – such as John Player Special (JPS) and Schnitzer. Particularly successful in endurance events such as the 24 Hours of Spa, Nürburgring 24-Hour, and the James Hardie Bathurst races. Although these race cars were not initially based on the M Division models, the factory M6 engine was almost universally adopted in 1983 and transplanted into them. The 24-valve head and six throttle-body design flowed significantly more air; and, in the race trim, maximum power approached 400 brake horsepower. A highlight for the JPS BMW team was the 1985 Australian Endurance Championship with its M-equipped 635CSi – driven by Jim Richards – dominating the series. It was to be a one-two victory for the JPS team: the second of the all-black JPS 635CSi cars was driven by team member Tony Longhurst – beating Peter Brock, Dick Johnson, and Colin Bond to the podium. Both these winning cars benefited from the incredible M6 engine, pleasuring the spectators as they sailed by at well over 8000rpm and just under 190 miles per hour.

Driving the 1980s M6 today is delightful with its light, but precise, shift; jewel-like engine which makes sophisticated, yet aggressive, noises; nicely-damped suspension; precise turn-in; and comfortable ride. The M6 cruises effortlessly and would be at home on the autobahn: technically capable of speeds above its restricted 155 miles per hour. The exhaust has a sensuous note when easily cruising up to about 3500rpm – after which, the car steps up a level in exhaust noise and performance: adding a harder and sportier tone when it reaches maximum power at redline.



THE TRUE MASTERY OF PAUL BRACQ'S DESIGN IS IN ITS COHERENCE: IT LOOKS STUNNING FROM EVERY ANGLE, AND HAS PERFECT PROPORTIONS.

Martin's example of the M6 is in stunning condition. "To be honest, I never expected to find one in better condition than average." Many of us know, after trolling through webpage after webpage that pristine examples like this have become extremely rare. Martin said: "When I found it, I knew I had to be quick. I saw it, I heard it, I bought it!" Visibility is truly panoramic, with the car's upright seating and large glasshouse. It is a practical machine, too – with rear seats suitable for children or even adults for short distances, and a large boot. To drive this 30-year-old car, you really do wonder about automotive progress. Clearly, new vehicles are faster and safer, and have all the connectivity gadgets and integrated apps you could imagine. However, compared with a modern 6 Series, the E24 has more room, infinitely better visibility, more storage space, far better ride, looks better, sounds better, and when you open the bonnet, you see a gorgeous engine which has a genuine motorsport heritage.

Martin said: "BMW had always been one of the more attractive automakers to me when growing up. They're still primarily drivers' cars; and, unlike other brands today, one can still trace their DNA of a new M sports car back to the early 1980s classics, like my M6." Present-day M-cars, though faster, are almost universally sporting turbochargers. Extracting more power is easily performed with increased boost and some software tweaks. Conversely, you cannot help admiring the much more complex methods employed by past M Division engineers to extract the kind of power they did from the M6 without detracting from its drivability. There is literally nothing like the instant response and aural stimulation you get when encouraging an M6's straight six to 7000rpm and beyond – and sadly, due to ever-tightening emission standards, may never be again.

AUTOMOTIVE FORM – AND
FUNCTION – ARE IMPORTANT
TO **MIKE SIMCOE**, THIS LEAN
LAID-BACK AUSTRALIAN,
WHO HAS LONG HAD A THING
FOR CLASSIC ITALIANS.
THE MAN ONCE HAD HIS
HEART SET ON BECOMING
AN ARCHITECT; INSTEAD,
BECAME GENERAL MOTOR'S
VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL
DESIGN



Simcoe has had his hand in modern benchmarks from Buick's Avenir concept to the Australian Monaro Coupe to the C8 Corvette. "I had no intention of getting to where I am," Mike said from his home, a 25-minute freeway ride from GM's sprawling Warren Technical Center in Detroit, and 10,000 miles from a childhood in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Australia.

Mike said that his father was a bit of a car snob. While he had once owned a Holden, his dad turned to a Rover 2000; then, the 3.5 Rover Coupe. "Weirdly enough, he went back to Holden after that because I was working at Holden and he could get a discount ... When he had the Rovers, I guess, is when I worked out there was something besides Holdens and Fords on the road. I was about 15 or 16, I think, when I bought an older Rover P3: a 75. That's when I learned to play with cars, I'd been working with the old man, and put it back together myself."

Someone talked a young Mike out of Architecture, and he liked the idea of Industrial Design – Product Design. Failing junior year of High School, he attended a Technical College to finish his schooling in a Creative Arts course – where lecturer Bruce Edwards inspired Mike and gave him confidence in his abilities. With a High School certificate now in hand,

Mike headed to the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT).

"There was no Automotive Design back then – in fact, most of the Product Design guys that I was with, just like some of the Product Designers today, thought that Car Designers were self-indulgent. They were teaching you how to think about design; think about the function of things; and, again me not knowing about automotive at the time, it seemed automotive guys were just about styling."

Though, Mike retained an interest in motor cars, and his final RMIT project was a fresh interior for a face-lift of the Purvis Eureka: an Australian kit-car based on the British Nova.

"So there was always an interest in the background in cars, but I didn't have any preconception that I could become an Automotive Designer. I liked cars and could always draw – but I never put the two together."

Instead, the College Graduate headed toward designing plastics for a local company ... got bored and headed to England for three years – working as a delivery lad on pushbikes. Then, driving a truck in London; before landing a job with Ogle Design, whose transport creations would include the Reliant Scimitar, the three-wheeled Bond Bug, and Raleigh Chopper bicycle. Mike worked in Product Design on projects such as interiors for Westland Helicopters and some exterior styling of the aircraft







because the Somerset firm was trying to move from military to commercial aviation.

After tripping around Europe in a Citroën Dyane, Mike moved back to Australia –thinking it would be easier, and faster, to make money there before heading back to Europe. He was tipped off about an Interior Design job at GM's subsidiary Holden, where Designer Phil Zmood was building up the outfit.

Mike said: "So I got a job as an Interior Designer. And that's where it all started, and I've been at GM since 1983 – so 37, 38 years. I started working at Holden Design, but I wasn't going to stay with interiors for too long – I set my sights on exteriors." It was an evolutionary time with studios moving from manual measurements – templates and touch-probe digitizers – to 3D scans and sketches. But it was two clay-model sculptors who helped educate the young Designer. "I didn't know anything about surface – thought I was pretty smart, but very quickly at the hands of these two sculptors worked out I knew nothing. And I stuck with them. Basically, they taught me surface and line quality. I understood proportion, understood design in general, but reading a surface, reading a reflection and highlights is a very different game: you don't learn that in Product Design."

Some of young Mike's early

influences came from car magazines and annual car shows: especially, when cars from Italian Design Studios arrived Down Under. He guessed that, in those days, he was more turned on by European designs than North American – just because there was more European stuff sitting in Australia. He loved the sense of proportion from the Italians; simple forms without too much embellishment in the way of graphics and such. Carrozzeria Touring and Carlo Felice Bianchi Anderloni – among the Designers and Studios Mike admired. A hero car, in design terms, was Alfa Romeo's 105 coupe. "That was something I lusted after. And I bought a cheap one and, like anyone who's bought a cheap Alfa, it was a mess and died. It went like stink for a short time and that was about it."

But the Holden Designer still liked older cars and classics and bought a Lancia Fulvia 1.3 HF – again in pieces. "I liked that 1950s-1960s period: the Italians, in particular; some of the English, but mostly the Italians because it was beautiful simple form. And the style was amazing stuff."

Mike bought a fifth series Lancia Aurelia B20 GT – his favorite car – in 2000. That is the car the Woodburn kid recognized; that is the car which attracts attention in Detroit – in particular, women hanging out of cars to smile and tell Mike it is a

beautiful car. Also, he has a Fulvia 1.6 HF, an Aston Martin DB4, an Elfin Streamliner (styled by Mike and Holden Design), and a 1961 Lotus Elite – a Super 95, being built up in England. There is a clutch of six motorcycles from a 1928 Douglas to a 1978 Ducati 900SSS. For Mike, it is about mechanicals as well as design.

“I’m allowed to like Lancia now because the brand doesn’t exist anymore, realistically. As a company, they were on the edge of Engineering all the time. The B20, apart from being beautiful, was the first V6. It’s where the term GT came from, it had a transaxle, and it was a race and rally car, as well. They did some amazing things with them. If I could have a collection of cars, I’d buy a lot of Lancias – I’d like a Stratos, but I’m not good enough to drive one properly. None of my cars are concours cars: they’re pretty, but not concours. I spend more time making sure that what’s underneath works properly than being highly-polished. They’re in decent nick.”

Understanding what is beneath a car’s body has been one of Mike’s noted strengths as a Designer. Among major career highlights, Mike nominates the Holden VE Commodore sedan: the first ground-up platform architecture created in Australia and pushed by design. Another was work on Vern Schuppan’s 962CR supercar of the early 1990s –based around

the Porsche 962 Le Mans car. Then, Detroit-based, Mike would fly to England on a Thursday night, work on the car, and then an overnight flight on Sunday to get back to his desk on Monday morning.

“Here, in the States, it’s always ‘the next one’s going to be the best one’. The recent stuff, or the stuff you’re about to see from Cadillac, you’ll find that’s pretty impressive. There’s not much coming out of GM these days you can’t be proud of. That’s me talking, not GM.”

Mike does not believe there is a lack of distinction among modern cars and modern brands with much more focus in the past ten years on brand differentiation. Even the ubiquitous SUV, from being one shape and one proportion, is now looking leaner – not as tall – and with more performance character in the style. “As people looked for attractive sedans in the past, they’re now looking for attractive SUVs; looking for a vehicle which looks like what it’s meant to do – whether it’s something that crawls up walls like a Hummer or something that looks like it should go fast like a C8. And, now, pretty much anything goes. No-one’s styling for bland deliberately, anymore: It’s the other way around, there’s some crazy stuff happening which doesn’t impress me too much for someone who likes proportion and fairly-simple forms. Some of the active line-based designs, all about



the creases and folds, that doesn't do anything for me.”

He noted that, in the past, distance and lack of real-time coverage kept styles different from continent to continent. “Now it's all the same because, whether you're in an emerging market or in a mature market, when something new exists anywhere in the world you can see it in seconds. And why – just because you don't have as much cash, or you're in an emerging market, why would your aspiration for something that looks good and makes you feel good, why would it be any different? People want features, want style. It's aspiration that makes you look for something new and different all the time; it's aspiration that drives people in their desire to buy their first vehicle, let alone through their life. Good is good everywhere now.” Electric vehicles, he said, will not become science-project looking all of a sudden, but interiors will be cleaned out. And, as battery technology changes, there will be more freedom packaging. GM Designers still use physical models to best understand how a new design will look in the real world – in different lighting and different environments.

“Ultimately, you're creating something which gives customers a visceral, emotional experience – and they react to it. You've got to fall in love with something you're

spending that much cash on and living with for so long. It's still one of those things that even people who say they're not interested in vehicles – say they buy for function alone – they're still buying at an emotional level, still selecting at an emotional level, but some of them will never admit that. It's quite strong and always will be.

“Style is now the point-of-difference more than anything else. Again, you're saying something about yourself. That's not going to change as we move forward, as EV becomes more and more ubiquitous. It's not going to change: You'll still want your neighbor to know you've either made it, or you haven't, or you've got good taste based on what you're driving.”





MARELLA ZAGATO

✦ WORDS **PAUL MATHERS** ✦ PHOTOGRAPHY **MARCO ANNUNZIATA & DAVIDE DE MARTIS**

To borrow from Churchill, Marella Rivolta is “a riddle, wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma”. For the Art Director of major car-styling company Zagato and the third generation of one of Italy’s most prominent automotive families, her online footprint is almost non-existent. Even her Instagram account, that she admittedly only started a few weeks ago, is remarkably spartan in terms of clues to who she is and what drives her.

When I met her, she was seated at the far end of her boardroom table – Godfather-like; dressed simply in denim, but in that elegantly Italian way; her hand wrapped around a vaping pod to which she periodically

returned to during our conversation. She could be the new Michael Corleone for the influence she wields as the righthand of Zagato’s CEO Andrea Zagato; and as the woman behind the rebirth ISO Rivolta, but pleasantly that veneer quickly melted away as I got to know the passionate Designer and self-confessed petrolhead with a proud legacy and some pretty big shoes to fill.

2021 sees the automotive industry at an interesting point in its history. Among a surging tide of electrification, we have seen major manufacturers – like Bentley, Jaguar, and Aston Martin – return to their back catalog to create their heritage and continuation series. Ironically, Jaguar has been so protective of its historic designs



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I WANTED TO HONOR MY GRANDFATHER. SO I ALWAYS HAD IN MY MIND, IF TODAY MY GRANDFATHER WOULD BE HERE, HOW WOULD HE DO THE A3.



GOOD DESIGN [MUST HAVE AN] AESTHETIC, BUT IT HAS TO BE USEFUL. IT HAS TO HAVE FUNCTION

that it has even taken legal action against the cottage-recreation industry which has kept its legacy alive all these years. On the other hand, every few months we witness super and hypercar manufacturers emerging into the market – making brands like Pagani and Koenigsegg old news. Finally, there are the resurgent brands – Hispano Suiza, Delage, et al – which, after decades of hiatus, have leveraged their halcyon days to rebirth a new era of prestige motoring.

According to Marella, the resurgence “is happening because premium and luxury car manufacturers – after being purchased by major groups – have been following the approach of the mass market in terms of scale economies and planned obsolescence. They have opened up to the global market with its distribution network which, as a result, has turned their models into consumables; at the

same time, these brands have been leaving behind the super-niche of car collectors.”

Three years ago, Marella revived the ISO Rivolta brand and, in the process, discovered a brand-new customer base. She explained that it started with “the first Vision GT – a virtual prototype made for the Gran Turismo video game with the idea of involving the 150 million Sony Playstation players.” Of course, this had a wild media coverage, that supported in the ISO Rivolta’s comeback – with millennials and Generation Zs. “A step we called the ‘Re-Loading of the ISO brand’.”

Then, it was time to wake the ISO collectors from their hibernation with a new ISO Rivolta model inspired by the car which took victory, in its class, at the 1964 and 1965 24 Hours of Le Mans. “This second step was called the ‘Re-Awaking of the ISO World’.”







Today, the “Re-Awake of ISO collectors is a *fait accompli*”.

Cars course through her veins. Leading the stead in her family was her grandfather, Renzo Rivolta. Who passed the baton to Piero: his son. Who passed the baton to Marella: his daughter. So she has all the knowledge; plus, she has the passion. “Well, I think the two things go hand-in-hand for me. Because many of the things I do in my life are dictated by my heart ... things that I like, love, or really believe in.”

Unfortunately, she never met her grandfather, who died a few years before she was born. But

Marella said: “One of the things they keep on telling me, today even more: ‘You’re just like your grandfather’. So what I did inherit from him is probably the passion for everything that moves – that has an engine.”

Her grandfather was the epitome of Italian entrepreneurialism, but Marella Rivolta Zagato mostly grew up in the United States and considers herself “more American than Italian”. However, having a family farm in Tuscany meant she got the driving bug early: and there she would learn her skills on Land Rovers (she’s quite the fan of American Jeeps),



motorcycles, and even tractors. Everything else, came as a consequence of those formative years.

A Mille Miglia veteran, she prefers road racing to the track – but is still fiercely competitive. She believes road racing does not rely on being a little too crazy and feels a little more grounded in reality. Here she can go at her own pace. And said that if you listen to the car, you can push it to its limits, and it will finish the race running perfectly.

Marella said: “I was 16 when I got my license, [and] I was driving a Pontiac Station Wagon

which was the car of the house. I said to my father, ‘I want my own car now I have a license’ ... and I said I wanted the Nissan 300 ZX.”

But in those days, she had to wait. At that time, Japanese cars were not produced in US: they were all shipped from Japan, so she had to wait two and a half months! Marella said: “A week before I was supposed to pick it up, the dealer called me and said, ‘Ms Rivolta we have a problem. The container fell and the car was destroyed.’ So I had to wait another two weeks.” And, when it finally arrived, she was in love.



Being the Head of Design, she cites German Industrial Designer and Academic Dieter Rams as a key influence. His ten principals for good design adorn the walls of the Zagato design-team studios and form the basis of the Carrozzeria's motto: "essential beauty".

Marella said: "Good design [must have an] aesthetic, but it has to be useful. It has to have function. Having been a Carrozzeria for more than 20 years, you can always find an equilibrium; but the form is most important to me. Cars for me are important because they bring out emotion. The first emotion [comes

from its] aesthetic. The second emotion is when you drive it. Which is also a big emotion. But God, to sit in a car that is really ugly and try it – for me it is very hard. Sometimes it is an extension of our ego, so it has to be beautiful!" Marella laughed in a way that is both self-effacing and more than a little confessional. She has power and influence, but she also knows who she is, and therein lies her charm. She may have married into the Zagato dynasty, but she insists that is not how it began. Her investment in the company came more than a year before any romantic attachment to its CEO



Andrea Zagato. But 20 years of marriage has seen the couple forge a powerful and successful relationship – both personally and professionally – her focused, structured “American” approach playing counterpoint to his “very Italian” style. A Marketing and Economics Major, rather than a Designer, it was Andrea who pushed her to take up the mantle of Art Director at Zagato – having demonstrated creative flair designing the interiors of their homes and showing an innate understanding of fashion. Still without the proper credentials, it was not plain sailing being the boss, and she clashed heavily with her

Chief Designer Nori Harada –the man behind Aston Martin’s Vanquish Roadster Zagato. Marella said: “The GTZ was a very hard project for me because when I decided to do this tribute ... I wanted to honor my grandfather. So I always had in my mind, if today my grandfather would be here, how would he do the A3 ... and would he be proud of me? For 3 months, I kept on saying, ‘Nori, no. This is not the right way. This is not the right way’. Until we had a huge fight. We were coming back from London from a meeting with Aston Martin, and I remember at the airport I said, ‘OK Nori, at this point I







IT IS CLEARLY NOT A RETROSPECTIVE. IT IS MORE OF AN EVOLUTION. IT ACKNOWLEDGES THE PAST AND LOOKS FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE.

will do it with another Designer’. And three days later, he picked up the emails, the briefing, everything, and came back with a sideview and I said ‘OK, we are in the right direction’. Nori did a wonderful job.” The GTZ ended up being 50% Marella and 50% Nori.

The GTZ has the shadow paint strokes of some great Designers: like Bizzarrini, Gandini, Giugiaro. Marella agreed: “Yes, of course. Gandini a little bit less, he was more in tune with the design language of my father. Maybe because of all the years I spent interpreting the design of Zagato, I am more minimal – less design as possible. I like continuous lines – uninterrupted lines – because I believe the most important thing for the GTZ was the belt line, the sideline. We call it ‘linear de cintura’.”

Marella drives Ferraris, Aston Martins, and

said that even the Corvette is a fantastic car. “If you look at the GTZ from the exterior, the only thing you can tell that makes it an American car is the long hood. The front is long, but besides that, you can’t tell me it looks like a Corvette.”

The design cues from the original A3 are obvious. They start with that sublime profile and are reflected in every detail from the bonnet to the kamm tail. But it is clearly not a retrospective. It is more of an evolution. It acknowledges the past and looks forward into the future: that is exactly what Marella set out to achieve. Marella said: “The first is a tribute to the past. I hope that the next one – which I hope there will be – will be the new ISO Rivolta. I mean, it will have the inspiration, but it will be a new one. What I can tell you is that I’m already thinking about it.” – Renzo would be proud.

WORDS COLIN FABRI IMAGES NATHAN DUFF & BRAD MULLER

LANCIA
DELTA
HF
INTEGRALE

VERDE
YORKE



Brad's first Lancia love was the Beta Coupe; however, he had always longed for the Montecarlo. Pursuing this dream, he was fortunate enough to participate in the Lancia Montecarlo Consortium's Rally Torino in 2016 – that was made possible through his long-time involvement with the Lancia Club of Queensland (in Australia). It was a memorable experience traveling in convoy with 20+ Montecarlo's making the 1500-mile journey to Turin and back. But his modern hire car was a little conspicuous among Pininfarina's 40-year-old mid-engine creations; and, while it made for a trouble-free journey, it did temper the overall experience.

So, when – in early 2018 – the consortium announced Expressions of Interest to repeat the Torino Rally in 2019, he did not hesitate – and with it, a plan was hatched. The timing would

potentially line up with the Australian government reform around the importation of vehicles 25 years and older. Now, Brad had 18 months to find a classic Lancia and plan the trip of a lifetime. The opportunity of importing a dreamcar back after the trip was too enticing – and if this was successful – there was only one Lancia on the agenda: the Delta HF Integrale Evoluzione.

The HF Integrale was homologated for Group A rallying and had a widened track and wheel combination – as well as a big brake package and longer-suspension travel – dramatically upgrading its handling and performance. The Integrale was a hugely-successful rally car in its prime: 46 World Rally Championship wins, as well as winning the Constructors Championship every year from 1987 to 1992 – a record 6 consecutive titles to make it the most successful rally car in history.

So, with the model defined, and undeterred from







being across the other side of the globe, Brad set about the search. If the task at hand was not difficult enough – he decided that, if pursuing this once-in-a-lifetime goal, he may as well go for the Holy Grail and seek out a limited-edition version which he had been attracted to since its launch. The “Verde York”: a limited run of 580, all in a British racing green and biscuit leather. Also known as the “World Rally Champion” version, it was released in parallel with the “Martini 5” limited edition to celebrate Lancia’s fifth World Rally Title.

Verde in Italian translates to “green”: and the specification for the color of all Verde York specials was York Green 344. The full title of this special version is “Lancia Delta HF Integrale Verde York’ – a mouthful in any language.

The Verde York model is an advanced evolution of the original theme. These models (and its evolution from turbo-charged front-wheel-drive models from 1983 through 4WD models, 8v and 16v ‘Evo’ turbos of the early 1990s) all lead to the “Verde York” 1992 model which you see here. Essentially, the Verde York was a special version of the Evo model: with a limited-build number, top specification, and – of course – all green. At this time, Lancia had officially retired from rallying at the end of a victorious 1991 season: leaving the privateer “Jolly Club” to campaign the 92nd season for the sixth world title.

After months of searching, Brad found what appeared to be a good candidate: a Verde York

model, low mileage, and having been a part of the current owner’s 15-year collection. Now, the difficult bit: inquiring and ascertaining details – emails and web-based inquires remained unanswered ... and Brad began to suspect that the car may not exist.

So the net was cast again: and another vehicle was located with a dealer in Belgium. Yet he discovered that it was sold ... but they had just taken possession of another Evo, in what was probably his favorite color: an unusual original color “Blu Madras”. They corresponded, all seemed reasonable, and made so easy – but it was not a Verde.

One last inquiry about the original Verde led to a phonecall from Germany around midnight. They spoke about the car and Brad’s planned trip – to justify why someone from the opposite side of the world would be inquiring about the car. Over the next eight to ten weeks, they corresponded further on details about the car and all

things Delta, and more about the planned trip and logistics. Brad become comfortable about the car and the seller, but really wanted to have someone inspect it on his behalf.

He reached out to Speedshop.ch: a Lancia Delta tuning business. Sandro knew of the owner, and he offered to undertake an inspection. With a successful inspection completed: a deal was agreed on for the Verde York edition number 200; and with Alex, the owner, confirming he was prepared to let the car go. Alex liked the story of Brad’s trip and the idea that his baby of the past

*ESSENTIALLY,
THE VERDE YORK
WAS A SPECIAL
VERSION OF THE
EVO MODEL*



15 years would relocate to the opposite side of the world; and in the hands of another custodian – not a collector.

With the vehicle and startingpoint sorted, it was time to plan the rest of the trip. Fortunately, the Lancia Club Swiss was holding their Autumn rally weekend and he was able to join them. So, from Stuttgart, he ventured west to take in the Black Forrest High road and give himself an opportunity to get familiar with the Verde, before hitting the Autobahn (essential if traveling in Germany), before crossing the border into Switzerland.

Brad said: “The next morning, my journey would head east across a number of famous Swiss passes before meeting up with the Lancia Club Swiss for their Autumn Weekend. First on the list of passes for the day was the Klassen. It’s made up of 100+ narrow serpentine curves and hairpins on a variety of surfaces from cobble stones at the start transferring to smooth (if narrow) tarmac as one ascends – forming the gateway to the high alpine routes. This was the first real taste of the Delta’s in-gear acceleration.”

Being the first weekend of Autumn, Brad was not expecting snow – but early reports noted that the Gottard pass was closed due to heavy snowfalls a day earlier. Brad said: “The inner child [in me] was getting excited as we approached the Gottard Pass and the reality of snow fall was apparent – what Queenslander doesn’t get excited at the

thought of snow.”

They rested when they reached the 1.25-mile summit, before retracing the road on toward the Furka Pass. Winding up the one-and-a-half-mile summit of Furka pass (made famous by the car chase in James Bond’s Goldfinger), the weather closed in with rain giving way to sleet; then, snow. Brad said: “The Delta handled the conditions beautifully, and the AWD ensured sure footedness. As much as I was enjoying the experience, I harbored a little concern for the car and what Alex would think – knowing it wouldn’t have been subjected to these types of conditions

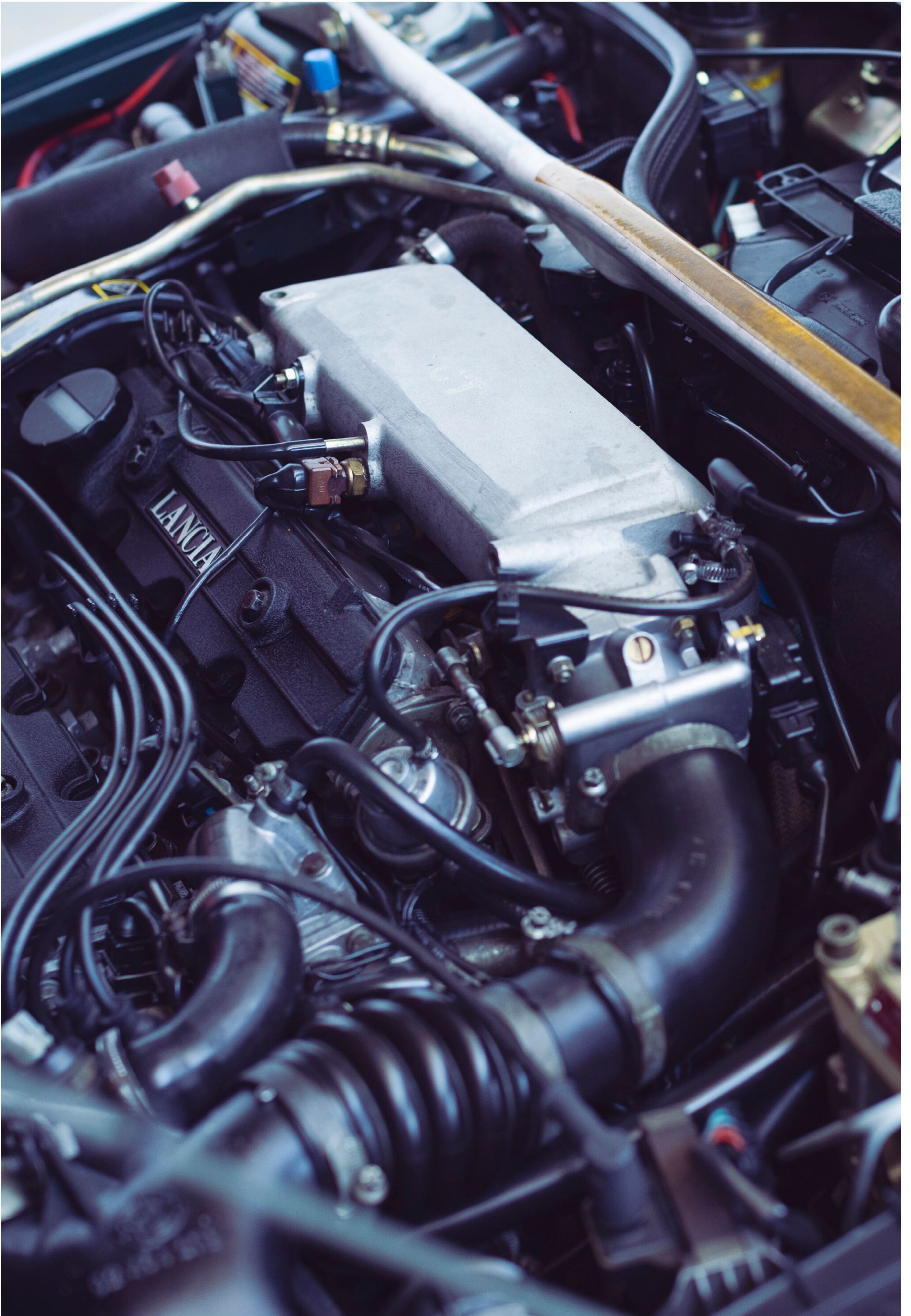
at any point in the past 15 years of its life.”

The final pass for the day was the Grimsel: one of the highest paved roads in Europe which takes in breathtaking scenery and turquoise lakes of the hydroelectric plant – that is, if you can see it. Once again, the weather closed in at the peak, reducing visibility to only a few feet,

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“with a wrong turn bringing me out of the clouds and onto some glorious sweeping bends and long straights. It was 30 minutes of driving delight before I realised my error –as my overnight accommodation was getting further away on Google Maps and not closer. Assessing my options and with light fading, the quickest route was to retrace my steps – what a shame – but this time, like a ‘rally special stage’, to meet the Lancia Club Swiss for that evening’s dinner.”

Dinner discussions for the next day centered







around the muchly-anticipated, but also long, drive to the world's most famous driving road: the Stelvio Pass/Passo dello Stelvio/Stilfser Joch. Brad said: "The selected route took me through St Moritz, the Bernina Pass, and through the most scenic valley in all of Switzerland: Val Mustair. This route leads you to the Stelvio from the Swiss side and the much-underrated Umbrail Pass – the highest paved road in Switzerland at 1.5 miles."

The ascent is eight miles; with an average grade of 8.5 percent, increasing to a maximum of 14 percent. The road starts out with a steep section containing 30+ hairpins; then, opens up to long straights and sweeping bends in the rocky landscape well above the treeline, before linking up with the Stelvio.

Just Brad, the Verde, some motorcyclists, hot hatches, and the obligatory Porsche. The descent illustrated the capability of the Delta's handling and braking. While the ascent seemed to be perfectly suited to the Delta's gearing – with first-gear acceleration out of the hairpins, into second before briefly into third; then, dropping back down the cogs for the next hairpin. Brad said: "Stringing together corner after corner, one

gets into a real rhythm, that must result in a turn of speed as we overtook a number of cars, and even a motorcycle, as we made our way back to the summit."

Parked up at the summit, they met a number of fellow motorists who were intrigued by an older car on the pass, that was sporting a German registration and being steered by an Australian. With the Stelvio checked off the list, they back tracked along the Umbrail Pass. With a slight detour – added the Julier Pass (1.5 miles) to the list – before returning to Domaso; and tomorrow's penultimate day, with the Montecarlo Consortium returning to Torino for something special – access to Lingotto's banked roof top track.

Brad's tour would last only a fortnight and would cover approximately 3000 miles over some of the best roads in Europe, in a 25-year-old car which he had not been seen in-the-metal until the day he picked it up. His time in Europe will be forever memorable, made extra special with the opportunity to have his Verde York now safely at home with him in Australia to enjoy – and as a permanent reminder of his ultimate trip.

St Benard Pass

Val Mustair

Simplon Pass in Convoy

Umbrail Pass

Gottard Pass

Fukar Pass

Simplon Pass

Swiss Lancia Club

Dallara

Stelvio Pass

Gottard Pass

Val Mustair

Val-d'Isere

EM Rogers Transport

Bernina Pass







FANTASY RACERS

✦ WORDS **NATHAN DUFF**

✦ PHOTOGRAPHY **FEDERICO CIUFFOLINI**

Federico Ciuffolini loves cars, light, and polygons. Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI) has been a passion for Federico for more than half of his life now. His interest was piqued at 15; and, even though he went on to study computer science and coding, his passion was always CGI. For the last seven years, Federico has worked as a 3D artist – a Pipeline Technical Director to be exact: Essentially, building a scene up to the point where it is ready to render.

Federico said: “Working for a UK-based automotive company producing on-line configurators was a primer for me. I was always passionate about cars, but my work isn’t always specifically in the automotive industry.”

Federico started toying with the idea of producing a personal series of work after experimenting with a 3D model of the Stratos Zero.

“The Stratos Zero really kick started the whole project – I had long been an admirer of the classic design, but found immense pleasure in messing with it.



There was a huge spike in cyber-punk works at the time: and that was the inspiration – and, inevitably, distilled the basis for the ‘What if?’ project.”

Federico enjoys the creative freedom which personal work, like this, affords him. “You can let your imagination go wild – engage in the process and have ‘freedom of expression’. You take your own creative liberties, too; as it becomes frustrating when you try and replicate every detail precisely – creative freedom is what makes a project like this fun!”

Queue lockdown and the “Fantasy Racer” project gets the attention it deserves. Federico was still working full-time from home, but weekends were all about racing ... well, sort of.

The Lucifero was the first in the series: taking its inspiration from the 1924 Fiat Eldridge Mefistofele. Federico indulges in a fanciful narrative to give his creations a more solid basis-in-reality. The built-up dust and slightly deflated tires give the images a distinct kick of reality which CGI can sometimes lack – due to the exacting, almost clinical, nature of the process.

Snapping Turtle, the reimagination of the D-type was heavily influenced by the









T50 design of Gordon Murray. “There is always a green light in my process – I need to get the model to a point where I think: ‘Yes, this will work!’.” Then, Federico will start collecting references to give his renders authenticity. “The ‘orange Miura barn find’ images were a big part of the inspiration – I wanted a really thick layer of dust on it. Lighting was aimed to be a little more dramatic and moody.” The detail of the tires being a little deflated is genius!

The race-ready Lamborghini Miura – the latest in the series – was based on a model Federico’s Co-Worker developed: meaning that most of the hard work was done, and Federico could concentrate on developing some of the more subtle elements.

Inspiration was drawn from 1970s racing – stripes, checkers, alcohol sponsors. (The pallet came from a period advertisement for Cynar.) Adding new spoilers, wheels, and livery, the Miura began to morph into a very convincing representation of what a Miura would like if it were campaigned in the 70s.

You can see the full range of Federico’s incredible work at...

www.behance.net/ciuffolini







HOWMET TX35

★ WORDS IAIN CURRY ★ IMAGES IAN WOOD

Engine noise: that is what gets you “in the feels” when you watch any form of motorsport at trackside. The sound does not just hit your eardrums. It goes right through you, buzzing your insides and firing off happy endorphins. Certain engine howls mean an involuntary dropping of the jaw or smile across the dial. Watch a kid when they hear a proper racing car fly past for the first time: It is an epiphany moment – it stays with you.

Want to know why historic motorsport has surged in popularity? They really do not sound like they used to. Go to Le Mans Classic, Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion, Goodwood Revival, or any of such ilk and prepare to be “shaken and stirred”. A Porsche 917’s flat-12. The Tipo 44 V12 from a 1995 Ferrari F1 car. The screaming rotary engine in Mazda’s 1991 Le-Mans-winning 787B. Or, of course, anything that terrorized the Group B era of rallying.

Soak up the sounds of any of the above, and modern equivalents just do not cut it. F1’s current 1.6-liter V6 turbo hybrid’s note is bemoaned even by drivers – let alone fans. The Le Mans 24 Hours just was not the same while Audi’s diesel engine dominated – strapping hybrid power on did nothing to boost its sexiness.

So let us head back to a period of peak engine noise: 1968. On the World Sports Car Championship scene that year you had rich acoustic satisfaction. If I mention the Ford GT40, Porsche 908, Alfa Romeo T33/2, and Chevrolet Corvette you would

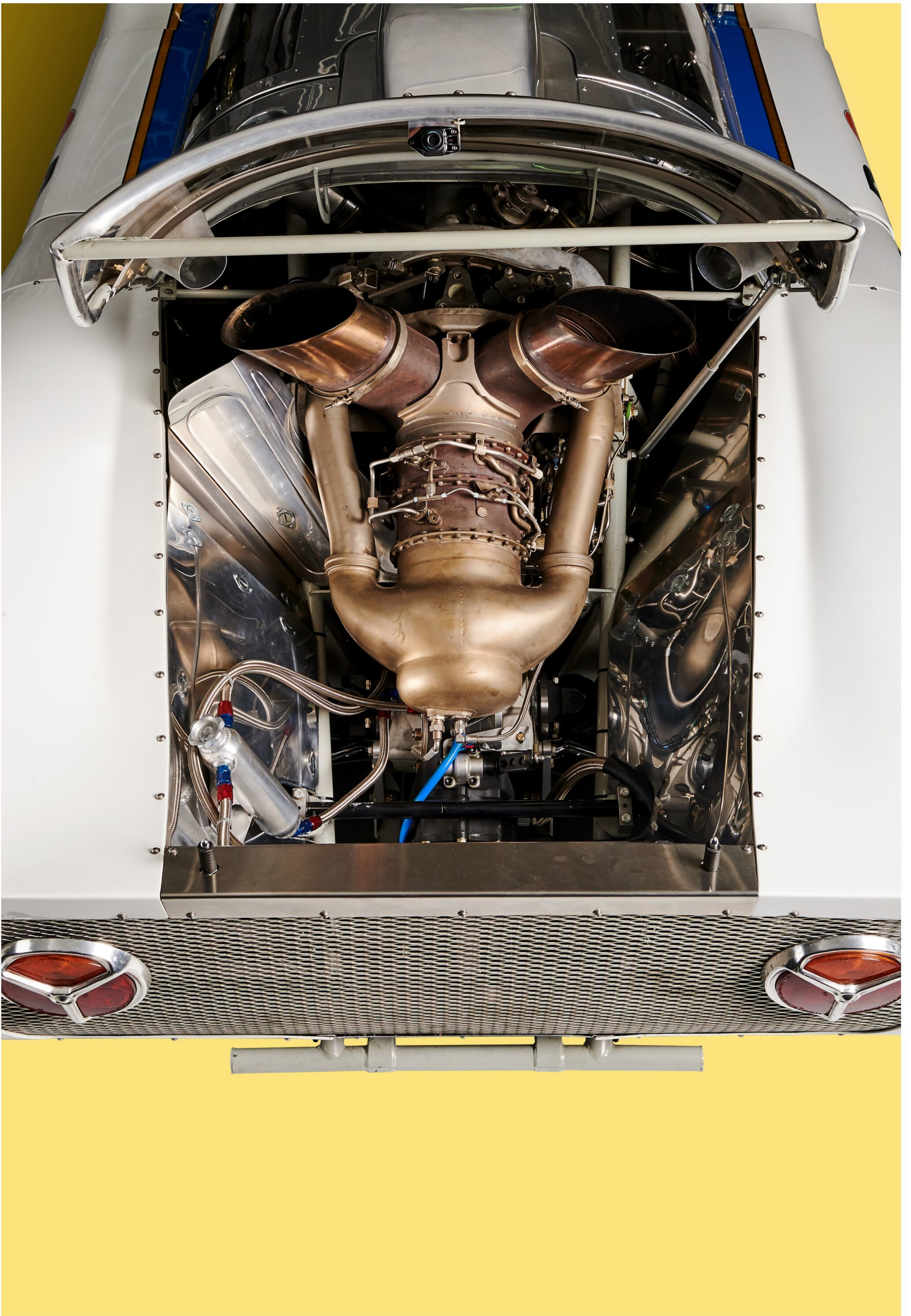
get the picture. Grids sounded good; yet, for just this one season, there was a very different kind of racing noise chasing down those sonorous flat-8s and V8s. It was called the Howmet TX: and mid-mounted was a helicopter’s turbine engine running on aviation fuel – yep, a helicopter engine.

Two were built in period; and, as you would expect, the interest and media coverage surrounding them was huge back in the day. They may have boon experimental cars – the TX bit stood for “Turbine eXperimental” – but these Howmets earned their racing stripes.

The turbine was deemed equivalent to a 2958cc piston engine, meaning the Howmet could run in the sub-3000cc Group-6 prototype category at showpiece sports car races.

A sole Howmet TX made its debut at the 1968 24 Hours of Daytona: qualifying a respectable seventh and reaching as high as third before a spin and bump into the barrier forced it into retirement. Signs were even more positive at that year’s 12 Hours of Sebring: qualifying third behind a Ford GT40 and Porsche 907; but turbine damage saw it retire halfway through proceedings. Green shoots of success came at the 6 Hours of Watkins Glen: a Howmet finished third overall and first in class.

Clearly, the Howmet was no madcap novelty there to just circulate at the back of the field: It was mixing it with the “big boys” – and what a spectacle for the gathered crowds. Which brings







us back to the engine noise bit. Today, not many can claim to have been there in 1968 to hear all those V8s alongside this unicorn shaft turbine-powered Howmet. Historic motorsport events, blessedly, give we younger folk a chance.

In 2007, I was standing trackside, behind the haybales, at a soggy and damp Goodwood Festival of Speed in the English-summer countryside. I had been lapping up the howls from a 1966 Ferrari 330 P3, 1956 Jaguar D-Type Long Nose, 1972 Ferrari Daytona LM, and Audi Sport Quattro S1 – you know, the usual sort of Sunday. Then, the whoosh arrived: Chuck Haines in the Howmet. It sounded like the start of Top Gun when those F-14A Tomcats fired up their turbofan engines. The turbine sound does not shake your bones like a pure 1960s sports racing engine, but it is mesmerizing and memorable – and boy did it make that Howmet go quick.

As mentioned, only two were built for the 1968 racing season and it was to be a one-year wonder. Two further examples were created in the 2000s – including the car pictured here, chassis #GTP3 – that turned my head and others at Goodwood in 2007. The Howmet's original Constructor Bob McKee used a spare chassis and frame to build this later version for the owner of Howmet chassis #GTP2 Chuck Haines. As far as continuation cars go, this one's credentials cannot be questioned.

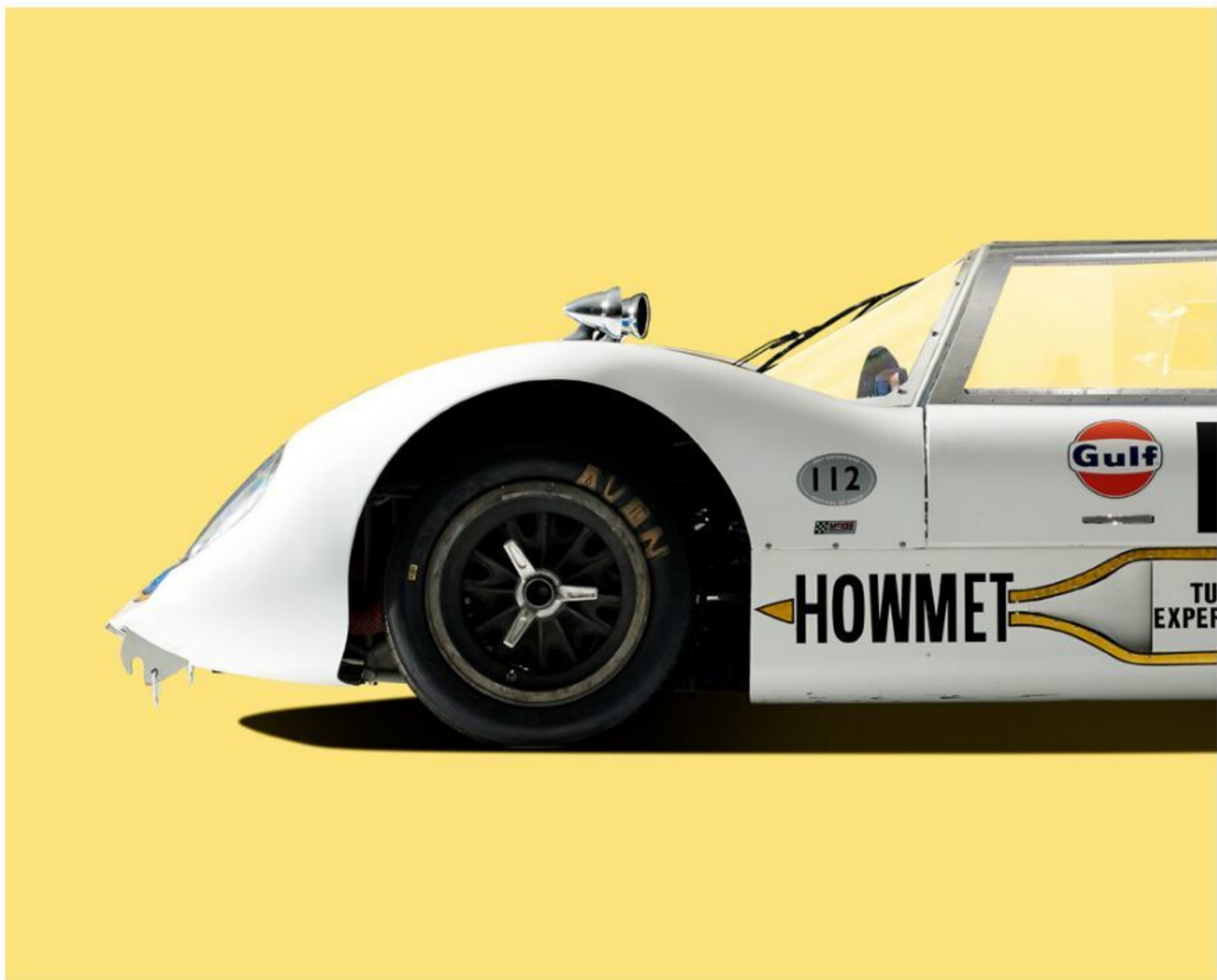
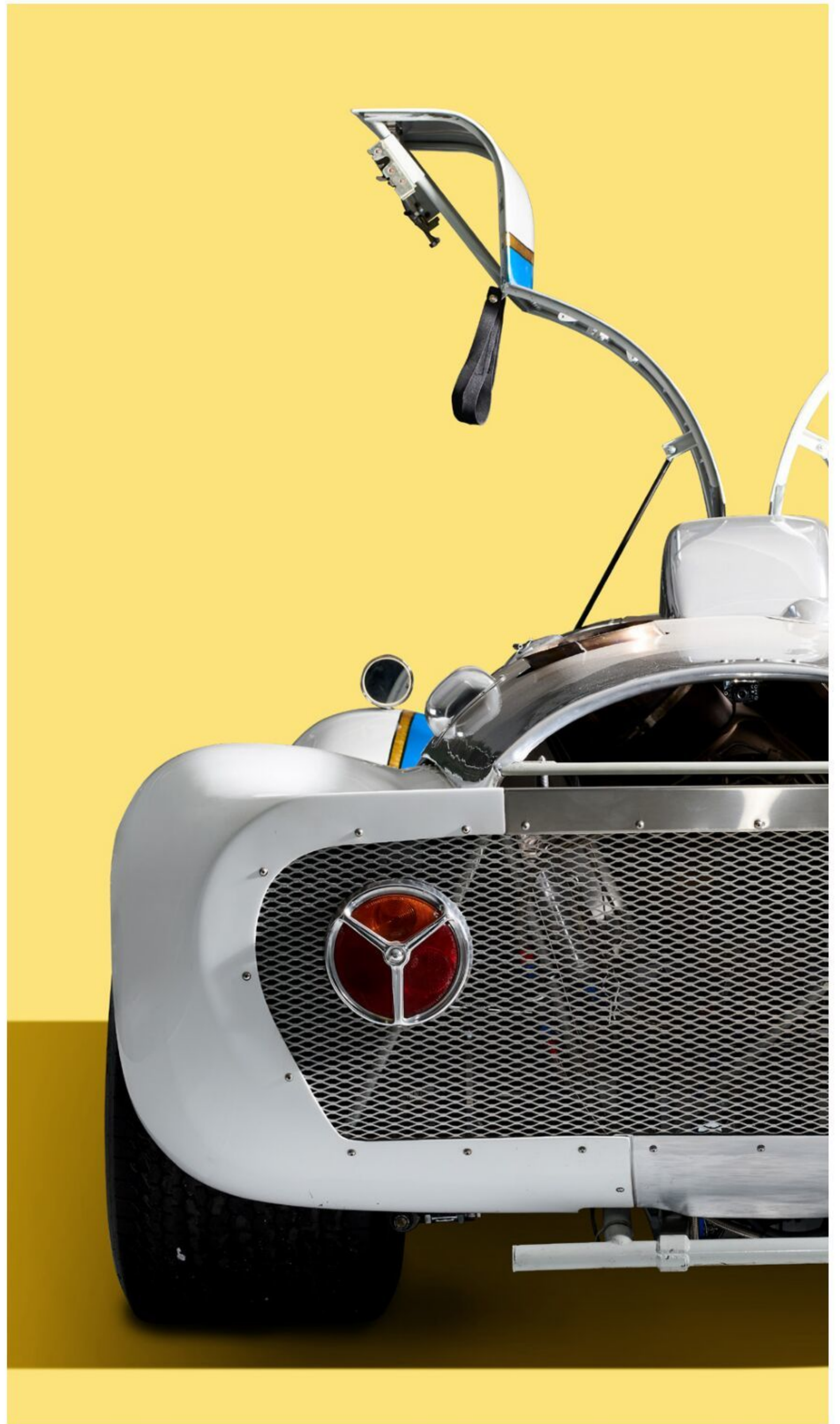
Back in 1967, American Racer Ray Heppenstall sowed the seeds for a turbine sports racer. One of his buddies, and fellow Racer, was Vice President of Howmet Corporation: a Manufacturer of precision metal products. You can imagine how

the discussion went: Ultimately, Howmet backed the project for its own promotional purposes. (And Heppenstall would be one of the car's Drivers).

Bob McKee's Illinois-based McKee Engineering had previously made Can-Am, F5000, and prototype electric racing cars, and was drafted in to build the tubular space frame chassis – a modified version of McKee's Mk.9 Can-Am – that would house the turbine power. The Howmet Corporation had experience building parts for gas turbine engines, and a brace of turbine military helicopter engines were leased from Continental Aviation and Engineering.

It all came together quite quickly – for a rumored budget of just over \$10,000 – and, on paper, the turbine reasoning had plenty of advantages. The turbine engine weighed just 170 pounds, yet could provide in the region of 350 horsepower. Torque was mighty: 650lb-ft was on tap. Compare that to the 1968 Le-Mans-winning Ford GT40: Its Windsor 4.9-liter V8 offered 425 horsepower, but just 395lb-ft of torque. And you want to hear about revs? Maximum power for the GT40 arrived at 6000rpm. The Howmet was able to spin at 57,000rpm. Can you imagine? That is almost 1000 revolutions every second!

More positives? A turbine engine is a relatively simple and reliable unit. It is small, light, and has roughly one-fifth the moving parts of a conventional petrol engine. There are basically three parts – compressor, combustion area, and turbine – with the pressure created by burning a mixture of compressed air and fuel spinning





the turbine. It does not need a cooling system, nor a clutch. The Howmet's gearbox – also a Continental unit from that helicopter – is only single speed; although, an electric motor was fitted to make a reverse gear possible.

There has to be “buts”, right? Otherwise, we would all be driving turbines! It is a thirsty beast, and that is not what you want in the world of endurance racing. Another problem is throttle lag: again, not ideal for any sort of circuit where you will be off and on the power. (This is not a problem for aircrafts – where you will be at even revs for most of the time – and it is also OK for oval racing.)

In 1967, Parnelli Jones drove the gas turbine-power STP-Paxton Turbocar to within eight miles of winning the Indy 500. The following year, Joe Leonard's Lotus 56 gas-turbine racer qualified on pole and was leading after 191 of 200 laps before a snapped fuel-pump drive shaft forced it into retirement. Reliability aside, these turbines were looking so dominant that they were swiftly banned.

The lag in the racing Howmet was mitigated – somewhat – by fitting two wastegates: so it could run spooled-up continuously.

As for starting the thing, well, it is not just a matter of turning a key in an ignition – you need to jack up



the rear wheels and let them spin as you crank it over. The turbine compressor gets up to speed, you turn on the fuel and spark to ignite a flame, and there is a cough of smoke through the exhausts to show that it is ready for action. Foot on the brake to stop the spinning wheels, lower it down, and away you go! The experimental powerplant aside, just look at this thing. You have to work hard to find an unattractive sports car from the 1960s, but the Howmet is up there with the finest shape to grace the globe's racetracks in 1968. The curvaceous coupe body is a mixture of aluminum and fiberglass panels – with the windscreen being a Porsche-906 item, that Bob McKee had

spare in his workshop. The upward-opening doors add the required theater, and the beautifully-crafted aluminum engine cover put Howmet's and McKee's products and craftsmanship on stunning display. This car, being one created over twenty years after the Continental turbine lease deal ended, features a more readily-available Allison turbine. Some redesign was required to house it: including relocating the exhaust to vent through the top of the engine cover, rather than from the rear – as in the original two cars. This chassis #GTP3 also does away with the wastegates which made the Howmets competitive at endurance races.

The rear view is menacing indeed. Aluminum mesh hides the turbine, with gorgeous Ford Cortina Mk1 taillights perfectly suited: race-car spotters will also recognize the lights from the Lola GT and TVR Grantura Mk3. Lift the engine cover and it is an imposing sight. Here is a turbine – clearly of aviation heritage – proudly sitting in a remarkably-uncluttered engine bay. It must have been quite the sound – and back warmer – mid-mounted behind the driver.

There is a GT40-esque long clamber into the cockpit which houses the required two bucket seats and tiny Momo steering wheel. Numerous gauges, dials, switches, and knobs crowd the dashboard and are angled nicely toward the driver. How easy it would be to place the front wheels with those bulbous wheel arches crowding vision through the windscreen is knowledge reserved for those fortunate pilots who braved these races over half a century ago.

The Howmets were fast in 1968 – but they retired a lot. Wastegate problems led to crashes at Daytona and at the BOAC at Brand Hatch: with a wastegate not opening, there is uncontrollable power – it must have been scarily unpredictable at times. At the big one, the 1968 Le Mans 24 Hours, fuelling problems hampered the Driver, Dick Thompson, as the Howmet struggled with speed on the straights. During the night, he rolled the car at the Indianapolis corner – and it was all over. The second car was disqualified for not covering sufficient distance: A wheel bearing had failed early, and a lengthy repair left the Howmet way down the order.

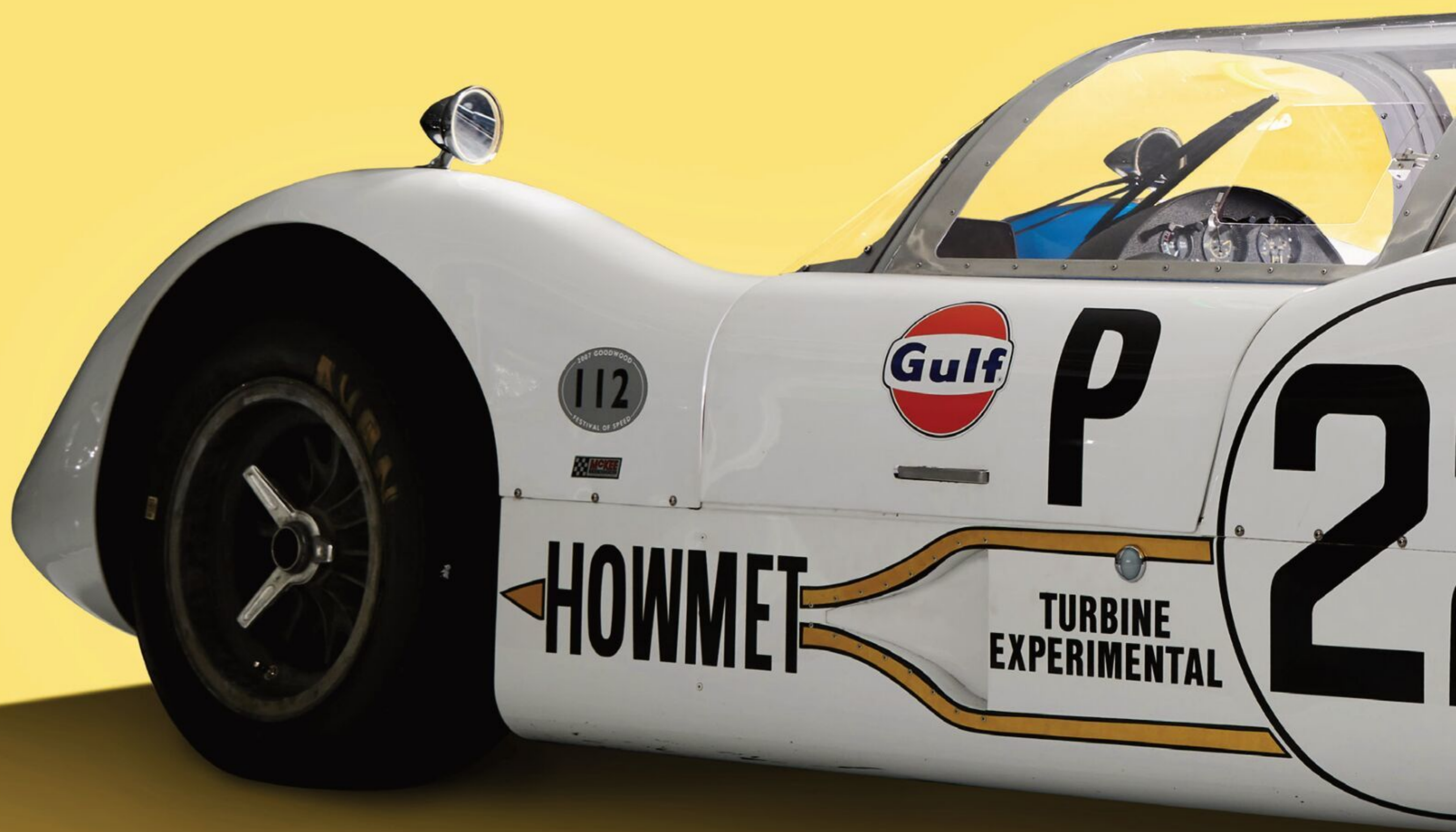
Better results were seen in the United States' SCCA National Championship. Ray Heppenstall

drove the Howmet to qualifier and main race wins in the Heart of Dixie and Marlboro 300 events of June 1968. These were the first-ever race wins by a turbine-power car. Alas, even these were not enough for Howmet to fund another year of racing. It seems the promotion was not matching the company's spend and there would be no development nor racing for 1969. A new multi-gear transmission to replace the single-speed box was the main plan. The potential was clearly there, but just one year in the spotlight consigned the Howmet to a mere footnote in sports-car history.

In 1970, Heppenstall repurposed one of the Howmets as a land-speed record car. In the under 2200-pound class, it broke records for the standing quarter-of-a-mile (11.83 seconds); then, he added some ballast and repeated the trick in the over 2200-pound category. By 1971, Continental wanted its leased helicopter turbines back – and the experiment was over. Today, Allison turbines have taken their place; and, with appearances at classic race events, we are fortunate enough to relive that crazy 1968 year when turbines threatened the cranks' and pistons' establishment.

The car on these pages may not be the one that sent shockwaves and a spectacular turbine heat haze above the tracks at Daytona and Le Mans; but, being built by Bob McKee and using his own spare chassis and frame, chassis #GTP3 is a blessing for us fans. I will never forget its aviation-esque whoosh while this knee-weakening-pretty race car rocketed past me at a damp Goodwood. It is the sound you see. That engine noise – it stays with you.

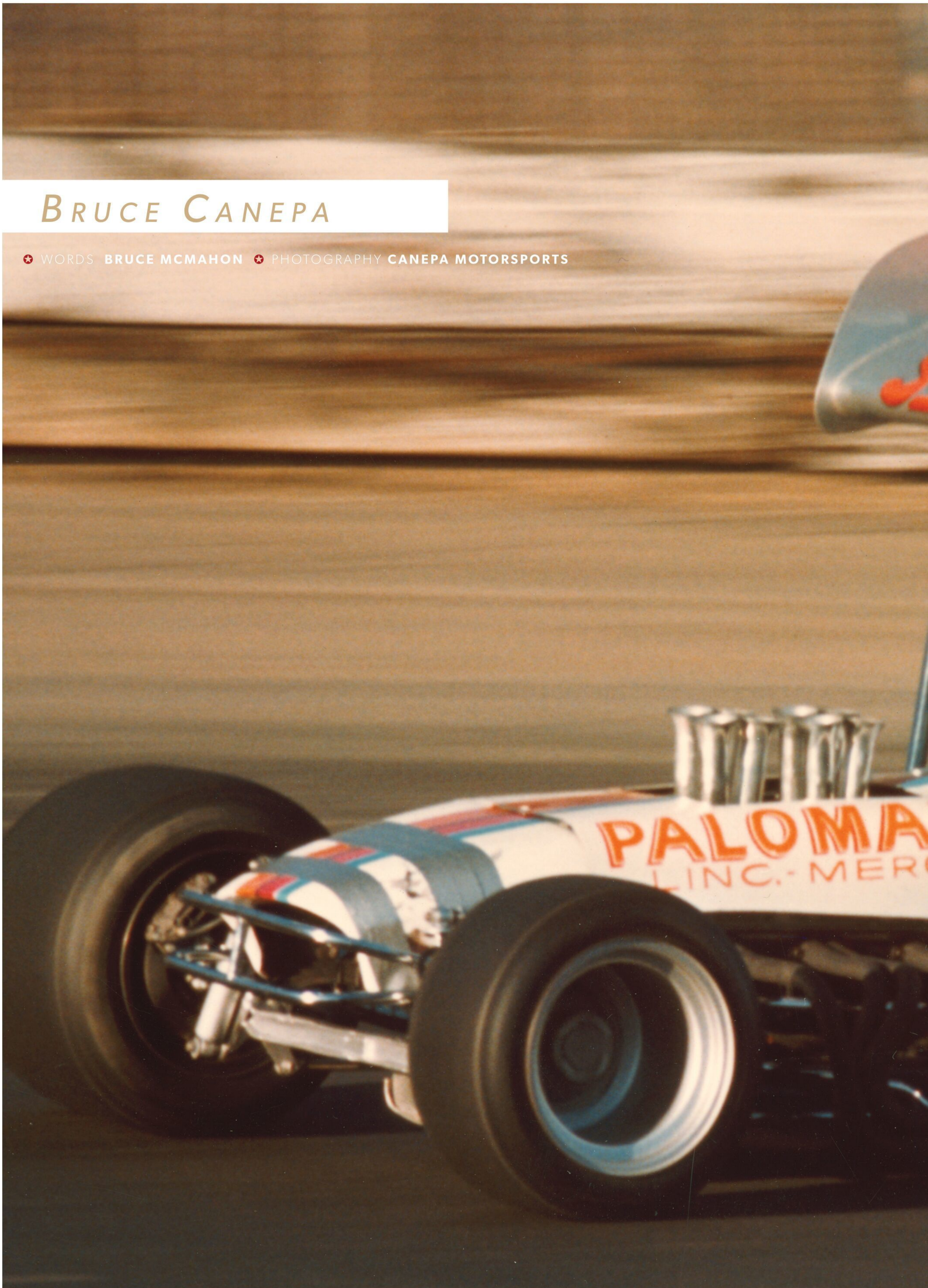






BRUCE CANEPA

✦ WORDS BRUCE MCMAHON ✦ PHOTOGRAPHY CANEPA MOTORSPORTS







The man never stood a chance.

Raised among Fords in his father's auto dealership, by four years old, the boy was standing on the front seat of the family sedan and naming all the passing cars. By 15, he had built his first hot rod, and racing dirt cars on ovals. Cars – and speed – bred into his DNA. And he is still at it, still has 20 years of ideas for customizations, restorations, and go-faster projects rattling around in his head. “I was born into it,” said Bruce Canepa from his Santa Cruz County workshop in southern California. “Cars, for me, have been a life-long passion.” That affair began with sweeping garage floors; then, moving on through every department of the family dealerships – primarily dealing Lincolns and Mercurys, but also international trucks and BMWs. But the big business was with the Ford-built cars, so the young Canepa grew up around American cars. “You know, American stuff with big engines, lots of muscle. So that's where I started, and I didn't look at anything else. I was kinda in that world pretty regularly; other than that, I liked hot rods and custom stuff.”

That enthrallment took a turn in 1969, when his father traded a Carmel doctor's 1968 Porsche 911 for a Lincoln. And, one night, Bruce snuck the German sports car out of the used lot. “I just kept driving it. Every time the lot was closed, I was out driving that car. I really got hooked on Porsche pretty early on. I couldn't afford one then, but it was definitely my favorite car because it went around corners, and it stopped – did everything so well. An American car went pretty well in a straight line, but I liked going around corners and all that kinda stuff. So I made American cars work pretty good for that purpose. But, the Porsche, you didn't have to do anything for it to do that. By the time I was 15, I was already racing dirt cars on oval tracks. So I was already used to being completely sideways. So the Porsche seemed like a natural to have the back end hang out – that was pretty normal.”

Bruce Canepa would go on to become a master of Porsches and other sporting machines on and off the tracks: credited with some 70 road-going 959s across the United States, and any number of podiums from sprint car to Trans-Am and sports car races. Set a Pikes Peak record in a 1300-pound Kenworth, in 2002 – sliding the big rig through the Colorado Hill Climb's 156 corners. He is still racing his Porsche 935 and 962 in



historics – holding off younger punks; and still building custom cars of all types.

Bruce said he has long been a perfectionist. As a kid, he was a champion model-car builder. Then, at 12-years old, he graduated to the real thing: learning all aspects from how to drive to how to detail cars to repairing body work and mechanicals because he worked through every division at his father's dealership. "By the time I was done with college, I was running all the sales end of the business; and, eventually, was General Manager. My dad made me work pretty hard in every department and learn it all, that turned out to be the best thing that could've happened."

Bruce enjoyed driving, enjoyed how to make cars work. Some of that the young man had to work out for himself because he could not always afford the cars he dreamed about. "So, while everyone else was surfing, I was trying to see how fast I could make a car go."

That background led the man to build a business designing, customizing, racing, selling, and collecting all manners of classic machines. That business is strong and, with the outlaw movement now fashionable, Bruce draws on all that early learning – plus, decades of experience – to create re-imagined machinery.

"I don't think I ever left a car alone. I was always trying to figure out how to make it better: visually, as well as perform nice. That was just kinda part of my nature to do that. And, now, we get to do it all the time." He appreciates that times have changed from days when most classics were stored and trailered to shows with tires wrapped tidy. "Nobody would ever think about turning the wheel on one of those cars. Most of them sat on the lawn with zero fluids in them because they didn't want seepage out of the transmission or a rear end. And that's dramatically changed. It's now acceptable to drive your car and get some rock chips on it, a mark here, and some fluid seepage a little bit. And it's all normal, nobody's frowning on it, anymore."

With it now being acceptable to drive these older machines, Bruce sees it as realistic to improve the drivability of classics. It is OK, he believes, to have a Porsche 356 with 170 horsepower, rather than 70; to have disc brakes instead of drums; to have better torsion bars and sway bars; plus, better gear ratios. His team has just completed an outlaw 356: originally, a one-owner 1964 SC which now runs a 2200cc engine (in the same case)



with 170 horsepower, six-inch wheels, upgraded and lowered suspension, GT seats and GT gauges – gone is most the body trim.

“I like things very understated – less is more for me, always. I don’t want six lights on the hood, and I really don’t care about having the gas cap sticking out of the hood. That’s OK, I’m not saying it’s a bad thing. It’s just not me, I always take the more conservative approach. I like the look where they have to walk up, and they know it’s different; but they can’t figure out why it’s different. That’s how I do my cars. That’s what we do. The important part is that when you sit in it, it’s totally comfortable: everything’s in the right place and, when you drive it, it does everything right. Stops, turns – does everything right.”

Bruce’s skillset has been honed through thousands of hours in road and race cars. He has a pretty good idea when a car drives well; and is pleased that the world now wants cars which are fun to drive. He believes that current levels of automation – traction control, lane-keeping systems, etc – have taken the experience factor out of new cars; plus, the current levels of all-round performance are incredible, but there is often not much to do in today’s autos.

“I’ve got some modern supercars. And you sit back and click in the shifter, you don’t have to do anything else, it’s got every aid in the world to keep you going straight with maximum traction. Now, I think guys are more and more thinking: ‘I want a car where I’m part of the experience and engaged in what it’s doing – whether it’s steering or stopping or figuring how to get through the corners without all those electronic aids.’ I think people are really starting to appreciate cars: where they get to be a part of the whole experience from when they start it up.”

In 2021, one of Canepa’s projects is an outlaw Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing with 350 horsepower, five-speed transmission, limited slip differential, sway bars front and rear, better springs, and better shocks. The car sits lower on 6.5-inch wheels, with exhaust pipes coming out the right-hand side – behind the passenger door. There will be subtle body tweaks; such as recessing the grille a smidge, marker lights recessed, and small bumpers on each corner of the Benz. Bruce said: “Nobody would’ve done this ten years ago. My god, you would’ve been persecuted. I want the car to drive fabulously, they drive like a truck normally. So what I’ve done is give it real power, and the right gearing, close-ratio transmission, air-conditioning. It’s going to be as fun as you can make a 300SL. I want



it to slide around corners because, for me, it's all of that. If I go fling it into a corner, I want it to slide around, sit there, and use the throttle to steer it.”

For all the custom cars, for all the supercars and race cars Bruce Canepa has built and driven, the one car he never tires of is his 1980s Porsche 959. He brought the first one into US in 1987. Then, followed the lengthy process – over some ten years – of making the cars road legal and emissions compliant. There have been multiple improvements to the cars' engines and suspensions since then; but, four years back, Bruce decided to disassemble his original car back to the bare tub and evaluate every system in the German coupe. Age, not mileage, was causing some issues with the 30-year-old car.

So the Canepa crew looked at every component – new innards for the power steering pump, new air-conditioning compressor, new condenser, new fuel lines, the latest MOTEC engine management, floating rotors to keep weight down, titanium exhaust. “We brought everything up to a current level of technology and standards. With that, we've taken weight out of the car, got it down 180 pounds to 3000 pounds. That car was 20-25 years ahead of its time when it was built. So, when we started what we were doing, it was only five years behind – ten if you want to be critical. Now, we've taken it and moved it forward again: the all-wheel-drive system, the suspension, and the chassis were way ahead of its time.”

Bruce believes that the 959 drives as well as – or even better than – any modern car. Smooth as glass on the worst road; as quiet as a luxury car, no tire noise like modern machines with low-profile rubber; and produces 825 horsepower. “I never get tired of that car. And when you go out and drive it, oh my god – its handling, its cornering ability, its ride quality, its performance – it's as good as it gets. It does all the things modern supercars do in terms of performance, but it does it in a car which you could drive all day long without fatigue. Most modern supercars I call ‘one-hour cars’ because they're all great to drive, but not for a long drive. You have fun for an hour and then go get something else. The 959 is a car you just jump in anytime you want – go anywhere you want.” And Bruce, most relaxed at the wheel of a race car, is still going places at 100 miles per hour. “I'm so passionate about my business. I'm here in my office from 7:30 in the morning to 7:30 at night. Cars are my thing, more than anything else. I have so many things in my head I want to do with cars still – I can think of 20 years of things I want to do with cars. I doubt I need another hobby,” he laughed. Some concept vehicles are designed as a showcase, demonstra



BOLWELL NAGARI

✦ WORDS **JAMES CORBETT** ✦ PHOTOGRAPHY **NATHAN DUFF**





This Series 8 Bolwell Nagari came to George May some thirty-four years ago. In fact he rebuilt it from a wreck. A young George put so many new parts into the car that it might have been easier to start from scratch. Since then it has never been in an accident, has never had a respray, and has never been driven in the rain.

“The soft top is there but I’ve never fitted it. I just couldn’t bring myself to drill holes into the tops of those lovely rear quarters.”

This is a rare car, but this doesn’t mean he hasn’t tested it’s limits as a sports car. As his professional knowledge increased, building some dozen Cobra kit cars for

clients, George soon came to realise that this elegant machine had some shortcomings. First to go was the Borg Warner live rear axle, replaced by a Jaguar IRS. Just like the Cobra replicas. After that the front end was reengineered with George’s own tubular wishbones to fix the scrub radius, raised stub axles on HQ uprights, new steering arms to remove the bump steer, and bigger brakes. Oh, and there was an assault on unsprung weight. This was the easy bit. George is adamant that the really difficult job was, at fifty years of age, going back to university to become a qualified engineer, so that he could have the knowledge to design, and approve, his own modifications.



*ANYONE WHO HAS DRIVEN A LIGHT CAR WITH
LOTS OF TORQUE WILL VOUCH FOR HOW
DIFFICULT IT CAN BE TO RESIST THE URGE
TO FEEL THAT ADDICTIVE SURGE.*

“All that maths...God it was hard. Hardest thing I’ve ever had to learn.”

One senses it is also the achievement that he is most proud of. It is apparent that George is the sort of guy that likes to learn. His first trade qualification was as a Fitter and Turner, enough skills for most, and especially handy when he was building Cobra replicas for a living, but at thirty-seven George decided that he needed to be a qualified mechanic as well.

“We were fitting LPG gas conversions to the Cobras. It was the easiest way to get the old style carburettor V8s to pass the emission tests. To do that I needed to be a qualified Mechanic.”

With the Bolwell now dynamically as good as it looked, it was time for some cream on the cake. More power! And as a bonus less weight. Getting to this point had only taken a mere twenty years. The cast iron headed

V8 was removed and given a new home in another Nagari, and its place filled with 347 cubic inches of well worked Ford Windsor. George built his own fuel injection system, starting off with what he calls...

“One giant throttle body ”

Like all of this cars other modifications, the engine was aimed at making the car a pleasure to drive.

"We could have gone for a big horse power figure, but I wanted big torque. I want to drive it, not brag about it. It has about 340 hp and 470 ft. lb. of torque, and with the alloy heads, bell housing, and a few other things I’m guessing it weighs about nine hundred and a few kilos.”

Anyone who has driven a light car with lots of torque will vouch for how difficult it can be to resist the urge to feel that addictive surge. Maybe because of that, George has finally decided to part with his Bolwell.







“I’M ALMOST SEVENTY NOW, AND TO BE COMPLETELY HONEST, IT FRIGHTENS ME A LITTLE BIT THESE DAYS.”

“I’m almost seventy now, and to be completely honest, it frightens me a little bit these days. It’s time, I’ve enjoyed it.”

The deal has been done, and after many years of asking and waiting, Sam Matandos will soon be the car’s new custodian.

“I’ve known him since he was a kid. His dad Bill bought a Mk 7 Nagari coupe for a then thirteen year old Sam, as a father son project. An employee of Bill's went with Sam to drive it home for the first time, got a little carried away with a skid, and crashed it.”

No doubt a bad day for all concerned. The car was left forlorn with a bent chassis.

" I didn’t know them then, but a couple of years later they discovered me and my car in my workshop, just down the road from their factory. At first they asked if I could reference my car to create a set of chassis

drawings for them.”

George being the practical guy that he is, decided that the time spent drawing a chassis would be better spent building one.

“I did that, and they wanted to take it from there....But then I got a call to do more work on it. In the mean time I had moved to Queensland. What ended up happening was, I would fly down there, work on it for a week or so at a time. Each time I would get a stage completed and they would ‘ take it from there ’. And then I would get another phone call.”

The car was completed when Sam was eighteen or so. After a few years he and his dad sold it, and as is often the case with these things, Sam had always regretted parting with that car, and now at forty-one he is setting out on his second Bolwell adventure.









MERCEDES-BENZ 300SL

★ WORDS JUSTIN JACKY ★ PHOTOGRAPHY ZACH BREHL





If you had to provide a list of the ten most beautiful cars ever made – you would be absolutely spoiled for choice. Hell, pick up any issue of *Retromotive* and you would be shuffling, salivating, then re-shuffling some more, probably changing your list several times before reluctantly handing over your final cut. Our lists would most likely reflect the motorsport we follow, the posters on our walls as kids, or even the cars our relatives tinkered with on the weekend. Philosopher David Hume once said: “Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; each mind perceives a different beauty.” While subjective beauty is validated daily, there have been a few vehicles over the history of the automobile which has flipped this theory on its head – cars which are so exquisite that their beauty becomes objective, defying the ageing process, and making it onto most people’s

“top ten”. One such car is the Mercedes-Benz 300SL.

The foundation of the project was the extremely successful 1952 race car, the W194; that brought Daimler-Benz’s return to motorsport – following the devastation of World War II. The car had numerous international victories, including Le Mans and the Nürburgring: overcoming the more powerful Jaguars and Ferraris – largely due to its lighter weight and more aerodynamic bodywork. This combination made it the perfect car for high-speed endurance racing, and what American Importer, Max Hoffman – inspirator of the ‘Gullwing’ – thought would also be the perfect basis for a road-going sports car in the booming post-war America. The 300SL (Sport-Leicht or Super-Leicht) made its debut to much fanfare at the 1954 New York Auto Show – controversially, bucking the trend of launching at either Frankfurt or Geneva. Of



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the initial 1,400 300SL ‘Gullwing’ Coupes, 1,100 found homes in US!

With more power than the W194 race car (thanks to a world-first Bosch fuel-injection system and a future-esque gullwing door design), the 300SL Coupe became an overnight sensation. Bizarrely, the car’s beauty was more a byproduct of the tubular chassis derived from the W194, rather than a pure expression of automotive design. Constructed from various chrome-molybdenum tubes, the frame was extremely strong and light at 181 pounds; but due to the abnormal shape of the structure, gullwing doors were a necessity to enable occupants to navigate the side panels. To continue the super-light ethos, Mercedes used aluminium on the doors, bonnet, and boot lid: resulting in a curbweight of only 3300 pounds. This lightweight streamlined body, coupled with the 240-horsepower 3.0-liter straight-six engine, was enough to propel the 300SL to a then-record 163 miles per hour.

Sales of the car began tapering around mid-1956, so Mercedes decided to look to the west coast for inspiration: and, in 1957, debuted the California-slanted convertible 300SL Roadster. Swapping out the gullwing design

for conventional doors, and with a redesigned space-frame chassis: The Roadster became a much more usable daily driver without compromising those stunning aesthetics. Over the next six years, Mercedes-Benz would go on to sell 1,858 300SL Roadsters; with the final 94 cars rolling off the production line in 1963. The Roadster very quickly became the car to own, with the likes of Elvis Presley and Sophia Loren leading a long list of celebrity customers. One celebrity (or celebrity family, rather) was none other than jewelry royalty, Tiffanys. They purchased one of the last 300SL Roadsters, in 1963, with Uni Black paint; and the car now lives out its days in the German countryside.

Pascal Stephan (Head of Sales at the distinguished Mercedes-Benz Specialists, Mechatronik) is one of the lucky ones who sees this car daily – and the privilege is not lost on him. He said: “I can’t tell you that much about our mind-blowing 300SL Roadster, but the fact that this car is still in its full-original condition is insane. The color combination and the way it drives make it the best car I could ever imagine driving (and I drive a lot of cars in my life!). This is simply one of the most beautiful cars ever built and is also beautiful to







*ON THIS CAR, NOTHING HAS TO BE CHANGED –
IT IS SIMPLY PERFECT.*

drive. All the Ferrari 250s may also look very beautiful; but, if you are taller than an Italian of the mid-1950s or 1960s, it is impossible to drive them!”

With prices of both versions of the 300SL now in the millions, this car has resonated with so many people across the world. He said: “The 300SL was simply a milestone in automotive history in my eyes. The technology at the time was years above; the driving performance was outstanding; and, of course, its appearance on the road makes it one of the coolest cars ever built. Also, all the glamour which comes with it because of the famous names who owned one makes it legendary.”

From the finned drum brakes to the elegant eyebrows hovering above the wheel arches, it does not matter which leaf you turn: the 300SL has an abundance of class. Usually, when you start talking to owners of vehicles this age, you begin to uncover design faults or gremlins, but when asked what Pascal would change about his Roadster, he revealed himself to be surprisingly smitten. “On this car, nothing has to be changed – it is simply perfect. Maybe it would be cool to have some more space behind the seat, so you could get a bit more legroom for the driver, in case you

are taller than [six foot]. But, apart from that, this is the perfect car.”

It is still difficult to fathom the almost accidental attractiveness of the 300SL. While I would not go as far as to say that the Roadster’s beauty is effortless – there was certainly some fortunate ease about how its elegant body wrapped around what was originally a purposeful race-focused skeleton. For Mercedes-Benz (at least until the Le Mans tragedy of 1955), the 1950s was a golden era. Stirling Moss set a Mille Miglia record in his SLR; Juan Manuel Fangio was devastating in the World Drivers’ Championship; and the company had barely finished re-building its factories before selling out pre-orders here; the 300SL was the Tiffany jewel in its crown. Many enthusiasts still believe that the first supercar was the Lamborghini Miura, but maybe the 300SL deserves that title: it was purely a racer until Max Hoffman convinced Daimler-Benz to create a road-going version for 1954; and, even more remarkably, the roadcar boasted an increase in power over the racer! Therefore, the 300SL unequivocally lives up to the hype, transcends subjectivity, and secures its place among the greatest sports cars of all time.





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