

1000s
OF CLASSIC CARS
FOR SALE INSIDE



ASTON MARTIN ONE-77
£1.1 MILLION SUPERCAR IS BORN

£4.40 | ISSUE 92 FEBRUARY 2011

Octane

CLASSIC & PERFORMANCE CARS

50 YEARS
How the legend evolved:
the complete story

MINI COOPER

STARS
George Harrison, Peter
Sellers & Monte Carlo Minis



HEROES
Cooper, Aaltonen
and Turner divulge

BUYING
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one; avoid the fakes

PLUS

McLaren M8:
'70s 860bhp
monster tested

Citroën SM
V8 one-off

Buying Ford
Sierra Cosworth

Lambo V12:
farewell to
an epic engine



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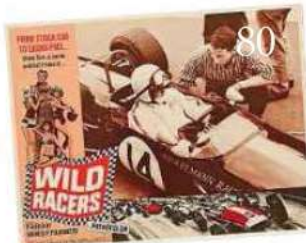


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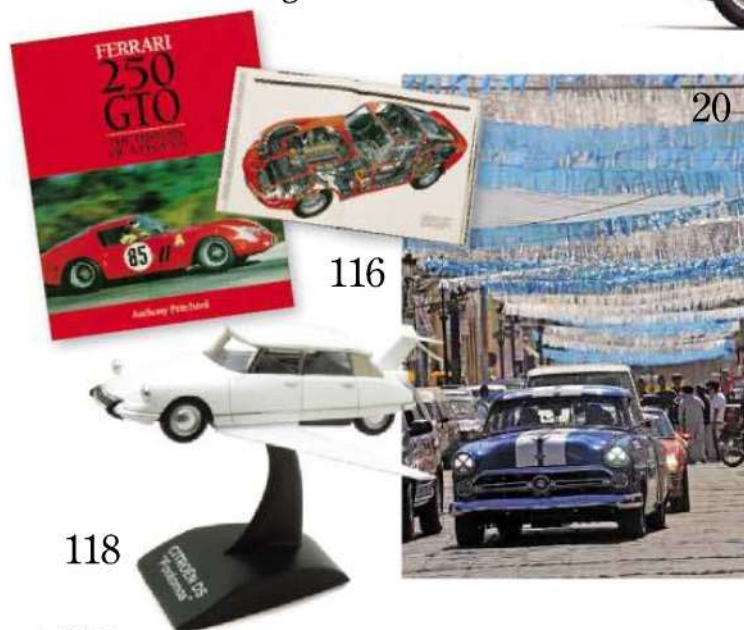


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ANOTHER YEAR OVER...

And so it's goodbye to 2010. That went quickly! But it's been a good year for classics, with new shows, strong sales and a number of significant restorations. All the signs are that 2011 will continue in the same vein, despite a slight slowdown in classic car sales during autumn this year. Anyway, we've marked the year-end with a few of our highlights, from highly important to utterly trivial, on pages 12 and 13.

For *Octane*, the year has certainly ended on a high, with our celebration of the Mini-Cooper (pages 42-54), 50 years old in 2011, featuring three

of the most significant Mini-Coopers in the world: the 1964 Monte Carlo rally-winner, George Harrison's 'hippy' Mini, and Peter Sellers' wickerwork Hooper. It's difficult to read that feature and then not hanker for a Mini; one of those cars that (with apologies for the cliché) everyone should own at some point.

We also pulled together four landmark

examples of the Lancia Stratos to meet the all-new one. That was entertaining, as you'll see on pages 94-102. And then we visited the usually out-of-bounds Aston Martin One-77 build facility, just outside the main factory at Gaydon, for the rare chance to see the construction of this incredible £1.2-million supercar, and witness the first test drive of the first production One-77. That starts on page 56.

We wish you all a happy new year; in 2011 we'd love to see you at one of the shows, at an *Octane* track day, or even the forthcoming Legends of Land Speed Records evening. Sorry about the shameless plug...

David Lillywhite Editor
david@octane-magazine.com

MORE FROM OCTANE

Don't miss out on events or on the extra content in print and on the website

Speed legends



Spend an evening with Andy Green, Richard Noble and Don Wales, 17 March, at London's Royal Automobile Club. Book on +44 (0)20 7907 6329 or www.octane-magazine.com.

Classic supercars



Octane has released a new magbook on the great supercars of the 1960s, '70s and '80s. It's priced at £7.99. To buy, visit www.octane-magazine.com and click on 'shop'.

Octane track day



The first of 2011's track days, sponsored by EFG. It takes place at Goodwood on 19 May. For details, see www.octane-magazine.com or call +44 (0)20 7907 6805.

Virtual Octane



Octane is now available on Zinio, which allows the entire magazine to be read on a PC, Mac or iPad. £3.15 per issue, £31.99 for 12. Visit www.zinio.com and search for 'Octane'.

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1929 DUESENBERG MODEL J DUAL COWL PHAETON *by Derham*
Engine No. J116

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1959 AC ACE BRISTOL ROADSTER
Chassis No. BEX 1090



1956 COSTIN JAGUAR



1958 ASTON MARTIN DB MK IIIA COUPE *by Tickford*
Chassis No. AM300/3/1386



1952 TOJEIRO MG SPORTS RACER (LOW 77)



1935 FRAZER NASH-BMW 319 ROADSTER



1949 FERRARI 166 MM BARCHETTA *by Touring*
Chassis No. 0024 M

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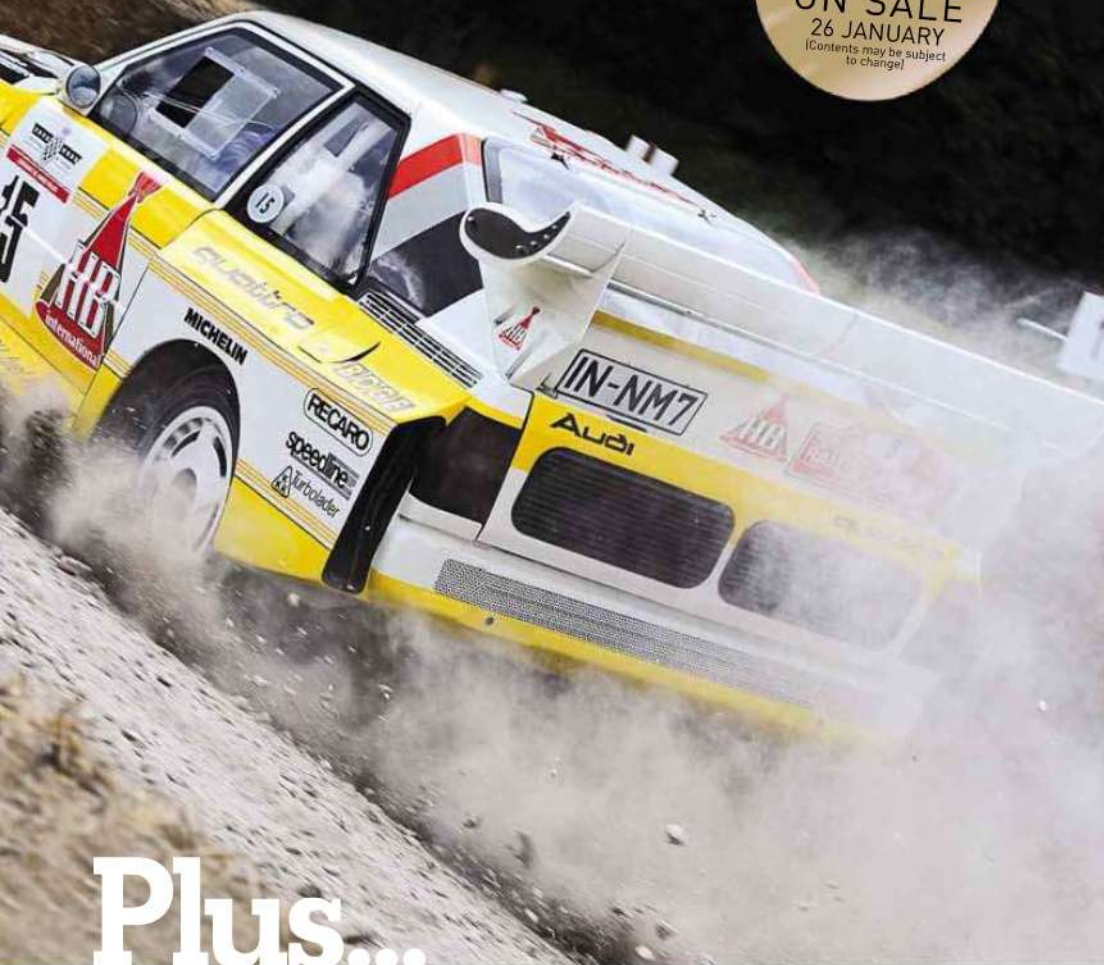
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Next Month

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FORD RS200, PEUGEOT 205T16...

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26 JANUARY
(Contents may be subject
to change)



Plus...



↗ Unique Drogo-bodied Ferrari 250SWB ↗ Classic 911
with hybrid power ↗ Rediscovering Monthléry in the
Mercedes SLS ↗ Ken Costello on his MGs

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1911 ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER GHOST LANDAULETTE
Chassis No. 1797

ADDITIONAL CONSIGNMENTS WELCOME



1930 DUESENBERG MODEL J
CONVERTIBLE COUPE *by Murphy*
Engine No. J331



1935 BMW 327 / 2 ROADSTER



1909 THOMAS FLYER 6-40
SEVEN-PASSENGER TOURING



1930 PACKARD 734 BOATTAIL SPEEDSTER



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GOODBYE TO LAMBORGHINI'S V12

END OF THE ROAD FOR LEGENDARY ENGINE

All-new V12 signals the end of Bizzarrini's amazing original
– serving Lamborghini since the company's first car in 1963

Words: Keith Adams Photography: Lamborghini



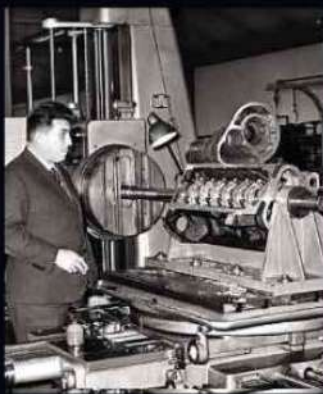
Out with the old...

Lamborghini has taken the unusual step of announcing details of its brand-new engine prior to the launch of the car it's going to power. But as we're talking about the Murciélago replacement, and the end of a V12 that has been around since 1963, the usual rules of new-car introduction have understandably been bypassed.

But the Giotto Bizzarrini-designed V12 was – and remains – a remarkable engine. Given that it was created nearly 50 years ago, much of the truth behind its origins has been lost in the mists of time. Legend has it that Bizzarrini was paid by the horsepower, in a challenge the engineer set himself and proposed to Ferruccio. He knew he was more than qualified to meet it.

During the short period between leaving Ferrari and receiving his

'Legend has it that Bizzarrini was paid by the horsepower, in a challenge he set himself'



commission from Ferruccio, Giotto joined Automobili Turismo e Sport (ATS) and helped build a Formula 1 single-seater and a GT racer, the ATS Serenissima. His engineering company, Societa Autostar, was subsequently tasked with creating a new V12 for Lamborghini, and Bizzarrini used the 1.5-litre Formula 1 racing engine design he produced while at Ferrari as his main source of inspiration. There are many conceptual similarities between the two.

Part of the Lamborghini V12's mystique is that Bizzarrini was also alleged to have been involved in the development of the first Honda F1 engine – most notably by LJK Setright in the now-defunct *Supercar Classics* magazine. Whether or not this is actually true will probably never be confirmed because of Honda's secrecy over the project, but it's a good story.

Whatever its pedigree, the all-aluminium 3.5-litre V12 that Bizzarrini developed for Lamborghini was a real racer. The main step forward was its quad-camshaft configuration, said to be a deliberate one in the eye for former employer, Ferrari. And the 60° V12 was certainly more advanced than the Ferrari 250GT0 design he was most famous for during his time as the chief engineer while at the Scuderia.

In May 1963, Bizzarrini's Lamborghini V12 burst into life on a test bench at Sant'Agata Bolognese, and the dynamometer revealed that it produced around 370bhp at 9000-9200rpm. However, Bizzarrini reckoned that over 400bhp at 11,000rpm was on the cards with improved breathing.

The V12 was to be no racer, though. Ferruccio considered motor sport a distraction, and was focused on building a road car to beat Ferrari. With the prototype engine duly delivered, the V12 was passed to Lamborghini's chief engineer Gian Paolo Dallara to refine into a civilised road car engine. And when it came to powering the first road-going Lamborghini, the 350GT, it had been detuned to 270bhp at 6500rpm. But most importantly, it was utterly refined on the road.

The V12 proved more than capable of powering Lamborghini's greatest cars. In 1965, it was expanded to 3929cc, raising the power output to 320bhp – and it was in this capacity that it went on to power the 400GT, Miura, Islero, Espada, Jarama and Countach. It's testament to the brilliance of Bizzarrini that it managed to age so well, coping with regular increases in engine capacity – first to 4.8 litres in the Countach LP500S, then to 5.2 in the QV, 5.7 in the Diablo and finally 6.2 litres in the Diablo SV, Murciélago and Reventón. And all this despite limited development funding well into the 1990s.

The V12 also found success in sport – although its F1 career was average at best, not to mention shortlived. An enlarged 8.0-litre pushing out 720bhp did well in offshoot powerboat racing, winning the prestigious Viareggio-Bastia-Viareggio, mounted in the *Sun International*, piloted by Stefano Casiraghi.

In its ultimate roadgoing form, the V12 that powered the 2009 Murciélago LP670-4 SV punched out 661bhp at 8000rpm and pushed the car to a top speed of 209mph. It was a fitting swansong for one of the industry's longest-lived – and greatest – engines, and proof that the best power units owe their existence to motor sport. Even if this one failed to score significantly at its pinnacle.

Five landmark supercars powered by Bizzarrini's V12

1 LAMBORGHINI MIURA

Lambo's first packaging masterpiece, with V12 mounted transversely on top of the gearbox and sharing its oil, Alec Issigonis-style.

2 LAMBORGHINI COUNTACH

Packaging genius: the end-on gearbox is mounted between the seats to result in a smaller car than its predecessor.

3 LAMBORGHINI ESPADA

Traditional front engine/rear-drive, but the low bonnet line and occasional rear seating make the

Espada the perfect Grand Tourer.

4 LAMBORGHINI LM-002

Amazing 4WD LM-002 was Sant'Agata's tilt at the military market. Fabulous in the desert, less so on the road. The US Army bought Humvees instead.

5 LAMBORGHINI MURCIÉLAGO

The king is dead: the last of 4099 cars may have rolled off the line but the Murciélago remains a mighty supercar, with a genuine 200+mph top speed.



...and in with the new

When it came to replacing Bizzarrini's V12, Lamborghini's engineers were given two fundamental principals to stick by in order to maintain true powertrain heritage: the new engine had to be a V12 with a 60° vee angle.

Considering that the current global trend is towards downsizing and turbocharging, this is a brave move from Lamborghini. But on figures alone, if the supercar manufacturer wants to remain at the top of its game – and ahead of rivals – this 6498cc V12 engine will be just the job. It produces 690bhp at 8250rpm and delivers 509lb ft of torque at 5500rpm: the first car it powers (likely to be named the Jota) will be designated LP700.

Although the engine capacity is near-identical to the outgoing V12's, the all-new one (designated L539) shares no internals. The cylinder bore has increased from 88mm to 95mm and the stroke goes down from 89mm to 76.4mm – and the short-stroke layout will allow L539 to rev more freely. It's also a dry-sump design, which helps keep the size down, so the engine is not only smaller but has a lower centre of gravity. It's also lighter at 235kg, down from 253kg, meaning that the carbon-tubbed LP700 is going to be an even nimbler drive.



Octane's top moments of 2010

It's been a great year for the classic car world – here are our highlights of the last 12 months



CAR OF THE YEAR

BUGATTI TYPE 57 ATLANTIC CHASSIS 57374.

While we don't necessarily applaud sky-high prices, the sale of this, the first of the four Atlantics built, for \$30 million made the point worldwide that the very best classic cars have just as much collector appeal as fine art. We paid tribute to it in our studio feature in issue 86.

SCOTT WILLIAMSON



WORLD EVENT OF THE YEAR

MOTORCLASSICA

The new motor show and concours held in the elegant Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne took the Australian classic car scene to a new level. It also brought classics to a wider public with an outdoor city-centre display tour of the streets.

ROAD TEST OF THE YEAR

BUGATTI VEYRON vs MCLAREN F1

Rowan Atkinson and Bugatti test driver Pierre-Henri Raphanel tamed (one of) the beasts in the wet in an exclusive comparison for *Octane*, issue 87. The F1 felt more involving, thought Rowan.

CONCEPT CAR OF THE YEAR

JAGUAR C-X75

Jaguar did it with the XK120 in 1948 and did it again in 2010 with the Jaguar C-X75, featuring electric engines and gas micro turbines. It wowed the Paris Motor Show.



INNOVATION OF THE YEAR

BUGATTI DIGITAL 3D MAPPING

Our lead news story in issue 91 revealed how Stuart Brown of 3D Engineers digitally mapped in three dimensions every one of 2800 components in a Bugatti Type 35.

COLLECTOR OF THE YEAR

PETER MULLIN

Arch-collector of Art Deco classics, Peter Mullin, opened the Mullin Automotive Museum to the public in 2010, featuring a host of Bugattis – including the 'Bugatti in the Lake'.



MAN OF THE YEAR

SIR STIRLING MOSS

To survive a fall three floors down the liftshaft in his home onto a concrete floor at 83 years of age shows that Sir Stirling still has the toughness and character that pulled him through his near-fatal 1962 Goodwood crash. Despite breaking both ankles, he was back racing six months later at the Silverstone Classic.

RACE SERIES OF THE YEAR

THE STIRLING MOSS TROPHY

This new series for genuine pre-1961 sports cars and sports-racing cars has been run in absolutely the right spirit. Set up by Motor Racing Legends, it aims to recreate the 'original' racing experience.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF THE YEAR

TIM SCOTT

As if the 10,000-mile Peking to Paris Motor Challenge weren't tough enough, Tim chose to compete on a 1923 FN motorcycle sidecar outfit. Lack of speed and mechanical mishaps didn't stop him from completing the rally, albeit in last place, to win a finisher's medal.



PAUL HARMER

RESTORATION/ RECREATION OF THE YEAR

DYMAXION REPLICA

Lord Norman Foster's recreation of the 1930s 'car of the future' devised by fellow architect Buckminster Fuller showed off the extraordinary skills of British companies Crosthwaite and Gardiner, Peter Freebody & Co and Roach Manufacturing.

ACHIEVEMENT OF THE YEAR

JAGUAR XKSS AT PEBBLE BEACH

Twelve of the 16 surviving XKSSs were brought together from all around the world by Jaguar Cars for California's famous Monterey Week. The Jaguars made a tour of the peninsula and formed a special display on the lawns of the Pebble Beach Concours. An amazing achievement.



EVENT OF THE YEAR



GOODWOOD REVIVAL

It just continues to get better. This year *Octane* had one of the best seats in the house: Mark Hales reported from the driving seat of Nick Mason's Ferrari GT0, sharing it with Martin Brundle. The rest of the event was pretty good, too.

AUCTION CAR OF THE YEAR

ASTON MARTIN DB2/4

DB2 values have been skyrocketing over the past two years, and they reached new heights when David Brown's MkIII drophead was sold by Barons for £206,000 in September – despite having been stored under a tarpaulin for 30 years.



NEW CAR OF THE YEAR

ASTON MARTIN ONE-77

Yes, it costs £1.2 million pounds and just 77 will be built. But the technology, craftsmanship and understanding of Aston DNA exhibited by this all-new model point to a very bright future for forthcoming Aston Martins.



WATCH OF THE YEAR



CHOPARD LUC TRIBUTE

A timepiece that switches effortlessly from being a wristwatch to a pocket watch, the LUC Louis-Ulysse 'Tribute' features a nifty cradle base into which the 49.6mm-diameter watch fits snugly. A simple quarter-turn unlocks it. Genius.



PICTURE OF THE YEAR

STRIPPED FOR ACTION

Gratuitous? Probably, but also rather pleasing to look at. Congratulations are due to photographer Tony Nylons.

MADDEST CAR OF THE YEAR

1905 DARRACQ 200HP

'The scariest car I've encountered in 21 years of motoring journalism,' wrote Mark Dixon after riding in the 1905 Land Speed Record holder with its restorer Mark Walker. The story of its epic rebuild was told in issue 87.



Historic comeback for touring cars

But moves in Group C racing cause controversy at grass-roots level

Words: Tony Dron



EXCITING NEW developments in historic racing for 2011 have stirred up a hornets' nest. There is nothing controversial, however, about Motor Racing Legends' launch of a new series, backed by JD Classics, for actual former touring cars of the 1977 to 1985 era.

The timing seems to be perfect. Potential competitors have been fired with enthusiasm, such is the nostalgia for those Alfas, BMWs, Fords, Jaguars and others that raced about 30 years ago. They have gathered dust for too long and anyone who has an eligible machine lurking in the back of their workshop has, through a stroke of luck, hit the jackpot.

Now that these cars have a future again, values will climb rapidly. Whether there are enough genuine cars left is an interesting question, and verification presents problems. Inevitably, surely, cars with no previous racing history will be accepted quite happily before long, provided that they comply with the period regulations, of course.

Things are less happy in Group C, where the established club feels that its toes have been trampled. When Masters Historic Racing announced that it too will be running some Group C races during 2011, an underlying problem was exposed. The super-fast Group C cars, when operated properly, are extremely expensive to run. The club has tried consistently to protect the interests of all its members, including the less wealthy.

The club's 2011 race series will take place at outstanding European and British meetings but it has resisted pressure to admit unrestricted, so-called 'third generation cars', which are considerably faster than most of the existing Group C cars, and probably even more expensive to run. The frustration of some wealthier owners over that perhaps prompted Masters to run its own Group C races, which it claims are complementary to the club series, not in competition with it. The club takes a different view.

To some competitors, the Masters Historic Racing organisation deserves the credit for bringing increased professionalism into our sport, thereby raising its status. Others have reacted differently. They see a corporate, commercial ethic that is inappropriate and inflationary to an essentially amateur sport.

As a direct reaction against that general feeling, Julius Thurgood has formed the Historic Racing Drivers' Club with the stated pledge: 'To revive the true spirit of club racing in 2011.'

The HRDC appears to be gaining support and one of its series is for Pre-1960 Historic Touring Cars, run to the regulations pioneered by Goodwood in the Revival meeting. While those rules may be somewhat flexible, they have produced some of the most entertaining races seen in years.

Is this war? An interesting year lies ahead.



Less testing times ahead?

New exemptions may actually work in favour of owners of some pre-war vehicles

THE TRIALS and tribulations of MoT'ing a pre-war historic vehicle could be eased in the future, following the UK Government's acceptance that older cars have specific requirements that the annual safety check may not need to cover.

A more sympathetic view of pre-war vehicle testing was on the agenda at a recent meeting between the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC), Greg Knight MP (chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Historic Vehicle Group and the Under-Secretary of State for Roads and Motoring), Mike Penning MP, and two senior officials from the Department for Transport and the DVLA. As a result, a number of pro-historic pieces of legislation have been proposed for approval.

As a classic car enthusiast, Greg Knight is a sympathetic voice for the old-vehicle movement within Westminster. Penning responded by expressing his willingness to look at cutting out unnecessary regulation and bureaucracy where practical. Following the meeting, the minister agreed in principle with the suggestion of exempting cars and smaller vehicles built before 1921, and commercial vehicles built before 1941, from MoT testing.

This will be continuously reviewed, and the possibility of it becoming a rolling exemption has not been ruled out. The FBHVC has pushed for this exemption in light of the problems experienced by owners at the annual test. FBHVC secretary Rosy Pugh said: 'We emphasise that road-going vehicles must be maintained in full working order at all times and we must strive to ensure that our accident level does not rise from the present virtually zero position.'

Lotus Renault enters F1 with classic livery

The famous black-and-gold returns to F1 in intriguing circumstances

THE ICONIC black-and-gold livery returns to Formula 1 in 2011, following the announcement that Group Lotus (the road car producer) and Genii Capital have formed a partnership that rebrands Renault's F1 cars as 'Lotus Renault GP' – in direct competition with Team Lotus!

Some of the sport's greatest

drivers – Andretti, Peterson, Senna – scored victories in the original black-and-gold cars. The JPS livery disappeared at the end of 1986, which coincided with a downturn in Team Lotus's fortunes.

Lotus Renault GP seems about to go head-to-head with Tony Fernandes' Team Lotus team, which made its debut in the 2009



F1 Championship. As we closed for press, Team Lotus looked set to continue with its British Racing Green-and-gold cars. It is based near Lotus Group HQ in Norfolk, and will also use Renault power...



Along the enchanted shores of Lake Como, a select few of the world's most elite motor cars will be offered at this inaugural auction. In the spirit of the associated Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, the examples are specially selected to showcase the grace, beauty and mystique of the historic automobile. The magnificent selection on offer at this event will be, truly, second to none.



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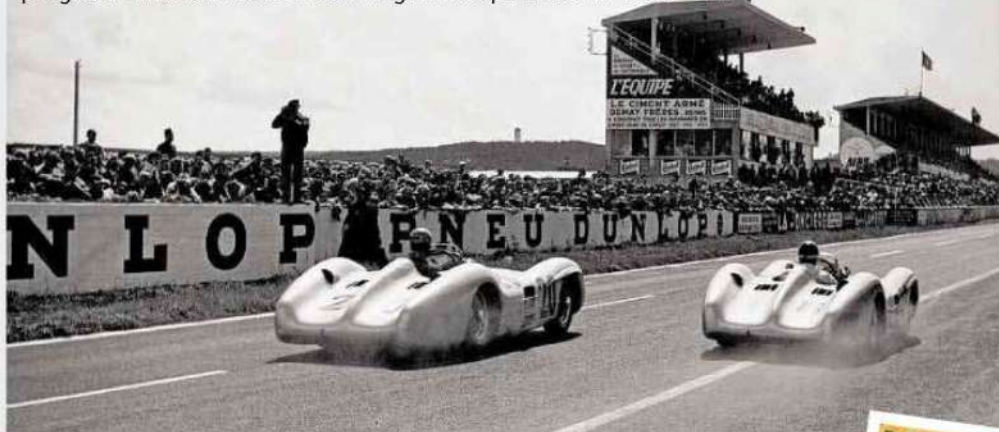
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125 YEARS SINCE THE WORLD'S FIRST CAR

MERC CELEBRATES

January to kick-off a year of exhibitions marking the company's progress since the Benz Motorwagen was patented in 1886



MERCEDES-BENZ is celebrating 125 years since the invention of the car: the Benz Motorwagen. Although there are several theories on what constitutes the first motor car, the German company is marking 29 January because it was on this date in 1886 that Carl Benz received the world's first patent for a car – which became the starting point of today's company.

The celebrations begin at the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart with an exhibition that includes the most significant cars in the company's history. Centrepieces are likely to be its replicas of Benz's original Patent-Motorwagen, built in 1885, as well as the Silver Arrows racers and record-breaking C111s. At the same time, an exhibition about emissions-free

transport looks to the company's future.

The Mercedes-Benz Museum covers 16,500 square metres on nine levels, and up to 160 vehicles are exhibited at any one time. Rob Halloway, head of PR at Mercedes-Benz UK, told *Octane* that the anniversary will also be commemorated in Britain: 'The Mercedes-Benz Museum at Stuttgart will be the focal point of the birthday celebrations, but later in the year we have a number of special celebrations lined-up at Mercedes-Benz World in Brooklands too.'

The Mercedes-Benz Museum is open daily from Tuesday to Sunday between 9am and 6pm. Up-to-date information for visitors is available from the website: www.mercedes-benz-classic.com.



Clockwise from top left

Mercedes-Benz made a triumphant return to grand prix racing at Reims in 1954; the museum will host the 2011 celebrations; world's first car was actually a trike; 1926 publicity poster marks the controversial merger of Daimler and Benz.

OCTANE TO HOST EVENING WITH LAND SPEED LEGENDS

And you're invited...

MAKE A DATE for 17 March and join *Octane* at London's Royal Automobile Club for a special gala dinner evening hosted by speed record expert David Tremayne, with (from left to right) Land Speed Record holders Richard Noble OBE, Wing Commander Andy Green OBE and Don Wales.

All will be on hand to share their greatest speed moments. Richard and Andy will explain how they plan to break the 1000mph barrier with *Bloodhound SSC*, and Don Wales will discuss his next venture, *Bluebird Electric*, a land speed car capable of 400mph.

The price of £125 per person includes a three-course banquet with wine in the elegant Mountbatten Room, as well as a

signed print as a memento of the evening, which begins at 7.30pm and ends at 10pm. A discount is available for group bookings of ten or more, and the dress code is lounge suits and cocktail dresses.

To book, call +44 (0)20 7907 6329, email driversclub@octane-magazine.com, or visit www.octane-magazine.com and click on 'shop'.

In brief...

■ GOODWOOD THEME

'Racing Revolutions – quantum leaps that shaped motor sport' is the theme for the 2011 Goodwood Festival of Speed (1-3 July). And the date for the Goodwood Revival has been confirmed as 16-18 September. For more, see www.goodwood.co.uk.

■ TOP BOSS SHUFFLE

Wolfgang Dürheimer has been appointed as Bugatti's new president, following the retirement of Franz-Josef Paefgen. He has moved from an R&D role that was shared between Bentley and Porsche.

■ NEW YEAR RUN

There's a classic car run taking place on New Year's Day from Aston Martin Works Service in Newport Pagnell. Partners for the event include Shell, Magic of Motoring, Export 56 and Porsche. Download an entry form from www.magicofmotoring.com.

■ JACQUES SWATERS

The Belgian former racer and owner of Ecurie Francorchamps and Ecurie Nationale Belge has died, aged 84. His team was most closely associated with Ferrari, and scored its greatest victory at the 1965 Spa 500km.

■ LOOKING TO SELL?

Classic car dealer Fiskens is looking for a new salesperson. A deep knowledge of the market and bags of enthusiasm are musts. Call James Mitchell on +44 (0)20 7584 3503 or email james@fiskens.com for more information.

■ TURNER'S 2011

Turner fans, mark 23-26 June in your calendars as the USA reunion takes place at the Mid Ohio Raceway in Mansfield, Ohio. The cars will be honoured by a special race – more information from John Ruth on JDRuth@att.net.

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Fossil fuel's Nemesis?

Yes, it's a Lotus-based electric car, but it's not a Tesla – meet the Nemesis, one man's concept of the electric future

Words: Mark Dixon



DALE VINCE, OBE, is an unlikely-looking businessman. When we meet at his Gloucestershire country house, he's wearing artfully torn jeans and a faded T-shirt, and there's loud rock music playing somewhere in an upstairs room; with his long hair he looks more like a successful musician than the boss of an electricity company. Or, indeed, the driving force behind a radical new sports car.

The Nemesis takes electric car performance to a new level. Its lithium-ion polymer battery pack gives the equivalent of 330bhp, and a range of 100-150 miles (enough for 96% of UK car journeys, ripostes Vince to the inevitable question about 'range anxiety'). Besides, he points out, battery technology is developing so rapidly that it will soon be possible to take on board a 50% charge in five minutes.)

And Vince knows his subject, having an impressive CV as the founder and MD of Ecotricity, the world's largest supplier of 'green' electricity. But in Vince's case, appearances are not entirely deceptive. 'For 15 or 20 years I was a drop-out,' he explains. 'I was living in a trailer on top of a hill. That's when I became interested in windmills...'

That 'interest in windmills' led to Dale setting up Ecotricity to supply wind turbine-generated electricity. But Dale is as much of a speed-freak as any petrolhead – he just prefers his energy to be non-polluting. So he pulled together a small team of experts, including car designer Peter Stevens, to help develop the Nemesis. 'It had to be a no-compromise car,' says Vince. 'People won't accept electric cars if they don't work at least as well as the petrol-powered cars they already have.'

Basis for the Nemesis was an eBay-sourced Lotus Exige, which has been lengthened by 900mm and given an entirely new carbonfibre rear section. The centre of gravity has been lowered and shifted forward; weight is some 150kg more than a supercharged Exige's but the power-to-weight ratio

is much higher, too. This is very much a prototype, so no attention has been paid to luxuries such as heating or noise insulation. Performance is everything.

And it certainly performs. Push the throttle hard and the Nemesis gathers speed like an F14 being catapult launched from the USS *Enterprise*. Sounds like it, too, making an incredible jet fighter roar under acceleration, a noise which abates only slightly at cruising speed. Frankly, it's pretty exhausting and it's markedly different to the discreet whoosh emitted by a Tesla.

So the Nemesis is noisier and less civilised than the Tesla. It is, however, lighter and faster, with a claimed 0-100mph time of 8.5sec, and – as far as we could tell from a drive on wet, crowded B-roads – better handling. Unlike in the American car, you don't immediately notice the extra weight of the batteries, and the Nemesis's Exige suspension has been left largely unchanged aside from uprated rear dampers. It handles like a Lotus, in other words, rather than a Lotus that's bearing a payload it was never designed to carry.

This car won't go into production, but Vince and his team will use the lessons learned for future projects. They have nothing less than the Land Speed Record for production cars in their sights, with a four-wheel-drive electric supercar that will develop over 700bhp. All they need is the funding...

New Continental GT. Honestly

Despite appearances, Bentley has changed every panel, but the big news is a new V8 engine option

THIS IS Bentley's new Continental GT. First thought? It looks like the original 2003 version. Second thought? Yes, but everything has changed, slightly.

The edges are crisper, be they on body or dashboard, and the grille is bolder. Front wings and bootlid are now of superformed aluminium, very light and able to be drawn into deep shapes, and the whole car has shed 65kg thanks also to new seats. Lights both ends incorporate numerous LEDs. It's more than a mere facelift.

Power still comes from a 6.0-litre, twin-turbo W12 – a more frugal V8 is due next year – but power is up by 15bhp to 575bhp. Peak torque of 516lb ft arrives at just 1700rpm. Significantly, the four-wheel-drive's default setting now sends 60% of effort to the rear wheels instead of just half.

This, some revised geometry and wider tracks transform the driving experience. The GT points more keenly into a corner, and can be held on the power to balance the (reduced) understeer. The steering is crisper, although you still can't feel what's really going on. Still less brutal than the previous-generation Supersports, it's more fluent and more, well, biddable.

On Oman's smooth roads the four damper-firmness ranges felt little different from each other – likely a different story in the UK. For all its epic thrust, though, the engine isn't joyful. It sends vibration through the steering wheel and sometimes generates a dissonant boom. Vital stats? It will do 198mph, hit 60 in 4.4sec, generate 384g/km of CO₂, and cost you £135,760.

John Simister



Above and left
Spot the difference? Sharper edges inside and out but the same four-wheel-drive twin-turbo W12 recipe – until next year's V8 arrives.

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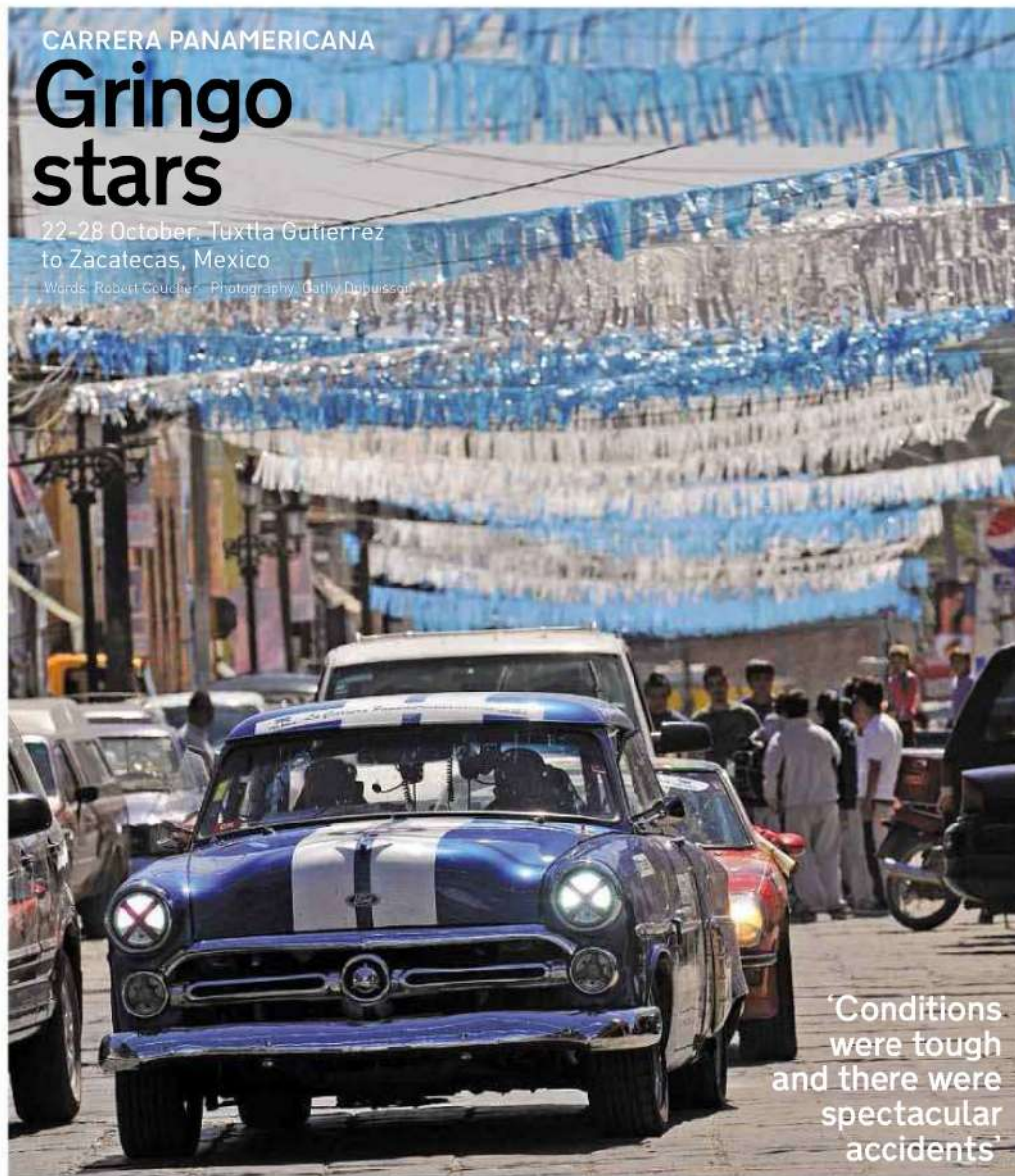
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CARRERA PANAMERICANA

Gringo stars

22-28 October, Tuxtla Gutierrez to Zacatecas, Mexico

Words: Robert Goudier Photography: Cathy Dobuiscan



'Conditions were tough and there were spectacular accidents'

THIS YEAR SAW the 23rd running of the fast and dangerous ten-stage, 1920-mile road race across Mexico. By the end of the first day, 27 had already been wiped out of the 115-strong field that started. Pre-race favourites Doug Mockett and Angelica Fuentes suffered a broken differential on their way to the startline. They returned to the race but suffered an 'off' in exactly the same place Mockett lost it last year. The corner is now named after him.

Among entries from all over the USA, Europe and South America, in a range of wildly painted Studebakers, Oldsmobiles, Volvos, Porsches and two Mercedes-Benz Gullwings, Finnish World Rally Champion Harri Rovanperä took the win in a Studebaker – on his first attempt.

'It has been a magnificent seven days,' he said. 'It was a very difficult race, very long. Everyone kept telling me to be careful. The other drivers are fast and the car behaved marvellously.'

The road conditions were tough and there were a number of spectacular

accidents. On the fourth day Bill Beilharz lost his brakes and went end over end near Morelia. Then in Aguascalientes the competitors visited the new NASCAR circuit south of the town for a race on the banked oval. But no-one thought to warn them that the end of the straight was strewn with gravel, causing lurid spins.

By the end of the fourth day it was a race between Rovanperä and Mexican racing champion Michel Jourdain. They finished just 12 seconds apart, and a full 13 minutes ahead of Jorge Pedrero in third place.

In the Historic C class, the largest with 31 cars entered, Tomas Lopez Rocha and Carlo Martinez Campos finished first and second driving Ford Falcons. Jochen Mass, who seems to appear everywhere, crashed out in his Mustang.

For the first time the Carrera finished in Zacatecas and included two runs of the infamous La Bufa mountain stage. Next year's Carrera Panamericana dates are 21-27 October but the final route has yet to be announced.

Left

Fiesta-time in Zacatecas as the finishers make their way through the streets after 1920 gruelling miles.



Right

Event casualties were high. The first day alone claimed 27 cars; Hubertus von Wangenheim's Opel Diplomat was done to a crisp.





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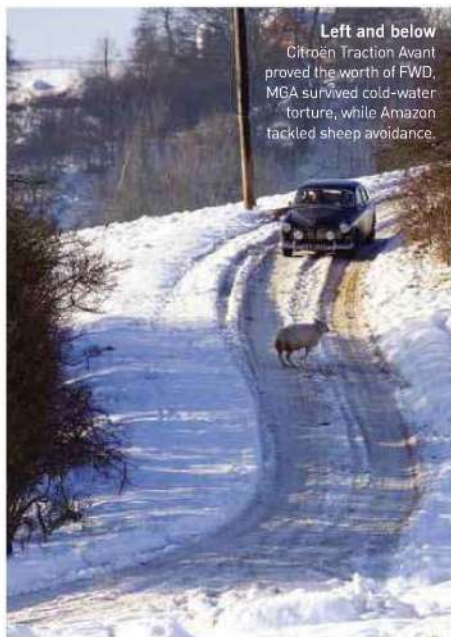
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HERO LE JOG 2010

A question of survival

4-7 December. Land's End, Cornwall, to John o'Groats, Scotland

Photography: Francesco Rastrelli



Left and below
Citroën Traction Avant
proved the worth of FWD.
MGA survived cold-water
torture, while Amazon
tackled sheep avoidance.



'HEAVY SNOW FALL, strong winds, dense fog and rain showers.' That was the weather forecast for early December, and they weren't kidding. Once the teams left Newcastle and ventured into Scotland, they were presented with the most challenging weather possible – and at times it looked like some of the entrants weren't going to make it at all. 'It was definitely a question of survival,' as Robert McLean, winner of the HERO Cup, summed up.

Two days earlier, at the Land's End start, the teams were bracing themselves for a tough drive. For the 16th running of LeJog, 54 participants from ten countries – including more than 12 first-timers – gathered for what they knew would be a gruelling challenge in navigation and regularity. But that's exactly what they had signed up for: HERO's LeJog has a reputation for being the UK's toughest endurance event.

Having left the windy cliffs of Land's End at the break of dawn, the teams were immediately thrown into navigating through the labyrinth of Cornwall's narrow lanes in horizontal rain, with the occasional sheep wandering into view round blind bends.

Day two took the participants into Wales and some severe weather, as the blanket of snow became thicker and the ice slicker. The entourage moved steadily northwards as the organisers revised the route to avoid closed roads, recalculating mileage, timings, moving the check points and relocating the 'Jogularity' sections overnight. But that was nothing compared with what was about to come.

The final leg was a full-on 24-hour non-stop-drive, leaving Newcastle in the face of worsening extreme weather with no respite until the next



'The final leg was a 24-hour non-stop-drive, leaving Newcastle in the face of worsening extreme weather'

morning at John o'Groats. 'These were definitely the worst conditions I've ever driven in,' said Robert McLean, veteran of ten LeJogs, all campaigned in his Rover P4 100 (above). 'It was unfortunate for the organisers, as they cut a lot of the route – but they did an excellent job in really tough circumstances.'

Several sections of the route had to be cancelled, causing disruption to regularities and tests, and the freezing temperatures and heavy snowfall led to recovery teams having to free-up crews stuck in drifts.

'The most worrying part of this for us was near Edinburgh, when we got stuck in traffic on the M8

motorway. But we were lucky and spotted a bank of snow, and dug a pathway through it to escape the gridlock.' This was on the day that hundreds of hapless motorists found themselves stuck on the motorway all night.

Despite the conditions, at no point did the organisers consider stopping the rally – as the rally cars and crews had proved themselves capable of overcoming everything thrown at them. And the snow made the spectacular Scottish scenery even more beautiful than normal.

'Running alongside Rannoch Moor in the dark was stunningly beautiful; it was so cold, and everything was frozen and sparkling in moonlight,' said Robert.

The first cars arrived at John o'Groats at sunrise after a night's navigation through the Highlands and sleeping villages of Scotland. The extreme difficulties en route ensured an even greater sense of team spirit and camaraderie than ever, with a sense of pride from the crews mixed with admiration for the reliability of their cars.

Christian Ruter and Stephan Huber (1971 BMW 2800) took first place; Kevin Haselden and David Kirkham (1967 Mini-Cooper) took second; and Tony Sheach and Richard Lambley (1964 Triumph TR4, above) finished third. Gold Medals went to Haselden and Kirkham, Sheach and Lambley, Jean-Marie Schmit and Thierry Hilger (1969 Sunbeam Chamois); and Igino Angelini and Francesco Moccagatta (1970 Triumph TR6).

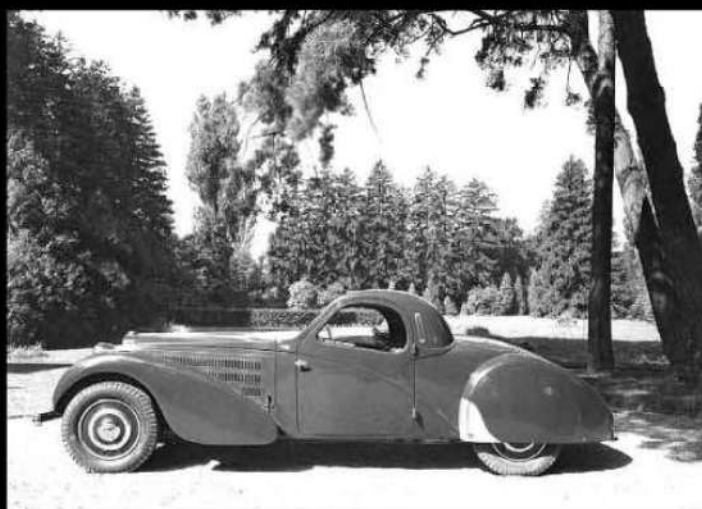
Event organiser Mathias Doutreleau summed-up after the event: 'LeJog confirmed its tough reputation, and also underlined the hardy spirit of the competitors. That they made it to John o'Groats at all was an amazing achievement.'



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THE FOOTMAN JAMES CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW

Birmingham or bust...

12-14 November. Birmingham, UK

Words: Keith Adams Photography: Gerard Hughes

THE UK'S LARGEST indoor classic motor show once again attracted a huge audience. Proof, if any were needed, that the level of interest in the classic car scene in the UK and Europe is as healthy as ever. Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre devotes five halls to the show – and during the three-day extravaganza, attendance was estimated at 46,000.

Shows like this aren't just about numbers; the cars and the personalities are what count. And with more than 200 clubs displaying around 1200 cars, there was a huge variety of metal to make sure classic fans weren't disappointed.

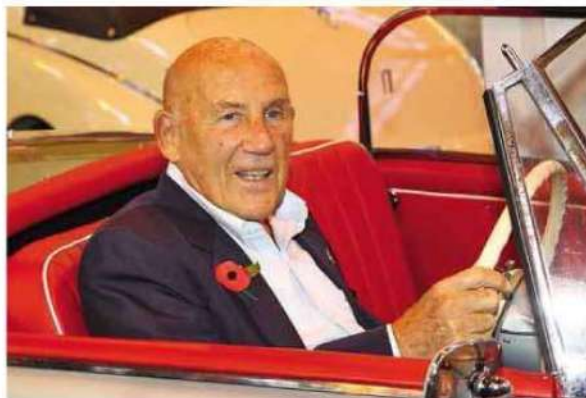
The Classic Motor Show's significance on the UK calendar was underlined by the quality of the exhibitors. The fact that the Bugatti Owners' Club, Maserati Club UK and Ferrari Owners' Club (right) laid on such impressive displays of supercars also emphasised how the NEC isn't only about bread 'n' butter classics.

Having said that, it's these cars that still manage to arouse the most interest during the weekend. The crowds around the Ford



Escorts and Capris, as well as the Rover SD1s and P6s, had to be seen to be believed. Sports cars also continue to prove eternally popular at the event, with the TVR, Gilbern and Fairthorpe stands attracting particular attention.

The Live Stage featured Mike Brewer of TV's *Wheeler Dealers*, in contrast to the serious business of the Meguiar's Club Showcase. The world-class concours was won by a 1963 Ferrari 250GT Berlinetta Lusso, which beat 16 entries in the Restoration Theatre.



Clockwise from above left
The crowds were healthy at the NEC Show, even on Friday; Sir Stirling Moss made a guest appearance; Ferrari Owners' Club starred F40 and Enzo.



TOUR OF ISTRIA

Kicks in the Balkans

5-7 November. Croatia

Words and photography: Daniel Tomicic

WITH SOME OF Europe's prettiest scenery, a favourable climate and uncrowded roads, the Balkan coast makes an ideal tour destination – even in November. And Istria, Mario Andretti's native land, is an undiscovered drivers' heaven. In two days of driving, the first classic Tour of Istria covered more than 500 miles of winding roads – and the Scuderia del Portello Alfa Romeo convoy was held up only three times.

The tour's drivers have participated in major events from the Monte Carlo Historique to the Nürburgring Oldtimer Grand Prix, but there was no time-keeping on this tour.

It began with a ferry crossing from the west coast of Croatia and on to a 1400m bridge to Rijeka, Croatia's biggest port – and the place where the Jankovits brothers built the unique Alfa 6C



2300-engined Aerospider in the 1930s.

The second day started with a photo session in front of the beautiful Belle Époque Villa Polesini in Porec, then the tour moved to the inland peaks, with a stage that took entrants over 1400m above sea level on the Ucka mountain pass. Rain and thick fog on steep 14% gradients made rear-wheel drive a lot of fun.

The tour ended in Motovun, Mario Andretti's birthplace. Before the event, the man himself said: 'I'm happy to see an event with classic cars touring through beautiful Istria. I'm certain everyone will enjoy their visit.'



Above and right
Uncrowded roads, stunning scenery and beautiful towns: Istria is an 'undiscovered drivers' heaven'.

'Rain and thick fog on steep 14% gradients made rear-wheel drive a lot of fun'

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7-8 JANUARY

MCC EXETER TRIAL
Exeter, Devon, UK. Classic trial with challenging tests.
www.themotorcyclingclub.org.uk

13-15 JANUARY

WINTER RAID
Swiss and Italian Alps. Classic road rally for those who like winter challenges.
www.raid.ch

13-16 JANUARY

AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL
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www.autosport-international.com

13-16 JANUARY

PISTONHEADS: THE PERFORMANCE SHOW
NEC, Birmingham, UK. Performance car show featuring classics and supercars.
www.pistonheads.com/show

13-16 JANUARY

THE WINTER TRIAL
Austrian Alps. Mountainous winter rally, for which snow is virtually guaranteed.
www.thetrial.nl

14-24 JANUARY

AUTO MOTO SALON
Brussels, Belgium. Large car show with classics on display.
www.salonauto.be

16 JANUARY - 2 FEBRUARY

RALLYE MONTE-CARLO HISTORIQUE
Monte-Carlo, Monaco. Retrospective rally held in the right location.
www.acm.mc

18-23 JANUARY

CAVALLINO CLASSIC XX
Palm Beach, Florida, USA. Top-level Ferrari event, with concours, racing and tours.
www.cavallino.com

22-24 JANUARY

MOTOR SHOW FESTIVAL
Zaragoza, Spain. Classic and performance car show, majoring on motor sport.
www.motorshowfestival.com

27-31 JANUARY

ROLEX 24 AT DAYTONA
Daytona Speedway, Florida, USA.
www.traveldestinations.co.uk

2-6 FEBRUARY

RÉTROMOBILE
Paris, France. The chic season-opener, now under new management.
www.retromobile.fr

2-6 FEBRUARY

KUWAIT CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE
Shuwaikh Industrial Area, Kuwait.
www.kuwaitconcours.com

6-9 FEBRUARY

NEIGE ET GLACE
Malsuisson, France. Winter rally set in the stunning mountain scenery of the Jura.
www.zaniroli.com

17 FEBRUARY - 17 MARCH

THE TIGER CLASSIC CAR RALLY
Bangkok to Hanoi. New event, with 25 days of driving.
www.wccr.com.com

25-27 FEBRUARY

RACE RETRO
Stoneleigh Park, Coventry, UK. A mixture of live action and static displays.
www.raceretro.com

27 FEBRUARY - 6 MARCH

THE JEWEL THAT IS CUBA
Exclusive tour of Cuba starting and ending in Havana.
www.thejewelevents.com

4-5 MARCH

ANTWERP CLASSIC SALON
Antwerp, Belgium. Indoor classic motor show - one of Europe's largest.
www.antwerpexpo.be

11-13 MARCH

RETRO CLASSICS STUTTGART
Large-scale German classic car show with echoes of Techno-Classica Essen.
www.messe-stuttgart.de/retro

11-13 MARCH

AMELIA ISLAND CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE
Florida, USA. Top-flight concours season-opening event.
www.ameliailandconcours.org

11-13 MARCH

BRITISH LEISURE SHOW
Royal Windsor, Berkshire, UK. Outdoor show featuring classic cars, bikes and boats.
www.britishteleisureshow.co.uk

12-14 MARCH

COPPA-MILANO-SANREMO
Italian regularity rally, starts at Monza Autodrome.
www.milano-sanremo.it

12-19 MARCH

MAROC CLASSIC RALLY
1400-mile historic rally from Rabat to Marrakesh.
www.rallye-maroc-classic.com

16-19 MARCH

12 HOURS OF SEBRING
Sebring International Raceway, Florida, USA.
www.traveldestinations.co.uk

17 MARCH

AN EVENING WITH LAND SPEED LEGENDS
Royal Automobile Club, London, UK. A trio of the UK's Land Speed Record-breakers.
www.octane-magazine.com

18-20 MARCH

THE SECOND POPPY RALLY YPRES
Ypres, Belgium. For expert and novice crews.
www.classicrally.org.uk

19 MARCH

BRITISH INDOOR 4X4 SHOW
Bingley Hall, Staffordshire, UK. Lots of off-road action.
www.britishtindoor4x4show.co.uk

19-20 MARCH

BRITISH CARS & LIFESTYLE
Rosmalen, The Netherlands. Excellent indoor show, with the emphasis on UK vehicles.
www.britishbest.nl

31 MARCH - 3 APRIL

TECHNO-CLASSICA ESSEN
Essen, Germany. Europe's largest indoor classic show: sales, clubs and Coys auction.
www.siha.de

1-3 APRIL

LONGFORD MOTOR RACING REVIVAL
Longford, Tasmania. Revival of the legendary racing event, featuring classic cars.
www.longfordrevival.com.au

1-3 APRIL

THE THIRD FLYING SCOTSMAN
London to Edinburgh, UK. For vintage and pre-war cars on Britain's best driving roads.
www.endurorally.com

5-10 APRIL

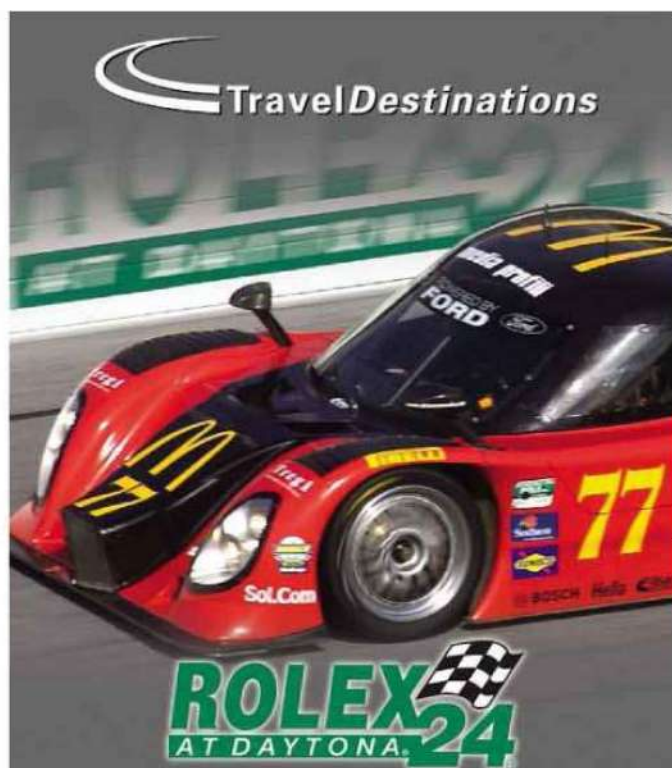
TARGA TASMANIA
Tasmania, Australia. Inspired by the Targa Florio; now celebrating its 20th anniversary.
www.targa.org.au

5-12 APRIL

LOIRE VALLEY SPRING TOUR
Provence, France. Seven-day tour of France's château country.
www.classiccartoursinternational.co.uk

7-10 APRIL

XK AND E-TYPE ISLE OF WIGHT TOUR
Isle of Wight, UK. Jaguar E-type Club presents a tour of this picturesque island.
www.classictravelling.com



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ABTA No. W597X



Best events in... Italy

MAKE A WISH-LIST of all your favourite kinds of classic car event, and you'll find they happen in Italy. The official opening of the season is in March with the **Coppa Milano-Sanremo**, a four-day historic car tour through beautiful scenery in commemoration of the 1906-73 event, and the **Valli & Nebbie** regularity tour around the Ferrara area. These events are popular with owners of pre-war cars, who use them as a warm up for the Mille Miglia. The **Mille Miglia** is the queen of the classic world, and the first week of May sees some of the finest classic sports cars built between 1927 and '57 meet in Brescia for the run to Rome and back. Also in May is the **Transappenninica**, open to cars built up to 1940, that tours 1000km of a different region each year; Tuscany, with Florence, Isola d'Elba and Maremma, for 2011. Something quieter? At the end of May, the **Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este** (below) is a refined event in a heart-stopping location. The **Vernasca Silver Flag** hillclimb, from Castell'Arquato to Vernasca, follows in June. In September, **La Settimana Bressiana** brings cars, aeroplanes, racing boats and motorcycles built before 1918 to Lake Garda and Brescia, while the **Trofeo Nuovolari** is a coast-to-coast tour open to cars from 1919 to '69. In October, Padua's **Auto e Moto d'Epoca** and, in November, the **Winter Marathon** – a rally up and down the Dolomite Passes – bring the season to a close.

Massimo Delbò



CLASSIC PILGRIMAGES

Franschhoek Pass, South Africa



SITUATED 50 MILES from Cape Town centre, Franschhoek – which literally means 'French corner' – is the food and wine capital of South Africa. Settled by the French Huguenots in 1688, Franschhoek has numerous established vineyards plus quaint shops and restaurants, serving delicious new-world French food, and the valley is dotted with boutique hotels and private estates. It is located in the Drakenstein Mountains and is accessed via the dramatic Helshoogte – literally Hell's Heights – Pass. So when you're not eating and drinking, driving is of the first order.

Many say the Franschhoek Pass is as great a drive as Italy's legendary Stelvio Pass, but without the traffic. The route up is tight and twisting, then opens out over the top, and the fast bends past Theewaterskloof reservoir lead through the apple-growing Elgin valley to the seaside village of Hermanus, which is famous for whale watching.

The Franschhoek Motor Museum on the L'Ormarins wine estate is a must-see, with its collection of 100 years of motoring history. Motor cars range from an 1898 Beeston motor tricycle to Bugattis and Alfa Romeos, plus American and British classics. See www.fmm.co.za.

11-16 APRIL

TOUR AUTO OPTIC 2000

Tour of France: Paris to the Riviera. Historic rally with special stages on historic circuits. www.tourauto.com

22-23 APRIL

MCC LANDS END TRIAL

Various starts, finishes Newquay, Cornwall, UK. Classic trial with challenging tests. www.themotorcyclingclub.org.uk

24 APRIL

TEST DAY AT LE MANS

Held at the famous French circuit. www.lemansrace.com

28-30 APRIL

MANX CLASSIC

Isle of Man, UK. Sprint and hillclimb events around the island for classics and specials. www.manxmotoring.com

30 APRIL – 1 MAY

BRISTOL CLASSIC CAR SHOW

Royal Bath and West Showground, Somerset, UK. Long-running classic show. www.bccsl.co.uk

2-6 MAY

IRISH TRIAL

Dublin, Ireland. Regularity rally in a similar format to the Scottish Malts. www.heroevents.eu

5-15 MAY

MILLE MIGLIA/ITALIAN LAKES TOUR

Northern and central Italy. Nine-day tour. www.classiccartoursinternational.co.uk

11-15 MAY

MILLE MIGLIA

Brescia to Rome to Brescia. Legendary! If you're not competing, go to spectate. www.1000-miglia.eu

14 MAY

BEAULIEU MOTORMART AUTOJUMBLE

Beaulieu, Hampshire, UK. Spring version of the most famous autojumble of them all. www.beaulieu.co.uk

14-15 MAY

THE RALLY SHOW

Cornbury Park, Oxfordshire, UK. Excellent rally show, featuring moderns and classics. www.therallyshow.org

14-15 MAY

GRAND PRIX DE PAU HISTORIC

Pau, France. Great historic racing around the picturesque town. www.grandprixdepauhistorique.com

16-22 MAY

VALLETTA GRAND PRIX

Valletta, Malta. Classic racing in Malta's beautiful capital city. www.vallettagrandprix.com

20-22 MAY

CONCORSO D'ELEGANZA VILLA D'ESTE

Cernobbio, Lake Como, Italy. Wonderfully stylish, world-class concours. By invitation only: public admission on the Sunday. www.concorsodeleganzavilladeste.com

23 MAY – 5 JUNE

THE JEWEL THAT IS JORDAN V

Aqaba, Jordan. Exclusive tour, billed as 'the ultimate tour for connoisseurs'. www.thejewelevents.com

28 MAY

GP100

Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, Warks, UK. Event to celebrate the centenary of British car designer Gerald Palmer's birth, now in conjunction with Jowett Car Club rally. www.gp100.org

28-29 MAY

SPA FRANCORCHAMPS CLASSIC

Spa Francorchamps, Belgium. www.traveldestinations.co.uk

1-4 JUNE

THREE CASTLES WELSH CLASSIC TRIAL

Wales. Excellent classic car rally for novices and experts that passes through some fantastic countryside. www.three-castles.co.uk

3-6 JUNE

GORDON BENNETT IRISH CLASSIC

Portlaoise, Republic of Ireland. Classic car rally along the Gordon Bennett route. www.gordonbennettclassic.ie

5-6 JUNE

GREENWICH CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

Greenwich, Connecticut, USA. Well-attended and rapidly growing concours. www.greenwichconcours.com

11-12 JUNE

LE MANS 24 HOURS

Le Mans, France. The legendary 24-hour race is a classic pilgrimage for the British fans who make up 30% of the total audience. www.lemansrace.com

19-25 JUNE

FRENCH REVOLUTION CLASSIC CAR RUN

Montreuil-sur-Mer, France. Old-fashioned regularity rally in Picardie and Normandy. www.conquestevents.co.uk

23-26 JUNE

ADAC NÜRBURGRING 24 HOURS

Nürburgring, Germany. www.traveldestinations.co.uk

25 JUNE – 1 JULY

FIRST CLASSIC CUP – LOCHS AND GLENS

Highlands, Scotland. New rallying event designed to get harder as it progresses. www.classically.org.uk

26 JUNE

ART OF THE CAR CONCOURS

Kansas City, Missouri, USA. Vintage and classic cars on the lawns. www.artofthecarconcours.com

30 JUNE

MOVING MOTOR SHOW

Goodwood Circuit, Sussex, UK. www.goodwood.co.uk

1-3 JULY

GOODWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED

Goodwood Circuit, Sussex, UK. Motor sport celebration in the grounds of Lord March's stately home. Advance ticket sales only. www.goodwood.co.uk

3-8 JULY

RALLYE INTERNATIONAL DES ALPES

Switzerland to Italy. Historic rally. www.rallyedesalpes.com

30-31 JULY

24 HOURS OF SPA

Spa Francorchamps, Belgium. www.traveldestinations.co.uk

12-14 AUGUST

AVD OLDTIMER GRAND PRIX

Nürburgring, Germany. www.traveldestinations.co.uk

16-18 SEPTEMBER

GOODWOOD REVIVAL

Goodwood Circuit, Sussex, UK. Advance ticket sales only. www.goodwood.co.uk

23-25 SEPTEMBER

SIX HOURS OF SPA FESTIVAL

Spa Francorchamps, Belgium. www.sixhoursofspa.co.uk

21-23 OCTOBER

MOTORCLASSICA

Melbourne, Australia. Coming back for a second year, top level concours. www.motorclassica.com.au

Octane makes every effort to ensure accuracy on these pages, but recommends that you contact event organisers before setting out.

AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL Start of the season

13-16 January, NEC, Birmingham, UK



THE AUTOSPORT International Show kick-starts the 2011 season in style, as all the major sporting categories will be featured at the show. But although the cars play a major role, the star personalities will be a major attraction for autograph-hunters. Last year, visitor numbers actually rose despite the economic uncertainty, indicating that people really feel the need to connect with the glamour of motor sport.

Major attractions include the F1 starting grid, with 2010's championship-winning Red Bull, an array of racing drivers, and the BBC F1 commentating team led by Martin Brundle and Jake Humphrey. But it's not all new metal, as the historic racers are once again out in force.

Tickets include a seat in the Live Action Arena and free entry into the Pistonheads show, held alongside Autosport International. *Octane* will be there too. More information on www.autosport-international.com.



AMELIA ISLAND CONCOURS

Class in Florida

11-13 March, Amelia Island, Florida, USA

THE US CONCOURS scene is envied across the globe and, although the Monterey Week dominates, the spring concours at Amelia Island can justifiably claim to be a rival. The event, held on the east coast of northern Florida, is based at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel and the adjoining Golf Club of Amelia Island. It is a suitably upmarket venue, which is one reason why Amelia Island attracts a stunning mixture of road and competition cars.

For 2011, a major attraction will be 'The Cannonball Run Revisited', a seminar celebrating the illegal road race (and series of spin-off films) that snubbed its nose at the pending national speed limit and other traffic laws during the 1970s. This year the special guest is Indy Car great Bobby Rahal.

Those choosing to visit Amelia and not worry about the budget can stay at the Ritz-Carlton, but an alternative is to rent a condo in a nearby resort complex. See www.ameliaislandconcours.org.

1965 FERRARI 275 GTB/C

One of the ultra rare alloy 275 GTB/C Competition models built by Ferrari for the 1965 season. Prepared regardless of cost to be a front running circuit racer that is still at home on the road, it has proved to be a highly successful participant in many of the major events including Goodwood and Le Mans Classic. This important GT Ferrari is beautifully presented in Rosso Corsa and retains its original matching numbered, 6 carburettor engine and transaxle



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Track time needed

Letter
OF THE
MONTH



WHAT MAKES a car a true classic and a timeless icon?

Personally, I cannot see the purpose of a manufacturer building a monstrously powerful machine purely for use on public roads, where in 99% of countries speed is governed.

I am talking about cars like the Bugatti Veyron and the Koenigsegg [above]. For them to achieve the same recognition as the McLaren F1, Ferrari 250GTO or Ford GT40 they need to show us what they can do on a race circuit, punching through lap after lap of torture and then coming out the other side victorious, wearing their battle scars. I don't think a Veyron would survive the first hour of Le Mans. These cars are more suited to short bursts of speed down deserted highways, and living in garages as tokens of their owners' wealth.

It evokes a special emotion to see a car being pushed to the

limit with brakes glowing, or a modern-day gladiator covered in brake dust and smelling of fuel and oil as he climbs out of his machine. The only people you are likely to see climbing out of a Veyron are sheiks and bald, overweight men.

The quality of the car is further elevated when a factory has the confidence in its product to enter works machines, as Porsche and Ferrari have done on numerous occasions. When you buy a Ferrari you get a little something extra not listed on the spec sheet: a magical time machine that transforms any road into the Mulsanne Straight, any corner into Eau Rouge. All people really know about a Koenigsegg is its top speed.

I hope to see these cars on a track one day (and I don't mean track days) so that I can take back my words.

PAULO ROSA
ALBERTON, SOUTH AFRICA



At 46, I'm flattered that Geoff Tabor should think I'm too young to have heard of Isadora Duncan!

Unfortunately, I spotted the trailing coat just after the photo was taken, but of course that frame was the best of the series... As for Robert Coucher and his cigars, we can absolutely assure David Griffiths that the Aston picture was not set-up in the way suggested.

Robert really does travel everywhere with a cigar to hand – **Mark Dixon**

'Gentleman' Rob

THANKS TO Dale Drinnon for his article on Rob Walker in issue 91. To me, as a 14-year-old Formula 1 fan in the mid-'60s, Europe and the grand prix circuit seemed like lightyears away from my home in Colorado; but without fail, Rob Walker's articles in *Road & Track* made it seem like you had been to the race.

I remember trying to get a copy each month and passing up all the road tests of the latest and greatest to read Rob's articles and live vicariously through him. He was a terrific writer and 'gentleman' was the perfect description of him.

JEFF ROBERTS
COLORADO, USA

Badges of honour

WHAT A GREAT ARTICLE in issue 91 on Sydney Allard, a man who personified the versatility of the sporting drivers of the era: Le Mans 24 Hours, Monte Carlo Rally,

Isadora Dixon...

ISSUE 91 has just dropped onto the doormat and what caught my eye was the feature on the Type 51 Bugatti – not the car, but the way the driver's coat was scraping the wheel. This young chap is obviously too young to remember the fate of one Isadora Duncan and the scarf entangling around the wheel of the Bugatti she was being driven in.

Fortunately, your young chap probably went on to keep his next appointment with the dry cleaners, whereas poor Isadora was well choked at missing hers.

GEOFF TABOR
HAMPSHIRE

...contrived Coucher

I DON'T NORMALLY write to publications about trivia but it irritated me to see in issue 91 the cigar placed strategically in the ashtray of the Aston Martin DB4GT Zagato, being driven by Robert Coucher on page 96 – too contrived!

You don't need to do this. Your magazine is a class act, so don't push the 'set dressing' too far.

DAVID GRIFFITHS
WEST YORKSHIRE

LETTER OF THE MONTH

WINS A FERRARI 250GTO KEYFOB FROM TMB ART METAL

These unique Ferrari 250GTO keyfobs are made using original leather from Ferrari 250GTO chassis number 3527GT, the seventh GTO built. Limited to just 150 examples, these very special keyfobs are finished with a miniature 'Essence of Form' GTO sculpture in sterling silver.

TMB also makes cufflinks and other items representing iconic automotive and aeronautic subjects – uniquely, always incorporating metal or other material from the original subject. This means their attractive designs have a direct physical 'DNA' link to the subject itself, giving them a unique provenance.

www.tmbartmetal.com



Prescott hill climb, quarter-mile drag race – it was all the same to them; just tuck corduroys into socks and drive as fast as possible!

The picture on page 88 of Sydney's trophies clearly shows the wood-mounted badge [below] of the Monte Carlo Rally British Competitors' Club, now renamed the International Rally Driver's Club. The IRDC was created by legendary navigator Rodney Spokes, a future Dealer Team Vauxhall team manager, active international competitor and Monte Carlo Rally regular. Spokes realised that British competitors didn't have much of a voice on that event and, with the era of the MCRBCC ending, formed the IRDC.

The IRDC acquired the assets of its forerunner, including the now-familiar badge depicting the flags of Great Britain and Monaco, the wheel chains and snow shovels – essential equipment for competitors – and the heraldic legend *Per Ardua Ad Solem*: Through Adversity to the Sun.

KEN DAVIES

PRESS OFFICER, IRDC



Newcastle green

I AM PLEASED to see that a book on the Intermeccanica marque has been published [*Books*, issue 84]. I remember as a young teenager travelling ten miles to Newcastle in about 1977 with some friends in the hope of seeing some interesting cars. All of us were car fanatics and fairly knowledgeable about even the more obscure marques, or so we thought.

On the way back home a sleek, light metallic green 2+2 coupé pulled up. None of us had a clue what it was. The lady driving this mystery vehicle was extremely generous with her time and explained that it was an Intermeccanica Indra, powered by a Corvette engine. None of us saw the car again and I often wonder what happened to it.

GARY REAH

WEST YORKSHIRE



Living the dream

CAR ADDICTS always dreamt of owning the coolest car in the world when we were aged ten. For me that was always the Ferrari 512 Berlinetta Boxer. Even the name sounded beyond cool.

Thirty-two years later, it was time. I went out and bought the best I could find, from *Octane* advertiser The Hairpin Company. With two owners and 9000 miles from new, it had been in storage for 20 years after being purchased for £350,000 in the mad times of 1989.

Following a very big service, the first day's drive was carefully planned. When the engine was warmed through, a gorgeous hour lay ahead, screaming across Exmoor in my very own Boxer!

After the car was safely back in the garage, the postman arrived with issue 90 of *Octane*. Ferrari versus Aston! But not the more obvious Enzo, 288GTO or 599 Ferraris but in my eyes the coolest, the Boxer. A perfect *Octane* day was made complete.

NEIL CLIFFORD

DEVON

The power of love

OH MAN... Does David Lillywhite [*Octane Cars*, issue 91] really know what he's let himself in for with a Citroën SM? Every time I look at my Maserati 3200 sitting there, waiting for another tranche of money to be thrown at it, I wonder whatever attracted me.

But buying a Maserati is one thing; linking Maserati with Citroën... that's brave.

But what fun! Remember that Mike Hailwood used to own one, and loved it? I can't wait to read more about your affair. And that the good bits of it will be like mine with the Mastress, where you just wanna look at her and run your hands all over her before jumping in and scaring yourself silly every time you get to a corner. That is, if you make it as far as the corner...

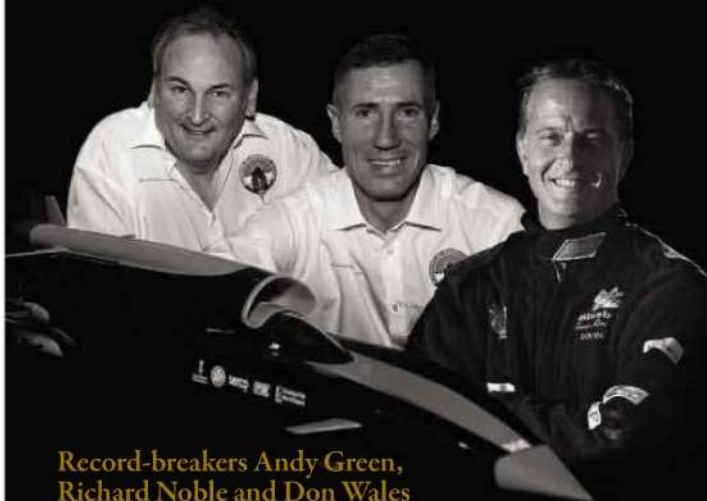
DAVID TREMAYNE

COUNTY DURHAM

An evening with...

LAND SPEED Legends

In association with
EFG International



Record-breakers Andy Green, Richard Noble and Don Wales talk exclusively with author David Tremayne

Join Octane...

...at the Royal Automobile Club in London's Pall Mall for the Land Speed Legends Evening on 17 March 2011

The evening is hosted by speed record expert David Tremayne, and land speed record holders Wing Commander Andy Green, Richard Noble OBE and Don Wales will share their greatest racing moments.

Richard and Andy will explain how they plan to break the 1000mph barrier with *Bloodhound*, and Don Wales discusses his next venture: *Bluebird Electric*, a land speed car capable of 400mph.

The price of £125 per person includes a three-course banquet with wine in the elegant Mountbatten Room, as well as a signed print as a memento of the evening. A discount is available for group bookings of ten or more.

When: 17 March, 7.30pm-10pm
Where: Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall, London
Price: £125 per person
Dress: Lounge suits/cocktail dresses



To book, call +44 (0)20 7907 6805
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THE COLLECTOR

Jay Leno

The adage goes that it is sometimes more fun to drive a slow car fast than a fast car fast. You know, cars that seem to go fast while in fact going slowly.

With that in mind I had a look through my garage to see which of my cars best fit the bill. There was my 1937 Fiat Topolino. It has 13.5 horsepower and a top speed of 52mph. The speedometer reads in kilometres, so 50mph is 80km/h, but the sensation behind the wheel is more like 80 miles per hour!

Believe me, bobbing up and down at 50mph in a car with tiny wheelbarrow-sized wheels and tyres and rudimentary suspension can be frightening. Just trying to keep control as the girl in the lane next to you in her Honda Civic is texting and applying lipstick while maintaining the same speed.

The next to grab my eye was the Morgan three-wheeler. It has a 998cc two-cylinder JAP engine, sounds like a Gatling gun at full pelt, and gives a ridiculous sense of speed as it is just inches off the ground. Toyota Camrys loom like trucks as they pass you. I know, because I often end up reading their hubcaps at eye level.

One day I'm on Mulholland Drive in the Morgan, scaring myself silly, throttle wide open, and I come around a corner, rear end sliding. Just as I straighten out I see an LA policeman with his radar gun. It's aimed right at me so I figure he's got me so, as I pass him, I pull over and I wait. And wait. And nobody comes.

So I turn and pass in the other direction and I pull up next to him. 'Hi, how're you doing?' He says 'Good.' And I say 'I thought you were going to stop me.' He says 'Why? you were only doing 37mph. The speed limit says 45.' I think what gives the sensation is vibration, minimal suspension, and being extremely noisy. In the Morgan, all three come together, overwhelming your senses.

But noise is not everything. My 1909 Baker Electric is one of the few vehicles that is taller than it is long. It looks like a phone booth on wheels. It has tiller steering and a top speed of 22mph and seems slow until you're going downhill. When you go downhill in a vehicle whose roof is taller than it is long, there is a tendency for it to become front-heavy. You find yourself thinking 'Hey, slow down, slow down! Take it easy! You're going 19!'

Speed limits originate from our perception of speed. When they came up with the highways here in America, people were taken for a ride in a modern car with a blanket over the speedometer and the driver would ask the passengers to say when it felt uncomfortable. And 65mph was what most people said felt fast. And that's sort of how they came up with the speed limit.

Till the day my dad died, he'd say 'Slow down, you're going a mile a minute!' I'd say 'Dad, we're in the F1 McLaren. We're doing almost three miles a minute'. A mile a minute to him was fast.

“

My 1909 Baker Electric has a top speed of 22mph. You find yourself thinking 'Hey, slow down, slow down! Take it easy! You're going 19!'

”

'There is no reason for anyone to go over 18mph. Being a speed demon proves nothing!' It says that in the manual for the 1907 White steam car. You sit maybe six feet off the ground in the White, with no windshield. So 40mph seems fast enough. You get a real sensation of speed and the steam engine has so much torque.

Now let's go to the ultimate in slow vehicles that scare you silly. I have a machine that is the most extreme example of frightening low speed. It is a 1906 Advance steam tractor. It weighs 13 tons, requires 250 gallons of water and, once you start the process of firing it up, it takes 90 minutes to pull away. It's been converted to run on propane because shovelling coal can get tiresome. It has steel wheels about 6 feet tall, which I've put rubber on so as not to tear up the road too badly. It's a steam tractor, used to plough fields. The guy I got it from had it at a tractor pull and he pulled 55,000lb with it. That's about 27 tons. On a sled.

The steering is by two massive chains, pulling to the left or the right. It takes two people to drive it, one to steer and one to work the throttle, clutch and brakes. Actually there are no brakes. What you do to stop is shut off the throttle, disengage the clutch, put it in reverse, let the clutch out and shudder to a halt.

Driving does not get much slower, or more exciting, than this. The sound is amazing. Hissing steam, a deafening whistle and the huge gears clanging. My buddy George and I took it out on the road last week and I said something I thought I'd never hear myself say.

'Slow down! We're going almost 4mph!'

JAY LENO

Comedian and talk show host Jay Leno is one of the most famous entertainers in the USA. He is also a true petrolhead, with a massive collection of cars and bikes (see www.jaylenosgarage.com). Jay was speaking with Jeremy Hart.



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THE ENTHUSIAST Nick Mason

A cracked cylinder block put paid to a run in this year's veteran trip down to Brighton, but an alternative was on offer. Tesla arranged for me to drive one of its electric cars in the RAC Brighton to London Future Car Challenge. If you think electric cars are slow, have a range no further than the end of the road and are driven by vegetarians, you may have to reconsider. There has been serious progress since the Sinclair C5 (mine lurks in the office, so far failing to become the next collectors' classic).

The Tesla's peak power output is around 290bhp, but that's not the point. It's the torque – 400Nm (or 295lb ft) from zero revs – that creates a new driving experience. It's fairly basic and fairly pricey, but the Tesla is actually a mini-supercar. Away from the lights, it will make the eyes of most Ferrari and Porsche drivers water; and its top speed of 130mph would get you locked up for months.

A couple of things need addressing. The first is that you really need access to proper charging facilities. You can plug into that 13amp socket in the garage, but it will need all night. A two-hour charge requires a more sophisticated supply, which is fine if you live next to a power station.

The other issue exercising the manufacturers is noise – or rather, the lack of it. The trouble is that pedestrians receive no audible warning of the car in motion. Given the state of the economy and high unemployment, this could be an opportunity for a man with a red flag to precede the slower vehicles, but faster vehicles require something different. I'd recommend the CD of car sounds enclosed within my new book [quite enough promo, thanks – Ed], but I'm happy to generate a new CD of suitable sounds to be played through an external speaker system.

Tesla had decided to go for a fairly radical driver line up. I was in one car; Perry McCarthy in the other. Perry – former *Top Gear* character Stig and fully qualified motoring lunatic – is extremely fast on four wheels, but his navigational skills are limited. He was forced to follow me (and I was trying very hard to save energy, which ensured snail-like starts from the lights and low running speed), and he did so in exemplary fashion. So well, in fact, that I thought there was a green window blind in the rear screen of my car, but it was only Perry following closely. Really, really closely.

All went well until Parliament Square and the last 700 metres to the line. In a blinding manoeuvre, Perry passed me on the inside and seized the lead. Sadly he then turned left instead of right and was not seen again for another hour, when he appeared in Regent Street, having missed the finish line, presentation and interview.

I WAS PARTICULARLY SORRY to see that Harold Dermott is to leave McLaren after caring for customers almost since the

“

The former Stig was not seen again for another hour, when he appeared in Regent Street, having missed the finish line, presentation and interview

”

inception of the McLaren F1. My experience is that most customer service personnel, be it in furniture, electrical appliances, computers or cars, are recruited from the guard house at Guantanamo Bay. Harold, on the other hand, has a glittering career ahead of him in the diplomatic service, should he choose to take it up. He has spent a great deal of time delivering bad news (ie, the estimate for the work) to McLaren F1 owners.

You might think that, if you buy what was the world's most expensive car, you shouldn't have to worry about servicing costs. You'd be wrong. I've seen strong men lying on the floor beating their fists and weeping as Harold gently administers the news that emptying the ashtray will require the services of Brinks-Mat.

Even better, though, has been his ability to explain clearly and calmly why these costs are so astronomical. I recently revisited a fax from Harold in which he'd responded to a complaint from me regarding a quote for fitting a new numberplate.

'Your insight into the manufacturing techniques for the numberplate is uncanny. There is no way you could know that this is preceded by the mining of the precious reflective plastic ore in the foothills of the Himalayas. This is then shipped by llama across the Gobi desert to the boat in Shanghai, a process complicated by the need to keep it refrigerated to exactly 4.2 degrees at all times.'

I just hope that his successor, Marcus, is as familiar with the parts manufacturing details.

NICK MASON

Pink Floyd's drummer and a great car enthusiast, Nick has raced classic and modern cars for over 30 years and has written two books: one on cars, *Passion for Speed*, and one on his version of the history of Pink Floyd, *Inside Out*.



THE RACER Tony Dron

It was Christmas Day, 1968. There was snow on the ground in Surrey and, as usual on that festive day in my parents' house, the roast turkey was served at lunchtime. I was keeping off the juice because I was entered in the Formula Ford race at Brands Hatch the following day. Yes, however fondly we may recall those old Boxing Day Brands meetings, they certainly made for a miserably stone-cold sober Christmas.

My mother was going on in her usual way, saying that given the chance she could have driven my Formula Ford car faster than I ever had. With my first season in motor racing behind me, the fact that I hadn't won every race I'd entered in 1968 had brought shame on the name of Dron as far as she was concerned.

She was a very competitive woman, my mother. When I was six years old, we went on a P&O cruising holiday round the Med and I well remember watching her win an underwater swimming competition in the ship's pool. Lots of teaspoons were thrown into the pool and the idea was for competitors to dive in one at a time and collect as many as possible before coming up for air. One by one, her rivals came up gasping, proudly showing three or four spoons, which were thrown back in each time. She got them all, of course, a great fistful of the bloody things, and she wasn't even out of breath.

When I was nearly ten, my parents thought it would be good for us all to take a Butlin's holiday for a change. We went to a classic 1950s *Hi-de-Hi* type of camp at Mosney in Ireland, which I enjoyed very much indeed. When an over-40s swimming race for ladies was announced over the loudspeakers, my mother was seen sprinting for her costume.

Presenting herself for the race, she had to prove to the happy Redcoats in charge of the event that she was exactly 40 years and one week old. When the starter fired his gun, she took off like an Olympic swimmer. What made the scene all the more remarkable was the rather obvious fact that she was all on her own in that pool. Curiously enough, there wasn't even one other woman prepared to admit to being over 40. The Redcoat on the public address soon made 'brave 40-year-old Audrey' famous all over the camp.

She was quite mad, in a nice way. After that Christmas Day lunch in 1968 she set off from our house to drive to Virginia Water in my father's BMW 1800. She had no fear of driving on snow, naturally. About 50 yards past Wentworth Club, heading east on Wentworth Drive, she lost it completely, over-corrected and went straight off through the rhododendrons.

I seem to remember that she walked back. It wasn't that far, as we lived at the end of the third hole of the West course. When

“Heading east on Wentworth Drive, she lost it completely, over-corrected and went straight off through the rhododendrons”

I found the car, it was nose-up at 45 degrees to the trunk of a silver birch tree, with the bonnet well stuffed.

That incident came to mind when I attended the recent launch of BMW Park Lane's new BMW Classic service. It was an informal but very impressive occasion, with star guests including John Surtees, Jackie Oliver and Steve Soper. BMW Classic staff were ready by their computers and, after some entertaining speeches, everybody was invited to step up and enquire about the availability of BMW Classic parts.

As I went forward for my turn, I decided I'd try to stump them with something really difficult. I enquired about a new bonnet for a 1968 BMW 1800 and was amazed to see it flash up on the screen at a very reasonable price. Looking closely at everything on the screen, it was clear that they didn't have one in stock. I was then told that it could arrive in two or three days from Germany.

That seemed fantastic to me. Needless to say, I don't require one of those bonnets. My father's BMW, which I remember so well as a really fabulous car back in those days, was given a new bonnet early in 1969 and was none the worse for my fearless mother's adventures with it through the bushes of Wentworth Estate. Oddly enough, she didn't mention the incident again for the rest of her life. She died in 1992, aged 76, and I'm glad also to report that she never again criticised my racing skills – not after Christmas Day, 1968.

TONY DRON

Having started his racing career in Formula Ford, Tony made a name for himself in 1970s Touring Cars and since then has raced an astonishing variety of sports and historic machinery. He is also a hugely respected journalist.

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THE DRIVER Robert Coucher

Everyone should experience the delights of driving an original Mini. In this issue we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the giant-killing Mini-Cooper, one of the all-time great driver's cars. Enthusiasts of a certain age invariably began their motoring with an Austin Seven because they were plentiful and cheap. John Haynes started his huge publishing empire when he stripped down his Austin Seven into a 'special' and recorded the process in a booklet that became the essential Haynes manual.

Many of the Baby Boomer generation fired-up their motoring in a Morris Minor if they were unlucky, or a Mini if luck was on their side. Coming along at the tail end of this bunch, I unfortunately missed out on Mini ownership.

Most weekends at the Coucher household were taken up with metal-bashing and optimistic mechanical work as various classic cars secreted around the property were attacked with spanners and Haynes manuals in an attempt to bring them back to life. Friends of my father would drop in for a cup of tea and to dispense advice on how to get the Bentley's one-shot lubrication system operative or how to set the timing on the 356. Being surgeons, engineers, architects and other comfortable types, their cars reflected their means so Minis were not often seen. But one of the more risqué creative types brought a Mini-Cooper S and took my E-type-driving father for a spin around the twisting mountain roads of Table Mountain. The E-type was sold soon afterwards.

I managed to get rides in these chaps' classics, ranging from rorty 911s to solid Mercedes and bouncy vintage contraptions. At the same time my father gifted me my first car: a 1953 Lancia Aurelia B20GT. Great, but there was a catch: it was a basketcase and I had to restore it. An Aurelia is one of the most complex cars ever handbuilt but, being an optimistic 16-year-old, I set about it.

This car had been owned by an engineer who crashed it the night before emigrating so father got it for a song, intending it to be a spares car for his own B20. We managed to pull out the stove-in front end with a chain and the shape was then 'corrected' with lashings of body filler. I just wanted to get on and paint it bright red! Cringe. But along the way I learnt about sliding-pillar front suspension, pot joints, propshafts, rust, epoxy glue, body filler, glassfibre, acrylic paint and all that good stuff.

The exciting bit was getting the 'Lowboy', as it became known, lit up. With everything connected the engine cranked over but would not ignite. One friend suggested removing the spark plugs and, as I undid number three, a fountain of water squirted out. Ah, that engine. It should have been a lovely De Virgilio-designed 2.5-litre V6 but the previous owner had blown that up and original Aurelia engines were thin on the veldt in South Africa. So he'd fitted a Ford

“

He buzzed the Cooper flat-out in top and held the throttle on the stop into the corners! No lifting off, no slowing down, the Cooper attacked bends at full chat

”

Essex 3.0-litre V6! Hey, a bush mechanic has to make do and the Essex promised 140bhp against the Lancia's 118 so I was happy.

The truculent Lowboy was eventually persuaded to run and what an incredible experience it was: absolutely terrifying. The Ford 3.0-litre was *too* powerful but sounded glorious with its free-flow homemade exhausts. Too much welly and the clutch would start to slip. Drive around that and get your boot in, then the Weber carb would starve, resulting in embarrassing kangarooing. The original radiator would just about manage for half an hour before the needle went off the gauge. The handling on ancient, cracked Michelin X tyres was alarming and firm braking would result in really scary front suspension vibration. Corner too hard, and body-flex caused the rooflining to come down over the occupant's eyes. It all taught me how to drive sympathetically.

The Lowboy was a deathtrap but I'd built it and I loved it. It got me to Varsity on most occasions. But one day a young racing driver, Roddy Mills, pitched up in a proper Mini-Cooper and took me for a blast. I was amazed at the tight fit of the bucket seat and experienced a racing harness for the first time. Mills hopped in and demolished my understanding of fast driving. On our favourite route he buzzed the Cooper flat-out in top gear and held the throttle on the stop into the corners! No lifting off, no slowing down, the mad Cooper just attacked the bends at full chat. I simply could not comprehend how fast that diminutive Mini went. Totally demoralised, I soon swapped the Lowboy for... an Alfasud. Not the smartest of car deals.

ROBERT COUCHER

Robert has grown up with classic cars, having owned a Lancia Aurelia B20GT, Alfa Romeo Giulietta and a Porsche 356C. He currently uses his 1955 Jaguar XK140 as his daily driver, and is a founding editor of this magazine.



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Jack Vettriano

Famous for prints, and his studies of *Bluebird's* record-breaking

IN THE PAST two decades Jack Vettriano has become one of Britain's most successful painters. Born Jack Hoggan in Fife, Scotland, in 1951, he changed his name to Vettriano as his parents are of Italian origin. Jack taught himself to paint and his breakthrough came in 1988 when he exhibited two paintings at the Royal Scottish Academy and both sold on the first night.

The style of Vettriano's art has been described as sentimental, mysterious, retro and melancholic. His works have become extremely sought after by collectors. His most famous piece, *The Singing Butler*, was sold at auction a decade ago for £744,500, and the striking *Bluebird at Bonneville* is one of his best. Recently named as one of Britain's favourite artists, Jack has owned a number of classic cars and especially enjoyed his Mercedes-Benz 250SL.

1 White telephone

This old telephone looks like it is made of white chocolate and I have to stop myself licking it! The black phones were the most ordinary, but these white ones are collectable. The red ones are also rare but green phones are the ultimate.

2 Bluebird tin model

Sir Malcolm Campbell set the Land Speed Record of 272.46mph on 22 February 1933 and this old tin model is of the car that achieved it. I painted his later *Bluebird* on the salt flats at Bonneville where he reached 301.337mph. He was 50 years old and was referred to by the Americans as the 'human bullet'. Racing drivers were crazy in those days.

3 Desk lamp

An American Flexo desk lamp from the Art Speciality Company in Chicago is heavily constructed, with its large adjustable knuckles. It's also wonderfully deco and looks great on my writing desk.

4 Fifties pin-ups

Another auction purchase. These lovely images of pretty and very 1950s-looking girls, with their tiny waists and big boobs, are almost theatrical and remind me of my father's *Stag* magazines, which I used to read for the detective stories, honestly.

5 Large office chest

This big old chest of drawers probably served as an office chest and I bought it purely for its looks. But it turns out to be ideal for my paintings. I simply pull one of the drawers out and stand a painting on it. A very practical easel.

6 Dunhill lighters

I first saw these oversized Dunhill lighters at a Christie's auction and started a collection. They are so beautifully constructed: heavy and mechanical yet elegant and sophisticated. I have taken them all back to Dunhill where an old boy carefully restored them so now they work perfectly. The green ones are covered in Shagreen sharkskin, which is rather exotic.

7 Vintage watches

These 1950s watches were found in a market in Nice, France. One is a Rolex, the other a Jaeger LeCoultre and I always enjoy a bit of an anorak moment on the aeroplane, adjusting the time when we take-off.

8 Set of stage lights

These stage lights remind me of Darth Vader from *Star Wars* but they are actually 1950s lights, which I bought from Gallery 1930, opposite Alfie's Antique Market in North London. Light is obviously important to me as a painter, so they are useful as well as good to look at.

9 Louis Vuitton luggage

Louis Vuitton leather cases remind me of the 'golden age of travel'. Perfect for strapping onto the luggage rack of an XK and motoring to the South of France, but a bit pretentious for EasyJet. I bought them in Nice, where I often go to find old pieces.

10 Stiletto shoes

I love shoes, especially women's stilettos. The shape is sculpted and sexy and my interest probably springs from puberty in the early 1960s, when women used to wear shoes like these. Imagine one dangling from the end of a beautiful woman's toe...

11 Art Deco ashtrays

I'm a keen smoker and these huge ashtrays appeal because of their generous size and Art Deco style.... They used to sit on wooden plinths in the foyers of Odeon cinemas in the grand old days of film, filled with sand and lipstick-covered cigarette ends!



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Words: Keith Adams Photography: Michael Bailie





'Wizardry on wheels'. It's a phrase coined by the BMC publicity department to describe its brand new baby car, known both as the Austin Se7en and the Morris Mini-Minor, at launch in 1959. Marketing guru Tony Ball's truism must be one of the most elegant understatements in the history of advertising – not just because Alec Issigonis's 10ft-long baby could seat four in relative comfort, travel at 70mph and handle more like a sports car than a runabout, but because of what it would achieve in the coming years.

Issigonis was BMC's chief engineer, and designed this revolutionary car – initially on the back of an envelope – to order from the autocratic BMC boss Leonard Lord, who had taken him off all existing new-model projects and tasked him with creating a fresh economy vehicle to appeal to cash-strapped buyers in the wake of the Europe-wide fuel shortages caused by the 1956 Suez crisis. The newcomer needed to use as many existing BMC components as possible, be capable of 70mph and, most importantly, render the opposition obsolete. On that, Lord was passionate: 'God damn these bloody awful bubble-cars. We must drive them off the streets.'

In less than three years, Issigonis took Project AD015 to production, a remarkable achievement given the radical engineering it contained. Front-wheel drive might have been employed by the likes of Citroën, Lancia, Saab and DKW, yet packaging the engine transversely and housing its gearbox in the sump was a genuine Issigonis innovation, and central to the Mini's incredible space efficiency. But in the early months of 1959, BMC management expressed worries about the Mini's commercial prospects. To generate positive publicity, they put the car into the hands of the right people before launch. And one of the chosen few was John Cooper.

His son Mike explains: 'My father got to know Alec on the competition circuit before the war, as their lightweight specials were rivals. They'd remained firm friends ever since. In mid-1959 Alec asked my father to drive a prototype Mini he referred to as the "Minor".' So the Mini-Cooper story's roots lay in the Brighton Speed Trials and wheel-to-wheel competition.

The Cooper Car Company had grown into a big operation by this time, and was underpinned by massive success in motor sport, carved out by a string of supremely competitive cars. And at the time BMC lent Cooper its Mini, his team was close to winning the Formula 1 Drivers' Championship with Jack Brabham driving the





RAUNO AALTONEN: THE DRIVING FORCE

RAUNO AALTONEN won the Monte Carlo Rally in a Mini-Cooper S in 1967, completing the BMC works team's Monte hat trick. The original Flying Finn, and a former speedboat champion and motorcycle racer, he joined the BMC competitions department team to drive Minis in 1962, taking his first major victory on the 1963 Coupe des Alpes.

Speaking to *Octane* from his home in Finland, Aaltonen summed up: 'The main advantage of the Mini is that it's small – when you're going quickly you need more space than the width of the car, and a five-inch-wider car would need more than a five-inch-wider road. Some of those Alpine routes are very narrow...

'Small cars didn't normally have good suspension, but Alex Moulton's set-up really worked. The wheels were right at the corners, so the Mini had a very low polar moment of inertia, meaning it was possible to change direction very quickly. If you trust the car, you can go faster, whereas in a bigger model you're always having to stop and see where to go. In the Mini we could just keep going.'

Left-foot braking – a technique Aaltonen invented when rallying Saabs – translated perfectly to the Mini, helping maintain a high average speed even though, with 95-105bhp, the car was beaten on power-to-weight ratio by the bigger machines: 'I used left-foot braking as a substitute for the handbrake to help reduce the understeer, but I could keep my hands on the wheel. It also helped with dynamic weight transfer, which many people still don't understand. To win rallies, you have to go into corners at what you believe is 110%, so instead of getting the braking done then powering through, we could go in very fast and help the tail round before mid-corner. Of course, about one in ten times the corner was as bad as you expected, and you really did need that help!

'Rallies then were both long and tough, not just tough, so we were changing the brake shoes once a day and the pads twice. The 10in wheels didn't allow big enough stoppers, and although we had both brake fade and boiling fluid we were no worse off than other teams – except when the flexible hoses used to fall apart because the calipers they were attached to got so hot, leaving you with no brakes. That happened to me more than once, but we found a cure. I drove the Mini for the works from 1963 until 1968, and it was under continuous development.

'We used Hydrolastic suspension for one year when it came out. The lovely thing about it was that we all carried a little pump, which meant that for rough sections we could raise the car, and for tarmac we could drop it down so it was nearly on the bump-stops. Once the Mini was high it was like a rocking chair, though. Hydrolastic was an excellent invention which, if we'd had time to develop it, would have been very good. But we went back to rubber cones the following year.

'We mustn't forget Stuart Turner in all this. He went into every little detail. Turner believed one man should build the car – except for the wiring – so he knew everything about it, and he would be so proud when the Mini won. The BMC guys all had big hearts – they were the best in the world.'

Paul Hardiman

revolutionary rear-engined T51. In Formula Junior, Cooper was making quite a splash with its BMC A-series-powered racing car and its engine also happened to be at the heart of the Mini.

The crossovers between the FJ car and BMC's new baby were obvious, and got Cooper really excited. They were too good not to be exploited. 'He said that it was the future of rallying,' Mike remembers. 'If the Mini had more power, lost its pudding-stirrer gearstick and could be made to brake properly, it would be a real force in racing.'

That's something of an understatement. Cooper was so besotted with the Mini's potential that he took the car, registered YOK 250, to the Italian Grand Prix at Monza. Roy Salvadori and Bruce McLaren were invited to drive the promising newcomer, too, and give their opinions. That the racing drivers were impressed with the Mini was hardly a surprise: it sported wonderfully direct steering and tenacious handling – characteristics that wouldn't naturally be expected of an economy car.

One of John Cooper's favourite anecdotes from the Italian Grand Prix was when the former Ferrari chief designer Aurelio Lampredi spotted the Mini in the paddock. Then working for Fiat, Lampredi asked Cooper if he could try the potential competitor – and then disappeared with the car for hours. According to Cooper, when Lampredi returned, he exclaimed: 'If it weren't so ugly I'd shoot myself!'

Cooper knew BMC was onto a winner, and was convinced that he could persuade the company to back his idea of a faster version conceived for motor sport. He returned to the UK and immediately set about making the Mini go faster by adding more power. The car he worked on is likely to have been YOK 250, which had already seen plenty of action.

Many of the tweaks applied to the FJ engine were used in the Mini prototype, and Cooper old-hand Ginger Devlin oversaw the upgrades which, in FJ form, pushed the A-series' output to a reputed 100bhp, although that was wound back to around 55bhp for the road car in the interests of longevity.

**'THAT THE RACING DRIVERS
WERE IMPRESSED WITH THE
MINI WAS HARDLY A SURPRISE:
IT SPORTED WONDERFULLY
DIRECT STEERING AND
TENACIOUS HANDLING'**



It was still a useful improvement; the standard Mini 850 developed a mere 34bhp.

Once the hot engine was installed, John Cooper showed Alec Issigonis the prototype and asked his friend for his thoughts about the car. Initially, Alec was sceptical – to him, the Mini was designed as an economy model, and its excellent dynamic qualities were merely a by-product of its low centre of gravity, rack-and-pinion steering, and the front-wheel-drive package he'd created in answer to the fuel crisis.

Yet that didn't stop Cooper. 'My father went to see George Harriman, who'd replaced Leonard Lord as BMC's managing director. Harriman drove the car and liked it a lot, but he had misgivings. The main issue was that BMC would need to make 1000 to homologate it – and Harriman wasn't confident that people would buy it. 'My father replied: "You don't have to build them; just say you did!"'

The Cooper Car Company was already on the case. It privately – and successfully – entered a Mini 850 into the 1960 and '61 British Saloon Car

THE MONTE WINNER

This car – 33 EJB – is the Mini that started BMC's four-year domination of the Monte Carlo Rally. However, its competitive winning streak began on the 1963 Tour de France, where Paddy Hopkirk and Henry Liddon took a class win, finishing third overall. It's said that even before the event was over, the French agent for BMC had taken nine new orders for Mini-Coopers...

The following year's Monte Carlo Rally saw 33 EJB achieve a memorable victory, once again in the hands of Hopkirk and Liddon. This groundbreaking win came after they fought off opposition from the much-fancied Ford Falcon team – the Mini-Cooper's agility in the Alps sealed the victory for the British driver pairing.

Retained by BMC as a display car, the Hopkirk/Liddon Mini was handed over to the British Motor Heritage Industry Trust, where it remains today in the Heritage Motor Centre in Gaydon, Warwickshire (www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk), along with its sister cars that won the '65 and '67 Montes, AJB 44B (Mäkinen/Easter) and LBL 6D (Aaltonen/Liddon).

Below

Yes, it's a giant killer. Astonishingly, the Mini-Cooper's greatest sporting rival was a V8-powered Ford.



Championship, driven by Sir John Whitmore. It's no wonder George Harriman was so keen – even if his lead engineer Issigonis wasn't. When the BMC boss asked Cooper what he should call the model, he was met with the reply: 'Mini-Cooper.'

Harriman offered John Cooper a £2 royalty on each car – an agreement written on the back of an envelope – and came up with a deal whereby the go-faster Mini could be sold as either an Austin or a Morris through the company's 5000-strong UK dealer network. BMC undertook development under the codename AD050, and said it would back the Cooper Car Company as the official BMC Mini team in saloon car racing.

It was the deal of the century as far as BMC was concerned – and the making of the Mini. The car was about to head into popular culture like no other model this side of World War Two.

BMC's engineers began preparing the Mini-Cooper for production by using a standard 850 as the first prototype, subsequently registered 126 LWL (but sometimes photographed bearing the registration plate KEL 236, to add confusion). The target power output was 55bhp – for a maximum speed of 85mph – and it was Morris Engines' chief engineer Eddie Maher who was given the job.

Considering the standard Mini 850's engine was actually a derivative of the Austin A40's 948cc A-series, it seems odd that this version wasn't used for the AD050. Instead, Maher produced a 997cc engine, longer in stroke but smaller in bore than the donor 848cc. It was the beginning of a string of uniquely sized A-series engines – cost control was never a BMC strong point. Other major upgrades included twin 1½in SU carburettors, a remote gearchange and Girling disc brakes – a feature that Cooper originally specified for his prototype.

Development was brief, and on 20 September 1961 the Mini-Cooper went into production as a full member of the BMC line-up. Performance was suitably peppy for a sub-1000cc baby car – a maximum speed of 85mph and a 0-60mph time of 17 seconds put this in the giant-killer category. Some perspective? A Ford Cortina Super De Luxe took 22.5sec to hit 60mph from rest. This was a marketing man's dream, boosted by the halo effect of Cooper's back-to-back F1 Championships in 1959 and '60.

Mike Cooper remembers the arrival of the production cars well: 'When the model came out, my father kept loads of them at home. They were delivered to his company, where they would be converted to racing cars, and that caused no end of confusion. One time, mum took the wrong car

shopping; she was stopped by the police as it didn't have any numberplates. Of course, she was okay... because she was Mrs Cooper!'

However, John Cooper wanted more performance, and he felt that the excessive use of off-the-shelf BMC components was compromising the car that bore his name. The answer would come from Downton Engineering, an aftermarket tuning company that had got hold of one of the first Mini-Coopers in late 1961 and turned it into a 108mph pocket-rocket that could scamper from rest to 60mph in eight seconds. The extra performance came from increasing engine capacity to 1088cc, which complemented the donor car's improved carburation. On the strength of this model's performance, Downton's engine guru Daniel Richmond was employed as a consultant to BMC.

While the road car development continued, the Mini-Cooper was still conquering on the track. John Love took overall victory of the 1962 British Saloon Car Championship for the works-backed Cooper team, but the following year Sir John Whitmore lost out to Jack Sears and the Ford Galaxie – although the Mini-Cooper still took a class victory. Anyone who witnessed the Mini-Cooper's on-track battles with the enormous Ford will speak

Below

Mini-Cooper: a great road car, rally winner, film star and pop icon. And all that in a box just 10ft long.

'BMC OFFERED JOHN COOPER A £2 ROYALTY ON EACH CAR, IN A DEAL WHEREBY THE GO-FASTER MINI COULD BE SOLD THROUGH THE COMPANY'S 5000-STRONG UK DEALER NETWORK'



THE PETER SELLERS MINI

It is generally acknowledged that the trend for luxuriously specified Minis was started by comic legend Peter Sellers, when he asked dealership HR Owen to convert his new Mini-Cooper into something more exclusive. HR Owen commissioned Hooper (Motor Services) Ltd – the spares and servicing arm of the former coachbuilding firm – to undertake the work.

The bill for the resulting car, completed early in 1963, came to £2600 (as against £679 for a standard Cooper at the time), and was accounted for by such luxuries as leather trim, electric windows with separate front quarterlights, full-length sunroof, an improved heater, and front wings modified to accept Bentley headlamps. However, the crowning feature was the hand-stencilled wickerwork-effect body decoration.

The car's film fame comes from its appearance in the first Pink Panther sequel, *A Shot In The Dark*, in which it dominates numerous scenes as Inspector Clouseau drives it through the streets of Paris. When filming was finished, Sellers used the Mini around France, and then gave it away to director Blake Edwards. The Hooper Cooper is now offered for sale by JD Classics (www.jdclassics.co.uk).

STUART TURNER: WINNING WAYS



BMC's competitions manager was shrewd enough to spot the Mini's potential from the very first time he saw it in action.

'I was lucky enough to take over a team well-honed by Marcus Chambers, and their

experience of rallying a wide variety of cars meant that they were well able to develop suspension settings, sump guards and whatever to make the Minis as competitive as possible. My part was simply to choose what I hoped were the right combinations of drivers, co-drivers, cars, events and service points for success.

'My technical knowledge was, and is, zero – I have always felt that, with people like Syd Enever, Alec Issigonis and, later, when I was at Ford, Brian Hart and Keith Duckworth to call on, any half-baked intervention by me would have been idiotic.

'My first thoughts of the Mini itself were less enthusiastic, because I was lucky enough to navigate for Pat Moss when she won the first-ever event by a Mini, an 850. She moaned

how slow it was, I moaned about wet feet (because most of the cars leaked)... but neither problem stopped us winning. So I guess I realised it had more potential than at first seemed likely. But to go on and win the Monte filled me with elation!

'Today the Monte is simply round one of a championship and gets minimal media coverage, yet in the 1960s it was much more significant, with nightly broadcasts about it on the BBC. Its importance back then is best illustrated by the fact that 1964's winning car was viewed on TV by three times more people than the most popular soaps of today. Of course, I was furious when we were disqualified in 1966, but I then realised it wasn't all bad when people whose marketing nous I respected assumed that I had fixed it all because of the priceless publicity we got. All three cars were flown back for the same TV programme, and it was only with some difficulty that the audience was persuaded not to march on France.

'My overriding memories of the time are the joy of working with a great team at Abingdon... people like John Cooper, Don Moore and Ken Tyrrell... and Timo Makinen's 1965 Monte win, which was perhaps the greatest drive rallying has ever seen.'



of real David and Goliath action – the Galaxie roaring away on the straights, the Cooper running rings around it in corners.

Ralph Broad's Broadspeed operation also started fielding Mini-Coopers in 1963, and provided stiff opposition to the Cooper Car Company. The team ran a Mini-Cooper for John Fitzpatrick, then expanded to a four-car team featuring John Handley, Jeff May and Peter Tempest. Broad's outfit gave Cooper a real run for its money.

Mini-Coopers were scoring well on road and track, and John Cooper's repeated wish for more power was about to bear fruit. It wasn't only he who had been pressuring George Harriman; competitions manager Stuart Turner had also persuaded BMC's MD that investing in block-boring equipment would be worthwhile. Turner knew that a more powerful Mini-Cooper also had the potential to clean up in rallying. With Harriman's approval bagged, development of the Mini-Cooper S was soon underway.

The car's 1071cc engine was co-developed by Downton Engineering and Morris Engines, and featured Nimonic alloy valves and a nitrided crankshaft to help boost power to 70bhp. The brakes were enlarged to 7.5in, which proved to be a massive improvement. Once again, this was a quick project, with production starting in January 1963 for an on-sale date of April.

And it was the Cooper S that created a revolution in rallying – although its huge success, especially on the Monte Carlo, was as much about the talent of the predominantly Finnish driver line-up and the ability of the slick BMC competitions department based in Abingdon.

The Mini-Cooper's rallying career may well have peaked with Monte Carlo, but it actually gained momentum in 1962. Pat Moss and Ann Wisdom took victory in May's Tulip Rally in 737 ABL, a 997cc Cooper, following an encouraging 26th overall finish in that year's Monte. By 1963, Moss had

Below

Even the Cooper's De Luxe trim is extremely basic, if space efficient. More power, bigger brakes are significant changes.

'WHILE ROAD CAR DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED, THE COOPER WAS STILL CONQUERING ON THE TRACK' →





taken three international wins in a row, and then followed those with third overall on the Monte Carlo – an astonishing achievement.

When the competitions department got hold of the 1071cc Cooper S, all the pieces were in place for rallying greatness. Paddy Hopkirk and Henry Liddon drove 33 EJB – the red car in these pictures – to an incredible victory on the 1964 Monte Carlo Rally. It was well-earned, and a fantastic drive, and placed the Mini-Cooper in the spotlight as an all-time great. The duo returned as heroes, and the car and its drivers were soon ensconced within the national consciousness – even making a guest appearance on ITV's *Sunday Night At The London Palladium*.

More road Coopers soon followed, including the short-lived homologation special 970S (capable of running larger valves), the big-selling 998cc Cooper and, finally, the 1275S. In only four years, the Mini-Cooper and Cooper S had run to four engine capacities, each version having its own strengths – and weaknesses.

The larger-engined car went on to follow Hopkirk's memorable Monte Carlo victory with a further two (1965 for Timo Mäkinen and Paul Easter, 1967 for Rauno Aaltonen and Henry Liddon) – which should have been three, had it not been for the 1966 disqualification (see previous panel for Stuart Turner's reaction).

The Mini was also proving tough to beat in touring car racing. In the 1964 British Saloon Car Championship the Cooper S won the 1300cc class and finished second overall, while the 970S took the European Touring Car Championship. The following year, Warwick Banks won the 1.0-litre class in the British Saloon Car Championship for Cooper, and Broadspeed received works backing in the European Touring Car Championship to run John Fitzpatrick and John Handley. John Rhodes won the 1300cc class, which he repeated in '66, '67 and '68.

The road-going 1275cc Cooper S was now the ultimate example of the breed, and had established itself as a true giant-killer on road and track. With 76bhp on tap it was very nearly a 100mph machine out of the box, but more importantly the Mini had now become a cultural phenomenon – the must-have 'It' car of the mid- to late-1960s. Transport Minister Ernest Marples bought a Radford-converted Mini-Cooper S with a hatchback rear – actually a great idea that added to the model's all-round ability – but the politician failed to put off the trendy crowd and it signalled the beginning of a deluge of true celebrity endorsements...

The roster of famous owners who fell for the Mini-Cooper's charms reads like a *Who's Who* of cool: all four of the Beatles (although George Harrison's 'psychedelic' car, seen below, is the most recognisable today), Twiggy, Brigitte Bardot, Peter Sellers (whose wicker-sided Radford, also seen below, starred in *A Shot In The Dark*), Paul Newman, Steve McQueen and Enzo Ferrari. And with these luminaries aboard, a killer competition record and a classless style that proved impossible not to love, the Cooper was all set for immortality.

As a tuning and modifying industry grew to support the Mini-Cooper, every young blade and stylish mum wanted one in their garage. They lusted for posher, faster and more stylish versions, buying everything from chrome-plated nudge bars to 100bhp tuning kits. In short, Cooper-mania swept the land. Sadly, it wasn't to last.

In 1968, BMC's parent company British Motor Holdings joined forces (thanks to a Government-encouraged merger) with the

Right

Clockwise from bottom left: '64 Monte winner; Peter Sellers' Hooper; '64 1275S; George Harrison's car.

'PADDY HOPKIRK AND HENRY LIDDON DROVE 33 EJB TO AN INCREDIBLE VICTORY ON THE 1964 MONTE CARLO RALLY, RETURNING AS HEROES'



BACK FOR MORE: THE NINETIES REBIRTH

Few cars are put back into production after being culled; even fewer return by popular demand after a gap of 20 years.

John Cooper never lost faith in the Mini-Cooper, even if BLMC did. In the early 1980s, Austin Rover Japan was making a tidy profit selling around 3000 Minis a year. Its only problem was meeting demand for customised and higher-performance versions. ARJ's head, Cedric Talbot, approached John Cooper to ask whether it was possible to put a 1275cc Metro engine into the Mini – and Cooper sent over a prototype, which potential customers loved. But the pair couldn't get UK management interested.

To meet demand, John Cooper exported a Janspeed-designed upgrade kit for customer Minis, with a modified cylinder head, twin carburettors, performance air filters and a special exhaust system. Shipped in a wooden box (now a collector's



item in itself), this lot boosted power to 64bhp. By 1989, Rover Group had taken notice and made Cooper's kit a factory-backed option.

Soon Cooper and Rover were discussing the next step – a 1275cc Mini. It was developed in-house by Rover Special Products, with input from Cooper Garages, and was introduced in May 1990. The new Mini Cooper (with a detuned MG Metro engine) was a massive success, and its limited run of 1000 soon sold out.

Four months later it was added as a mainstream model into the Rover range. And since then the name has been in continuous production – in classic form between 1990 and 2000. MG Rover built the last Mini Cooper at Longbridge on 4 October 2000, and that car – driven off the line by production line supervisor Geoff Powell – was the final of a total run of 5,378,776 Minis. Sadly, John Cooper was too ill to attend the ceremony, and died in December 2000.

THE GEORGE HARRISON MINI

In 1966, Beatles manager Brian Epstein gave each of the band members a Mini-Cooper S as a gift – the group was at the top of the charts, and the Mini was the ultimate car to own at the time. George Harrison's Cooper attracted the most attention over the years: having started life as a black Cooper S, in 1967 it was painted with psychedelic images such as yantras and Sanskrit mantras, reflecting Harrison's Eastern influences.

The car then had a starring role in The Beatles' film *Magical Mystery Tour*, sealing its place in the annals of Mini history. It is known as the Mini Tantric and is owned by Harrison's second wife, Olivia, patron of the Material World Foundation (www.georgeharrison.com).

Octane recently rated this very Mini in its Top 50 ranking of the world's most valuable cars, placing it at around £2,000,000. In the unlikely event that it would ever come up for sale, of course...



Leyland Motor Corporation to create British Leyland – the world's fourth-largest car company at the time. A raft of new management, headed by Donald Stokes, swept into Longbridge, the highest-profile arrival being Triumph's Harry Webster as chief engineer. This signalled the easing out of Alec Issigonis, who'd followed up the best-selling Mini and BMC 1100 with the rather less successful BMC 1800, 3 Litre and, latterly, Maxi.

The merger also brought a new focus to the corporation's finances – and the initial signs weren't good. The Mini and 1100 were well documented as loss-leaders with high warranty costs, while the bigger cars simply didn't sell in sufficient numbers. Webster later commented that, almost as soon as he had arrived at Longbridge, he was 'rushing round, turning off all the expenditure taps. Money was rushing out of Longbridge, and we had nothing to show for it. It was quite terrifying.'

In an ideal world, the Mini-Cooper should have been untouchable – a halo product – especially as the BMC competitions department had been doing such an

effective job of keeping the car competitive in rallying. But Stokes' accounting team was leaving no invoice unexamined, and they soon came knocking on Cooper's door to find out what benefits his consultancy brought to BLMC.

Stokes asked Cooper on one visit: 'What do you do?' Cooper replied: 'I come here once a fortnight and wind Issigonis up...' Cooper later recalled: 'I don't think Stokes liked that very much.' He was told his services were no longer required.

Daniel Richmond was also informed that he wasn't needed at BLMC, leaving the dream team that brought the Mini-Cooper to production out in the cold.

It seems odd, too, that BLMC did little to assist with the biggest rolling advertisement ever for the Mini-Cooper, Paramount's *The Italian Job*. Producer Michael Deeley approached the company for help, and was greeted indifferently. He recalled: 'They were completely uninterested.' In the end, the best deal Deeley could extract was six Minis at trade price, with a further 30 at retail. But that perfectly summed up the situation at BLMC in 1968-69 following the

merger – there was no money in the cupboard for PR opportunities, no matter how good they were.

And this would probably explain why the competitions department was next to receive attention from Stokes' men in suits. At the end of 1968, BLMC released all of its rally drivers apart from Paddy Hopkirk – a sure sign that the budget was to be slashed. New car development was also put on hold. In 1969, the department was ordered to run a team of Minis in the 1969 British Saloon Car Championship. It didn't win. The works Mini-Cooper glory days were over.

And the road-going Mini-Cooper's days were almost over, too. Despite the popular myth that the insipid 1275GT replaced the Cooper S, the two cars were built side by side into 1971 – with the original model actually being facelifted into Mk3 form in March 1970. Sales were fading away by this time, most likely because the rallying glory days were over and the 'It' crowd had moved away from the Cooper. Certainly, the mood of the nation seemed to change as we moved from the swinging 1960s into the gloomy '70s – and the brasher-looking GT seemed

““WHAT DO YOU DO?” ASKED STOKES.
COOPER REPLIED: “I COME HERE
ONCE A FORTNIGHT AND WIND
ISSIGONIS UP...””

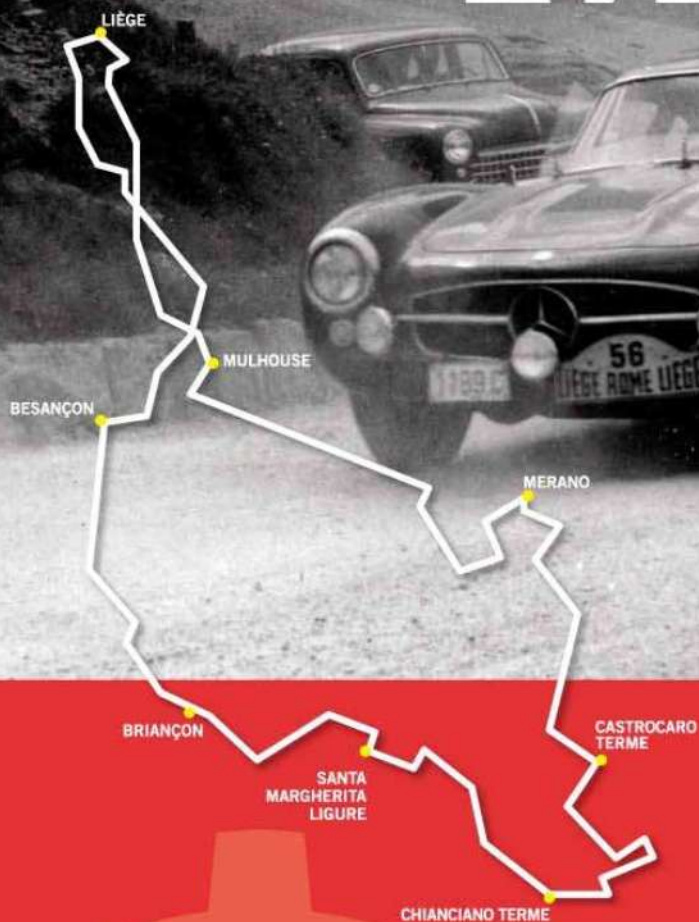
Below
George Harrison's '66
Cooper S became a
work of art in 1967.
Note the spotlamps
faired into the bonnet.



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BUYING A MINI-COOPER

There are many pitfalls to be aware of – most notably the risk of buying a fake. Mini-Cooper values have been steadily rising since 2000, when the original went out of production.

Tell-tale signs of an original early Cooper are: two-tone paint, additional chrome brightwork and interior trim, a three-dial instrument pack featuring a 100mph speedometer, and black vinyl on top of the dash. Chassis numbers are C-A2S7 (Austin) and K-A2S4 (Morris). In the case of the Mk1 Cooper S, look out for its 120mph speedometer, removable tappet covers on the rear of the engine block, and ten studs/one bolt fixing for the cylinder head. Cooper engine numbers are a minefield, but the excellent MiniMania website has a useful checklist at <http://www.tinyurl.com/cooperengine>.

Mk2 Coopers have a seven-slatted grille and black upholstery – the Mk2 Cooper S has twin fuel tanks and a 130mph speedometer – and chassis codes of either C-A2SB or K-A2S6. The Mk3 Cooper S is based on the Mini 1000, with single-colour paintwork and larger rear windows, and chassis prefix XAD-1 for both Austin and Morris versions.

The main enemy of any Mini is rust. Early Minis can break out anywhere but favourite hotspots are the sills, valances, inner wings and floors. Underneath, if the rear subframe is rotten, it's a pig to replace. In terms of engine and running gear, Minis are straightforward: the A-series is a known quantity with a ready parts supply. Make sure that the head gasket is OK, and that the transmission isn't excessively noisy.

But the crux of Mini-Cooper purchase is that, if you're paying for an original car, you should ensure you're buying an original car. And the best way to do that is to get in contact with the Mini-Cooper Register, which will be able to confirm your car's originality – or not. This advice holds especially true if you're looking at an FIA car for competition use.



Top and below
No Monte Carlo rally scars, wickerwork or psychedelic paint, just a perfect example of a 1275S. Fantastic.

far more in keeping with the times than the tastefully subtle S.

BLMC finally – and predictably – closed its competitions department in October 1970, and Stuart Turner moved over to become competitions manager for Ford. The decades of success that followed his arrival there must have seemed bitter-sweet to the colleagues he left behind. Eight months later, the final Mini-Cooper S came off the Longbridge production line, bringing to an end a ten-year run that changed the way driving enthusiasts – not to mention motor sport fans – thought about small cars.

In an interview in 2001, Lord Stokes revealed why the Mini-Cooper was axed. 'It was an expensive car to make – there were so many different body pressings. We lost about £20 per Mini... then people wonder why I scrapped the Cooper. We were giving more money to Mr Cooper than we were making in profit.'


Sad to think it was the dead hand of cost management that killed a car which had brought so much success to BLMC. And that success had also bred warmth

towards the company – positive morale that would become so lacking within the firm as the 1970s dragged on.

As with all icons, the Mini-Cooper was easily outlasted by its legacy. BLMC might have pulled the plug, concentrating its efforts on the more pressing matter of survival, but rival manufacturers had noticed. They formulated their own interpretations of the Mini-Cooper with varying degrees of success until Volkswagen scored a bull's-eye with the Golf GTI in 1976, thus reinventing what Cooper had created for the post-sports car world. John Cooper always knew his Mini continued to have a ready market, and he later went on to prove it.

The model's legacy also lay in its past successes. Three wins – as well as that disqualification – at Monte Carlo ensured the Mini-Cooper's place in history. But, for many people, its significance lies much closer to home. Mike Cooper smiles as he recalls: 'My first Mini-Cooper was red with a white roof, and I passed my driving test in it back in 1967. Even then, I knew it had set me off on a course of enthusiastic driving.

I offered the examiner a lift back to the test centre in it after earning my licence. He said: "No thank you, I'll walk." I had such fun in that car. I eventually sold it to a lady, but I ended up buying it back later and today it remains in a museum in Japan.'

And that's why the Mini-Cooper really was 'Wizardry on Wheels'. It was capable of miracles, as the unlikely competition winner of all time, and a national institution to top all others; a classless car that suited everyone. The original might have lasted a mere ten years, but it influenced a new generation of Mini-Coopers that are now poised to have the same impact in World Rallying as they did back in the 1960s, thanks to the upcoming efforts of Prodrive and BMW. While it's 50 years since the birth of the first Mini-Cooper, there's no sign of the wizardry dying any time soon. 

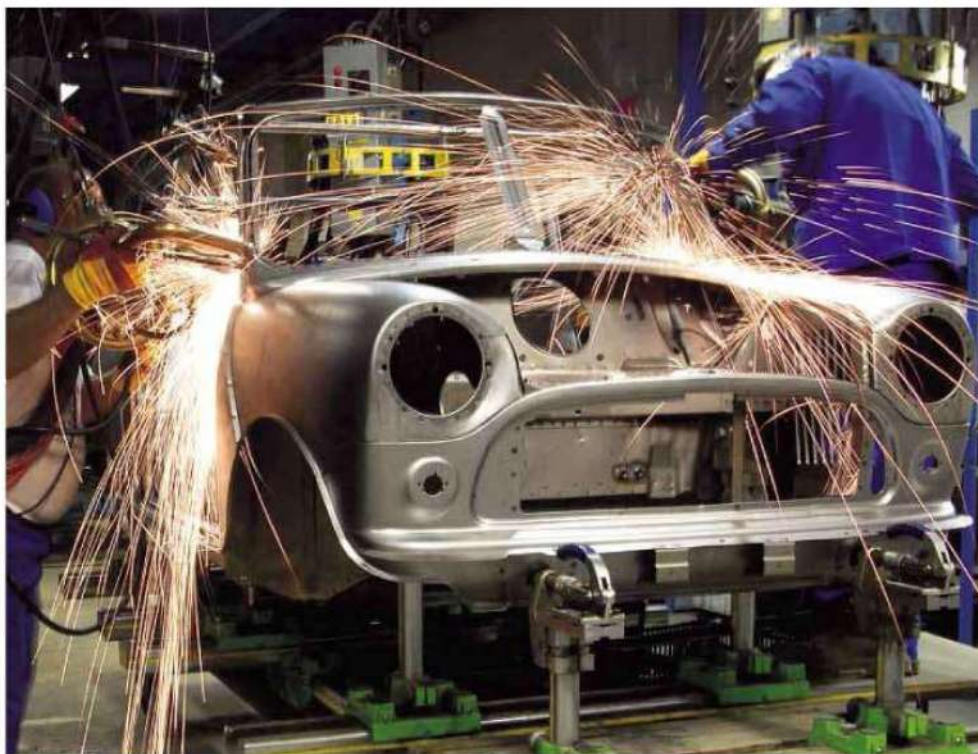
Thanks to: Ian Nicholls, without whose input this feature would have been impossible; the Mini-Cooper Register, www.minicooper.org; Olivia Harrison; James Ruppert; JD Classics, www.jdclassics.co.uk; and the Heritage Motor Centre, www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk.



'IT WAS CAPABLE OF MIRACLES, AS THE UNLIKELY COMPETITION WINNER OF ALL TIME, AND A NATIONAL INSTITUTION TO TOP ALL OTHERS'

1964 MINI-COOPER 1275S

ENGINE 1275cc transversely mounted four-cylinder, OHV, twin SU carburetors
POWER 76bhp @ 5800rpm **TORQUE** 80lb ft @ 3000rpm **STEERING** Rack and pinion
SUSPENSION Front and rear: wishbones/radius arms, interconnected Hydrolastic spring/damper units **BRAKES** Discs front, drums rear, no servo **WEIGHT** 672kg
PERFORMANCE Top speed 98mph. 0-60mph 10.5sec



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ONE IN A MILLION

Aston Martin's first £1.2 million One-77 supercar has just been completed. But it's only when you see the process of building of it that you realise how special it actually is

Words: David Lillywhite Photography: Nick Dimbleby



What's the all-time ultimate Aston Martin? The DB4GT Zagato? The DBR1? One of the Development Project cars? The current DBS? There's quite a choice.

And now the choice is a little wider, because we have the One-77, a worthy contender for title of 'ultimate Aston'; not just because it's so fast (220mph on a banked circuit), nor because it possesses the most powerful normally aspirated engine currently in existence (750bhp), but because there's never been an Aston Martin that has been so uniquely and exquisitely engineered and styled.

There have been plenty of sneak previews of the One-77, ever since the glimpse of the styling model's muscular wheelarch at the 2008 Paris motor show, followed by a reveal at the 2009 Geneva show and a highly lauded appearance at the 2010 Villa d'Este concours.

For a while there was talk that this was merely a limited edition, high-power version of the DBS. But the rumoured one million pound-plus price tag – how did that match the DBS-on-steroids theory?

Of course, it doesn't. The One-77 is actually an all-new, high-tech, profit-making showcase for what Aston Martin is capable of. A few parts are shared with other models, but not many. This is something special; over to design director Marek Reichman, as he shows us round the finished car.

'Dr Bez [Aston Martin CEO] had a conversation with me about this in October 2007. As a company we were at a point at which we needed to put the cherry on our potential. We had to develop the ultimate Aston Martin supercar, and that had to be a combination of hand crafting and proportion mixed with technology.

'It wasn't a blank sheet. Dr Bez wanted 700bhp and a weight

'THE ONE-77 IS ACTUALLY AN ALL-NEW, HIGH-TECH, PROFIT-MAKING SHOWCASE FOR WHAT ASTON MARTIN IS CAPABLE OF'





'ASTON MARTIN SPECIFIED THAT NO STRUCTURAL JOINS SHOULD BE VISIBLE AND, WHERE DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF CARBONFIBRE MEET, THEY MUST MATCH PERFECTLY'



Above and right
Aluminium panels are handbuilt, which allows details such as the way the door mirror 'flows' from the panel; brakes are carbon ceramic; note how far back engine sits.



Above
Carbonfibre structure is beautifully finished and doubles as air ducting. Coilovers are horizontally mounted.

of 1500kg, which would give the same power-to-weight-ratio as the Veyron. We had to show that the body was handmade. It had to have 50:50 weight distribution. It had to be front/mid-engined and rear-wheel drive, because that's the iconic Aston Martin layout – we know how to develop a front/mid-engined car, and this had to be the *best* front/mid-engined car. And it had to be great to drive on the street and around the Nürburgring.'

This power-to-weight ratio required an all-new super-lightweight (but immensely strong) structure, which led to the One-77 being based around a carbonfibre tub, clothed in hand-formed aluminium. The layout is front/mid-engined rear-drive, with torque tube to rear-mounted transaxle. The engine is a development of the DB9's V12, increased from 6.0 litres to 7.3, with radically different cylinder heads and injection system. Even the suspension is totally different, with the exception of the wishbones, which it shares with the rest of the range. And the price? £1.2 million plus optional extras and local taxes.

Aston Martin had to sell 50 of the 77 cars promised to get into profit. Why 77? Because 100 seemed too many, 75 seemed too obvious, and the number 77 'looks good', says Marek. Fair enough. So far, 60 have been sold, while there's interest from more than 27 other potential buyers, most of whom are waiting for a drive of the first production car before they commit.

Right on cue, the first production car has its first test drive on the day we're there; we're the first to see a production One-77 moving under its own power, to hear it fire up and

rumble through the new One-77 'factory'. This place is McLaren-esque in its stark cleanliness, and 007-esque in the sleek drama of its four assembly stations, at which stainless steel two-post lifts rise smoothly out of the polished white floor. It's quite special, but it's only when Dr Bez pays an impromptu visit and loudly points out that there's no need to speak in hushed tones, that we realise how reverential the place makes you feel.

You get to see the majority of the car's production in this one relatively small building, although the process actually begins thousands of miles away in Canada. That's where each body tub is made up, by Multimatic (MTC), from no fewer than 3000 pieces of carbonfibre. Those pieces are carefully laid up over a period of three weeks, and the resultant parts are then shipped to the UK – Thetford in Norfolk, to be more precise – where they're bonded and autoclaved together, along with sections of extruded aluminium honeycomb (from Lotus Lightweight Structures in Worcester) to form the full tub.

It's at this point you see the beauty of the structure. Aston Martin specified that no structural joins should be visible and, where different sections of carbonfibre meet, they must match perfectly, like adjoining sections of veneer. The result is stunning, a marked move on from existing carbonfibre supercars.

The tub then heads for CPP in Coventry, one of those wonderful places where the ultra-modern meets the age-old in terms of engineering skills. The panels are superformed – ➔



Clockwise from below
One-77 workforce is chosen from the cream of the Aston factory; customers are given a wide choice of seat trim options; most chassis components are milled from billet aluminium; trimming is performed in-house.



'BUYERS OF THE ONE-77 CAN VISIT AS OFTEN AS THEY LIKE, AND IF THEY'RE ATTENTIVE THEY'LL GET TO SEE THE BEAUTY OF THE CHASSIS COMPONENTS'

a relatively new process in which aluminium is heated to 450-500°C and forced over a mould by air pressure to form a complex shape – then welded together and finished by craftsmen on a traditional English wheel before being trial-fitted to the tub.

Up close, you immediately see the beauty of the workmanship. Most exquisite is the way the door mirrors seamlessly flow out of the door panels; and when you run your fingers over the form you realise that the body line extends into the mirror, a piece of crafting so subtle that you have to know it's there to see it.

The front of the car shows off every trick in the car designer's armoury. If you sectioned the front wing you'd see its profile goes from sharp flange around the bonnet edge, to a positive curve, to a tricky negative curve to a muscular bulge over the wheels and a highly sculptural entry into the front air intakes. This is clever stuff, a visual masterpiece that still satisfies one requirement that the DB4GT Zagato, for example, didn't have to contend with – a 200mph-plus top speed.

'When you're talking those speeds,' says Marek, 'aerodynamics have to play a part but we didn't want aero aids all over the car.'

It's those vents on the sides of the front wings that turned out to be the most critical aerodynamically, helped along by the tiny front splitter, the complex rear diffuser and the neat pop-up rear spoiler. Marek didn't want a single shutline or panel join visible at the back (the rear glass acts as the luggage hatch) but that spoiler is neat enough to be an acceptable compromise, and he enthuses over the rear diffuser, which incorporates the near-invisible exhaust tailpipes, themselves cut in such a way as to aid the aerodynamics

under the car (the hot gases help the flow). They're the only hot gases that do leave from under the car – the flat underfloor helps the aerodynamics some more, so most of the heat (400-600°C) from the engine is directed by twin carbonfibre 'chimney stacks' out of the bonnet vents. The exhausts, incidentally, run inside the sills.

And yes, what of the engine? That's built in Northampton, where Cosworth's engineers were briefed to get as much power out of the Aston V12 as possible. Boy, have they done that, somehow keeping it within the new EU5 emissions regulations. They increased the bore size and stroke, to get from 6.0 litres to 7.3, converted the engine to dry sump to enable it to sit lower, and completely revised the cylinder heads with more upright valves for better flow, directly operated by repositioned camshafts rather than via the valve operating 'fingers' of the standard V12, which eat into the power by adding friction to the valvetrain. The disadvantage of the new heads is a taller (by 100mm) engine – too tall to fit in the DB9 – but that was deemed acceptable because, in the One-77, the dry sump allows the engine to sit low, well behind the front axle line. Only the front half of it is visible; the rest disappears under the fascia.

The inlet camshafts use variable cam timing to optimise low-down torque, and the quad throttle-body injection system and carbonfibre crossover inlet manifolds are tuned to boost mid-range torque without compromising top-end power.

How much power? An awesome 750bhp, a jump of 280bhp over the DB9 and 240bhp more than the DBS, in a delivery that's said to be perfectly tractable and road-friendly.

So it's only once the engine has been hot-tested that it is mated-

'THIS PLACE IS McLAREN-ESQUE
IN ITS STARK CLEANLINESS,
AND 007-ESQUE IN THE
SLEEK DRAMA OF ITS FOUR
ASSEMBLY STATIONS'

up first to the transmission – a carbonfibre propshaft inside a magnesium torque tube running to a strengthened version of Aston's six-speed transaxle – and then finally united with the bodytub. These jobs are done in the 'dirty' side of the One-77 production space, though it would take a serious case of OCD to declare this to be anything other than spotless.

The car then moves to the 'clean' side and onto one of those four workstations, where it remains until fully built, engineers coming to the car rather than the car moving to the engineers. Buyers of the One-77 can visit as often as they like, and if they're attentive they'll get to see the beauty of the chassis components, some of which are hidden on the finished car.

You could stare for hours at the suspension and chassis. Aston Martin took a step back, and asked what the ultimate application of front/mid-engine suspension layout has been in the past few years. The answer had to be the German DTM racers, which use horizontally mounted coil-over-damper units operated by bellcranks, for the best compromise between suspension travel and bonnet height. And so that's the principle that the One-77 followed, except that each component is jewel-like in its technical beauty, with the bellcranks and mounts milled from billet aluminium, and the alloy-bodied coilovers resplendent in anodised blue and gold, with red springs.

Everywhere you look there's another treat. The engine bay is braced by a curvaceous carbonfibre cruciform, integral to the structure and pretty enough in itself, but made all the more impressive when you find that it also acts as air intake (similarly, the front 'crash structure' also ducts air to the brakes). Some of the heat insulation on the bulkhead is gold leaf, à la McLaren F1, because it's what works best – and it looks great!

And then the interior starts to go in. Fascia first, bench-built, ➔




then the centre console and finally the seats, carbonfibre Sparcos trimmed in the One-77 building to the customer's specification. There's a choice of leather or Alcantara, of colours, of stitching patterns... It becomes a little mind-boggling, and then which finish should be chosen for the interior fittings? Brushed stainless steel? Chrome? Ruthenium (a finish used in the watch industry)? Rose gold? That last one adds £40,000 to the price. There are around one million combinations! Oh, and you can add a Cygnet, maybe in matching colours, which 60% of One-77 buyers so far have done.

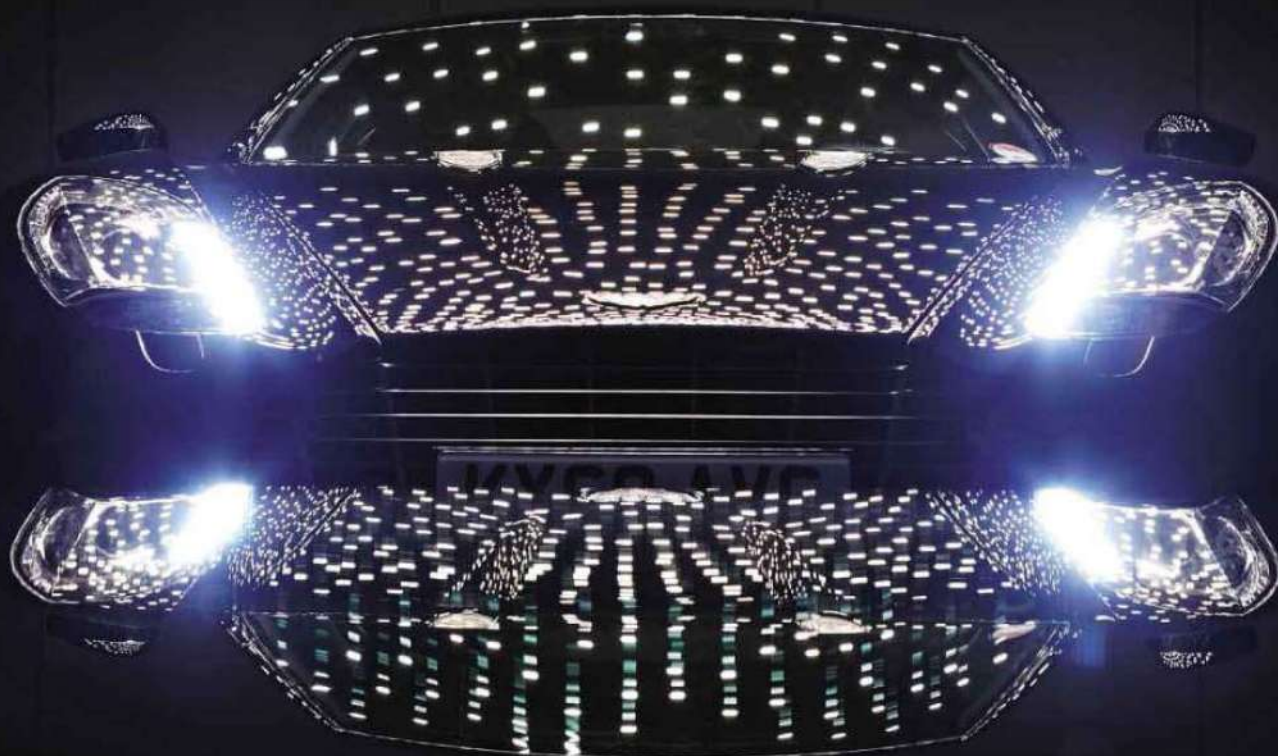
The choices allow anything from mean and moody to fully pimped in terms of cabin feel – Marek's favourite is Villa d'Este Blue paintwork, dark blue leather, carbonfibre trim rather than wood or metal, and ruthenium fittings – but what's really clever is how Aston has made the cabin feel sporty *and* luxurious, and yet kept the weight to a minimum. There's no trim hiding the carbonfibre of the tub and door shells, and the car is all the better (and lighter) for it.

The finished car rumbles into the customer handover room. We get the full experience, as doors slide open, music blares, lights strobe and there in front of us is the One-77 in all its glory. It's a great looker; not necessarily beautiful but muscular and utterly awe-inspiring. It's big, a full two metres across the rear arches and with a bonnet so long that it's three metres from the driver's eye to the front grille, but it's also a full 140mm lower than the lithe DBS.

Sitting inside, there's decent visibility all round and no doubt as to where the front corners are. Chief programme engineer Chris Porritt, who classes the One-77 as 'the project of a career-time', flashes a guilty grin and, against the rules, fires up the V12; the thunderous exhaust note bounces around the small room.

This is great stuff. Aston Martin, like all manufacturers, has been hit by the recession, but the One-77 has sparked excitement throughout the factory, and the technology it showcases will filter down the rest of the range. Is it the ultimate? Time will tell. 

**'WE GET THE FULL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE.
DOORS SLIDE OPEN, MUSIC BLARES, LIGHTS STROBE AND THERE
IN FRONT OF US IS THE ONE-77 IN ALL ITS GLORY'**



2010 ASTON MARTIN ONE-77

ENGINE 7.3-litre V12, 48-valve aluminium head and block, DOHC, fuel injection, dry-sump **POWER** 750bhp **TORQUE** 553lb ft

TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual transaxle with Auto Shift Manual or Select Shift Manual, rear-wheel drive

STEERING Rack and pinion, power-assisted **SUSPENSION** Front and rear: double wishbones, horizontally mounted coil-over-damper units, bellcrank/pushrod actuation **BRAKES** Carbon ceramic discs front and rear **WEIGHT** 1500kg **PERFORMANCE** Top speed 220mph-plus. 0-60mph n/a

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CITROËN SM V8

CITROËN SM V8

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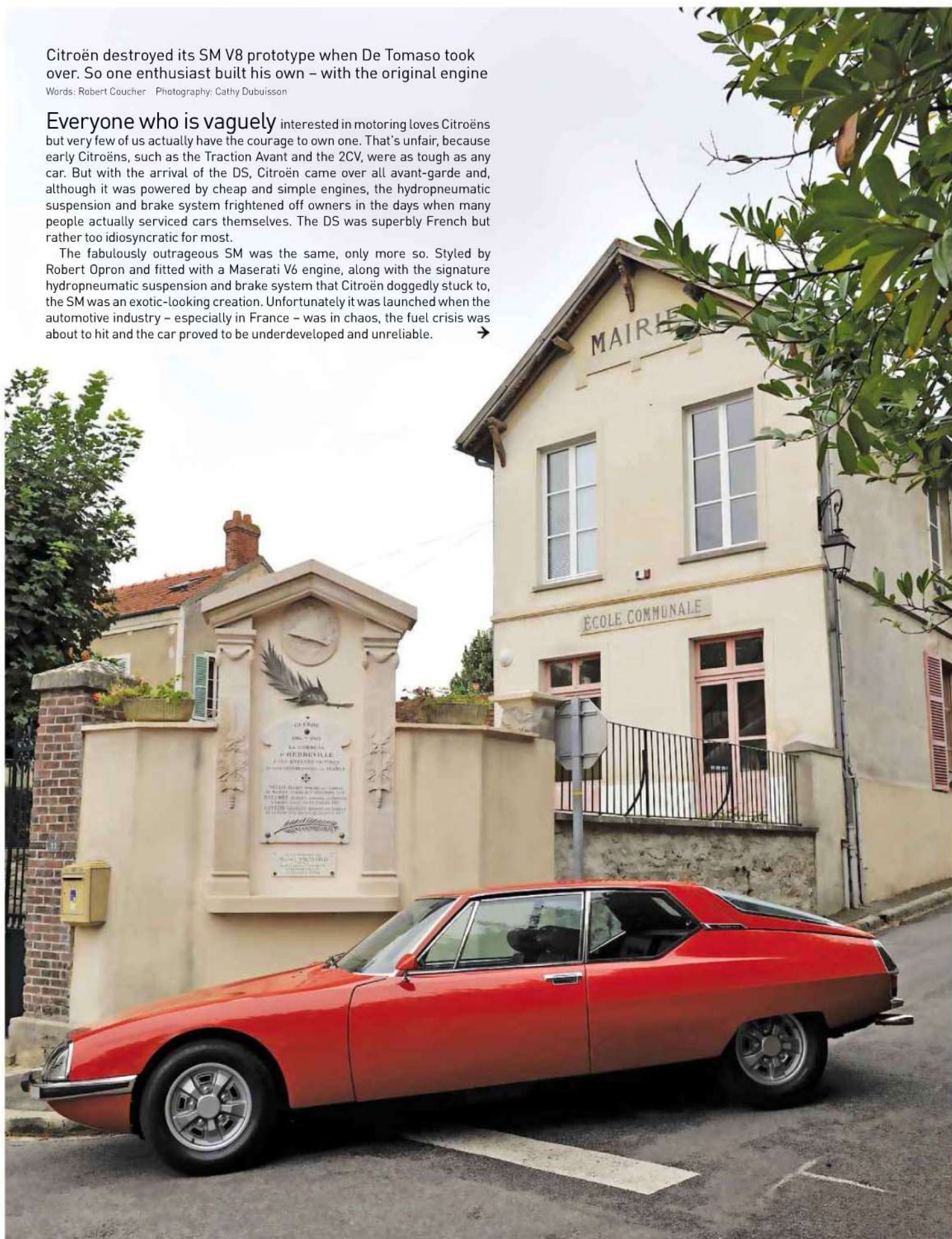


Citroën destroyed its SM V8 prototype when De Tomaso took over. So one enthusiast built his own – with the original engine

Words: Robert Coucher Photography: Cathy Dubuisson

Everyone who is vaguely interested in motoring loves Citroëns but very few of us actually have the courage to own one. That's unfair, because early Citroëns, such as the Traction Avant and the 2CV, were as tough as any car. But with the arrival of the DS, Citroën came over all avant-garde and, although it was powered by cheap and simple engines, the hydropneumatic suspension and brake system frightened off owners in the days when many people actually serviced cars themselves. The DS was superbly French but rather too idiosyncratic for most.

The fabulously outrageous SM was the same, only more so. Styled by Robert Opron and fitted with a Maserati V6 engine, along with the signature hydropneumatic suspension and brake system that Citroën doggedly stuck to, the SM was an exotic-looking creation. Unfortunately it was launched when the automotive industry – especially in France – was in chaos, the fuel crisis was about to hit and the car proved to be underdeveloped and unreliable. ➔





Below
The SM proved what a great car the Citroën DS would have been with a V6. And this one's got a V8...

During the decades since, the SM was largely ignored by the mainstream classic car world, seen as an over-complicated underachiever. For years, old SMs could be seen smoking around less salubrious suburbs with bits of fragile trim hanging off and the brittle interior crumbling. But in the last few years prices have jumped as the SM has become a desirable icon of the 1970s. With specialists such as Garage Daunat and Regembeau in France and Andrew Brodie in the UK proving that SMs can be made to run reliably and their foibles remedied, interest has rocketed. Even *Octane* editor David Lillywhite is in the process of importing one!

The SM was recently afforded a seven-page feature in *Octane* (issue 89), so this is not the place to repeat all the history. And nor should it be, because the car we have here is not one of the ordinary 12,920

production models but a replica of a one-off prototype. In fact it's the only Citroën SM V8 in existence.

To the bafflement of many, Citroën purchased Maserati in 1968 and this gave it access to Maserati's engine department, headed by Giulio Alfieri who developed the 2.7-litre V6 for the SM. According to marque expert Marc Sonnery, and detailed in his upcoming book *Maserati and Citroën Years 1968-1975*, in the spring of 1974 Alfieri was tasked with developing a new V8 engine for the Maserati Quattroporte II. The old Indy/Bora V8 was deemed too heavy and out of date so the Merak V6 engine was the basis for a fresh and more efficient 4.0-litre V8, and the idea was to test it in an SM.

Alfieri ingeniously enlarged the V6 by cutting it in the middle of the third cylinder from the front and mating it with a one-and-a-half cylinder section from another

block. *Perfecto!* A lightweight V8 that sits behind the front-wheel-drive SM's gearbox.

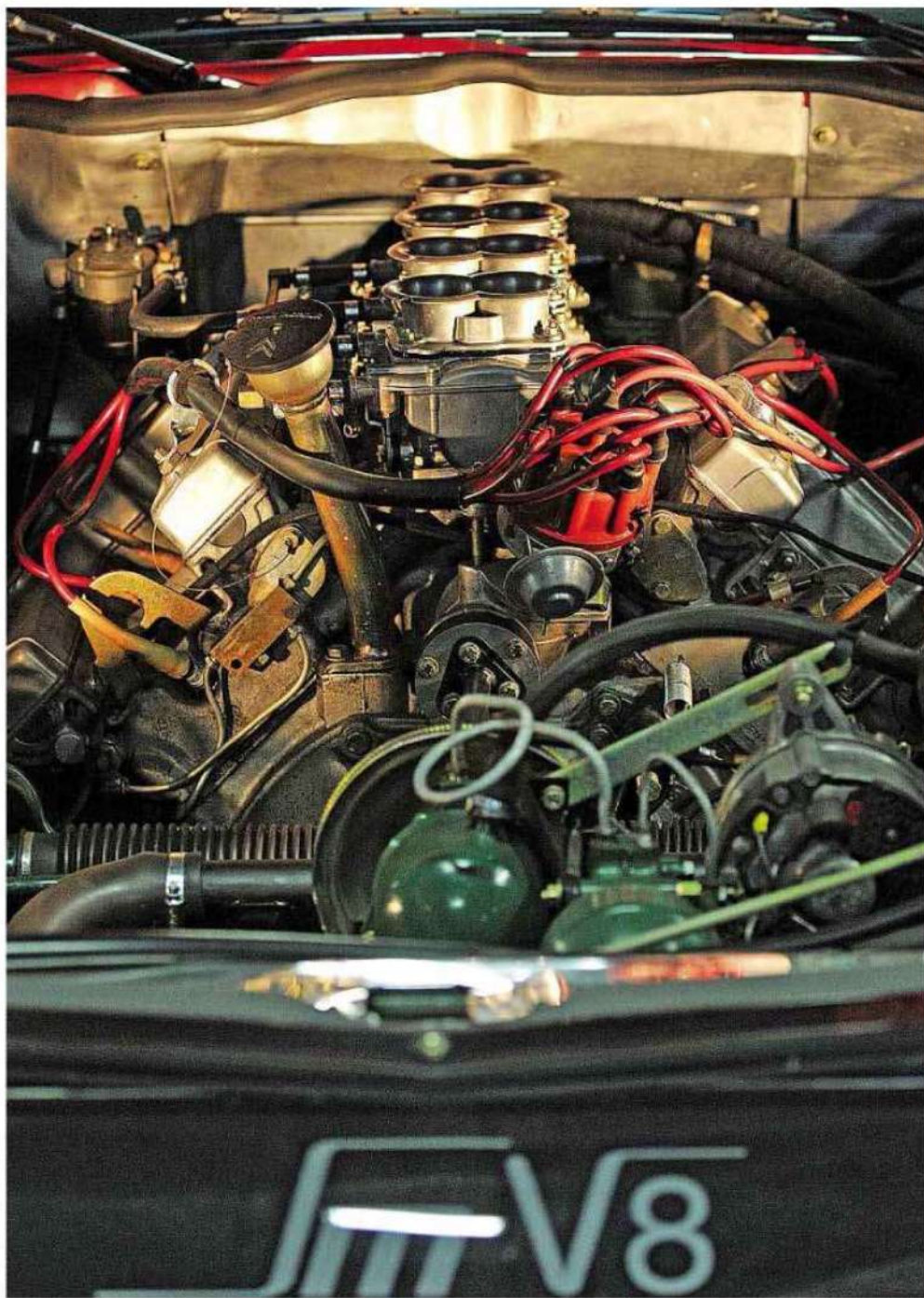
Marc Sonnery put the question to Cleto Grandi, who was head of *tecnico* in the late Alfieri's R&D department for Maserati, and he says: 'Since Mr Malleret [director of Maserati for Citroën] did not want to use the traditional V8, judged too long in the tooth and uneconomical, it was decided to make a Merak Plus 2 engine... we took a Merak block and welded two additional cylinders from another Merak block and this engine came together quite simply.'

Grandi continues: 'It was installed in the same position as the six-cylinder except that, to make room for the two additional cylinders, we had to modify the bodyshell slightly in the area of the dashboard to be able to fit the coolant pipes.'

The gearbox remained standard, as Grandi explains: 'Normal five-speed



'The SM V8 looks no different to a regular SM but, when the engine fires, the cat is out of the bag'



Above
Carburettor trumpets
prove the badge tells
the truth – though this
V8 was actually built
out of two V6s.

gearbox, yes. We practically did not change a thing... To be able to fit [the engine] in the car, we flattened, as opposed to cut, the firewall and it just fitted in. There wasn't a lot of spare space, however.'

One of Citroën's reasons for purchasing Maserati was because of the smaller company's ability to produce prototypes quickly and Alfieri's engineers were skilled at aluminium welding. Grandi says: 'The distributor, we obviously took one for a V8, I am sure we fitted a Bosch unit, and we made longer camshafts and crank. The most difficult part of the job was to cut the two engine blocks and then afterwards weld them *on the inside*. That was difficult because of water and oil flow... you have all these passageways which had to be

machined and then the two parts of the V8 were placed together so that everything could be calculated, then a welding tool specifically made for aluminium managed to weld it all very well.'

The compact V8 was secreted into the SM's engine bay using the standard gearbox and engine mounts, with the firewall 'tapped with a hammer' – as Grandi tactfully puts it – to accommodate the extra cylinders. The regular SM sound-deadening material had to be removed, the exhaust manifolds took a bit of work, and additional pipes had to be added to both headers at the correct angle.

The standard SM chosen to take the prototype V8 was finished in Rio Red with a black interior – exactly like you see in



NOT THE ONLY SM HOT ROD

For decades, Citroëns have been enormously advanced cars let down by distinctly pedestrian engines. And as Citroën destroyed its only SM V8, you'd either have had to build your own – or visit Georges Regembeau.

Regembeau, born in 1920, first got into engineering at the age of 14, when he built a tractor. At 17 his innovative repair of a road-tarring machine (which had broken down outside his home) earned a handsome sum from a Mannheim company, which patented his modification. So he bought himself a car: a Citroën Traction 15/6.

After World War Two, he rallied it and even entered Le Mans, and realised the chassis could cope with more than just 77bhp. So he devised his own mechanical fuel injection and supercharged it. For good measure he built a six-speed gearbox, which endowed the Traction with a 131mph top speed – verified by an officially timed run at Montlhéry.

Regembeau supercharged another four 15/6s for customers, then moved on to develop various modifications to improve the reliability of the DS. Besides work to make the hydraulic seals more oil-tight, he devised a five-speed gearbox, greatly improving the car's refinement and economy on the new autoroutes. Then he moved to tuning and, with judicious changes to its cylinder head and induction system, the later DS21 was capable of a staggering 138mph.

Soon Regembeau found himself peering beneath the SM's elegant bonnet. With the oil shock of 1974, Regembeau began proposing a diesel conversion to SM clients whose engines were giving them problems. He had already built an 85bhp 2.0-litre four-cylinder diesel for the DS and, by the early 1970s, experiments with Bosch mechanical injection and successive increases in capacity to 2.6 litres produced a reliable 180bhp – enough to push the 1450kg SM to almost 125mph.

But there was life in the petrol V6 yet. Regembeau understood the V6's flaws and realised that nothing short of ground-up re-engineering would make it run reliably. Starting from the bottom end, he revised the crankshaft, main bearings and piston liners, installed solid valves and redesigned the cylinder heads using better quality steel. He also redesigned the primary timing chain with better lubrication and added automatic tensioners to this and to the secondary belt, which drives the alternator, air-con compressor and the hydraulic steering and suspension systems.

Regembeau's revisions to timing, induction and exhaust manifolds lowered peak torque from 4000rpm to a more relaxing 3000rpm, while power went up to an impressive 240bhp with triple Weber 48 carburettors. Allied to Regembeau's own six-speed gearbox, the Citroën SM RG was a 150mph car.

Son Patrick gradually took over the business from a very reluctant father and today, like his father used to, he works alone – although his mother is also an accomplished mechanic who has certainly served her time in the workshop. Visit <http://citroensmregembeau.free.fr>.

Kieron Fennelly →

**Left**

Inside, it's the usual plush, deeply comfortable and slightly eccentric SM story. With added speed.



'Going, not stopping, is this car's intention and, boy, is it quick. The V8 engine note hardens at about three thou', then goes off the chart with enthusiasm'

CITROËN SM V8 ENGINE

4100cc V8, DOHC
per bank, four Weber
42DCNF carburettors

POWER

260bhp @ 5500rpm
(approx)

TRANSMISSION

Five-speed manual,
front-wheel drive

STEERING

Rack and pinion,
fully powered

SUSPENSION

Hydropneumatic,
front wishbones,
rear trailing arms

BRAKES

Vented discs front,
solid discs rear

WEIGHT

1450kg (approx)

PERFORMANCE

Top speed 150mph.
0-60mph 7.8sec (est)

these photographs. 'Ingegnere Alfieri [and others] did about 12,000km with the car, using it not only as a test bed but also for his personal commute home,' says Grandi. 'There was *troppo potenza* [too much power] so we had to change the suspension settings. Then at the end of the testing and development stage we removed the engine and, as the car was by then in poor condition, it was dismantled and scrapped.'

By 1975 Michelin had decided to sell Citroën to Peugeot along with Maserati, which was haemorrhaging money. Peugeot then sold Maserati to Argentinean industrialist and ex-racing driver Alejandro de Tomaso. A fiery character, he wanted all signs of Citroën totally expunged from Maserati's history and the SM V8 was one of the casualties.

Although the original Rio Red SM bodysell was crushed, the special engine was saved along with other important Maseratis, including a collection of historic racing cars. This collection was then preserved by the Panini family in Modena, where it was put on display at its Parmigiano cheese factory. In 1998 the SM V8 engine was sold to the German Maserati collector Hermann Postert, who displayed it on a stand in his home.

In the summer of 2009, private collector Philip Kantor persuaded Postert to sell him the prototype engine, to realise a long-held ambition. 'My late father loved SMs,' says Kantor. 'The trouble was they proved somewhat unreliable so he owned five at

once to ensure one would always be running. He thought the cars were great but underpowered. Discovering that Alfieri had created this one-off prototype V8, and researching exactly how he had gone about it, I knew I had to recreate it, using the original V8 engine. My father would have really appreciated the engineering challenge and most certainly the result.'

Citroën SM specialist Frederic Daumat was entrusted with this personal project and recreated the V8 in accordance with the original prototype. And now *Octane* gets the chance to drive this unique SM in the quiet rural surrounds of Herbeville, near Versailles.


It's immaculately finished in the soft orangey hue that is Rio Red, wearing the rare composite wheels made by Michelin, and its smart black leather interior appears original. In fact, the SM V8 looks no different to a regular SM but, when the engine fires, the cat is out of the bag.

And, *mon dieu*, it sounds good! There's a very angry Italianate rasp that promises a good deal of power. It was never dyno'd, but the 4.0-litre V8 is thought to be whacking out around 260bhp.

The driver's seat is big and soft; the view over the curved dash and fat steering wheel clear. The clutch operates as it would in the V6 and the V8 provides plenty of shove off the line, while the gearshift moves around the heavily chromed gate beautifully. That fat steering wheel needs to be so because you really have to hang onto it – with high

gearing and extremely strong self-centring, you cannot palm along with one hand.

Frederic Daumat, who prepares rally-winning SMs, has beefed up the hydropneumatic suspension but the car retains that incredible gliding ability across the country roads. As instructed, the brake button on the floorboard has to be treated very gently and at first application the SM nosedives to a very sudden halt. It takes practice to learn how to toe it correctly and it is a bit disconcerting not having a brake pedal to feather into blind bends, but at least you are always assured that the 1450kg Citroën will stop.

But *going*, not stopping, is this car's intention and, boy, is it quick. The V8 engine note hardens at about three thou', then goes off the chart with enthusiasm. Minimal sound deadening means you hear it at work from inside, and what a wonderful sound. With super-sharp steering, immense brakes, a tautened chassis and a fabulous V8, this prototype replica is the car that the SM always should have been. It's fast, comfortable, totally sorted, and the added power allows you really to exploit the capable chassis and benign handling to the full. This impressive Citroën is exactly what the late Mr Kantor Sr would have enjoyed for his high-speed European motoring. 

The Citroën SM V8 prototype replica will be offered for sale at the Bonhams Le Grand Palais auction in Paris, France, on 5 February 2011; www.bonhams.com/cars.

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Yellow Peril

It was the most powerful privateer race car of the early '70s – and remains so in today's historic championships. Mark Hales tames the 215mph McLaren M8E

Photography: Matthew Howell





Couldn't happen, could it? Well, not today, but it did and it's sort of a military theme. If you asked a NASA scientist in the 1960s to get a rocket to the moon, he wouldn't ask if there were any restrictions on size or fuel consumption. Or budget for that matter. All that mattered would be getting there. CanAm was a bit like that, the race series created in the mid-1960s to embrace the American dream that anything was possible and, preferably, the bigger the better. The only stipulation was that the car had to have two seats and enclosed wheels.

So you had engines of seven, eight, even nine litres; tyres 17 inches wide, exotic materials, multiple engines, ground effect and wings the size of a Beechcraft mainplane, all of which represented the biggest and best of what they knew in 1970.

It's unfeasible now but the chaos from complete lack of regulation that seems so inevitable was actually restrained by the technology of the time. Carbonfibre hadn't been invented, car aerodynamics were rudimentary, Colin Chapman had yet to plagiarise ground effect (although CanAm's equivalent, Jim Hall, produced a car with a snowmobile engine driving two fans that

sucked the air from under the car...) and tyres had only just stopped wearing treads. Electronics weren't available to keep a turbocharger from melting an engine; while Porsche found a way to do it in 1973 with the 1100bhp twin-turbo 917/30, it nearly killed the formula because nobody else could. Or perhaps by then the American auto industry's love affair with CanAm was over and the money was going elsewhere.

The 917/30 remains the most powerful circuit race car ever made but, until then, a big-block Chevrolet that started life at 7.0 litres was the largest and most powerful *available* engine that would fit into a car, and most subsequent regulation would seek to restrict exactly what it liberated. A CanAm car might look relatively unsophisticated now, but it ushered in ground effect, skirts, wings (movable and fixed), four-wheel drive and aerospace materials into motor sport, and, as a result, the cars were often faster than the Formula 1s that went on to embrace all of those. CanAm was certainly out there at the edges of the envelope.

And CanAm produced the most powerful race car an amateur could buy. It was so in 1970 – and it *still* is. The McLaren CanAm



'CanAm produced the most powerful race car an amateur could buy. It was so in 1970 and still is'



Far left and top
Eight trumpets top the 8.7-litre, 860bhp, 750lb ft Chevy V8; Ian Jones makes sure it doesn't blow itself into oblivion.



1971 McLaren M8E CANAM CHALLENGE CAR

ENGINE 8712cc V8, OHV, aluminium block and heads, Lucas Kinsler mechanical fuel injection. Built by RM Motorsports, Wixom, Detroit

POWER 860bhp @ 6700rpm **TORQUE** 752lb ft @ 5300rpm

TRANSMISSION Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive **STEERING** Rack and pinion

SUSPENSION Front: double wishbones, coil-over-damper units, anti-roll bar.

Rear: upper and lower links, radius rods, coil-over-damper units, anti-roll bar

BRAKES 12in AP vented discs front and rear, four-pot calipers **WEIGHT** 850kg

PERFORMANCE Top speed 215mph (depending on gearing). 0-60mph 2.8sec (est)

car in these pictures – M8E no 80-06, now owned by enthusiast and racer Stephen Minoprio – was bought from the factory in 1971 by one Fred Parkhill, who ran his eponymous liquor store at 5111 South Lewis Boulevard in Tulsa. It came with a Hewland five-speed LG500 gearbox but without an engine, which makes sense since the car was made in England and the people who knew about Chevrolets were in America.

The horsepower race was already on. Parkhill built his own engines in the great American hot-rodding tradition and takes up the story. 'I started out with a 427 and the big guys went to 465, so I got one; then they went to 494. I got one. Of course, after that, they went to 512. I gave up then...'

That an amateur could mix it with the likes of Gurney, Stewart, Donohue, Foyt, Andretti, Hulme and the rest is something for which I'd have given anything in my formative years but Fred raced the car in official CanAm just the once, at the 3.1-mile Donnybrook Speedway in Minnesota, in 1971. He qualified 15th and finished 15th, but he was there... with the best in the world. Fred went from there to less-challenging events, like the grand prix in Ponca City, Oklahoma, where

in 1975 he set a track record that still stands! Speed has always cost money: 512ci equates to 8.4 litres and in 1978 Fred sold the McLaren for something less expensive. He had raced the car fewer than a dozen times. CanAm engines grew bigger still but Fred now owns a Lola T332 Formula 5000 car, which he says he is 'too old to race' but takes out 'once a year to have some fun'. Respect.

The CanAm series began in 1966, with John Surtees winning the inaugural championship in a Lola T70. But by 1968, Kiwis Denny Hulme and Bruce McLaren had begun the 'Bruce and Denny Show' with the latter's dramatic-looking racers and put their grip on the championship. The M8E was intended as a customer version of the M8D factory car that had trumped the 1970 CanAm in the hands of Hulme, American Dan Gurney and Englishman Peter Gethin, but was shuffled aside by 1971's 'F' model, a razor-edged orange monster with dramatic aerodynamic fences.

Hulme was less than enthusiastic about the F, saying that it had too much downforce in the wrong places. The E, he felt, was smaller, more slippery – and faster. The factory stuck to the F-plan but took note of

Bottom and right
Not much in the cockpit to monitor the virtual earthquake that's going on behind you.



'Let nobody suggest an M8E is anything but large. Here at Silverstone it looks simply enormous'



Hulme's comments and made the customer car slightly shorter and narrower. Hulme tested the M8E in 1971 and liked it but only ten were ever made. Eight are known still.

Let nobody suggest an M8E is anything but large, though. When it greets me at the HSCC's Silverstone test day, it looks simply enormous, an impression heightened by the huge rear wing, the snagged row of inlet trumpets, and the vertical Kinsler/Lucas injection pump that together feed the Chevy V8. All of which soon seem minimal in comparison with the noise it generates.

On hand to assist is New Zealander Ian Jones of Suffolk-based Racing Fabrications, who rebuilt the car and replaced the 5.0-litre small-block V8 mandated by 1980s UK regulations (strange how history repeats itself) with a 532ci (8.7-litre) all-aluminium pushrod Chevrolet built by Kirt and Bud Bennett in Wixom, Detroit. It pushes out 860bhp and 750lb ft of torque and, to handle it, the original Hewland transaxle (a weak point in-period) has been replaced with an uprated version produced by Charlie Agg – son of Peter, original boss of Trojan, which built the McLaren customer cars.

Once the car is denuded and the bodywork removed (a couple of minutes' work for Jones' team), it's very simple under the skin. The suspension is almost identical in design and layout (double wishbones at the front, ➔



transverse links and radius rods at the rear) to a Formula Ford's of the period – just larger and with a big riveted aluminium monocoque tub in-between. Nice too, according to Jones. He says the detailing and finish of the parts were ahead of most of the opposition at the time, pointing out the neat little strengtheners on the wishbones and chassis, the latter zinc chromate treated for anti-corrosion. All, he says, made in a 'very McLaren way, very aviation'.

Yet it's amazingly light – two men can lift the monocoque tub – and, even with the huge engine and gearbox installed, the whole lot weighs in at just 850kg, for 1024bhp per tonne. Mechanic Sam Richardson is busy squirting neat petrol down the trumpets while Jones spins up the engine on the starter, then flicks on the ignition – if the engine fires before it's properly churning, the advance kicks it backwards and smashes the starter. Much can break on one of these and, as the knowledge of what and where filters through, I get a sense of a gladiatorial contest. A battle of man against man in racing, but also man against machine.

The engine fires with a shattering bellow that summons watchers from all corners of the paddock. A modern Formula 1 car has a

shrill intensity that hurts – this has all that underpinned by the biggest bass box imaginable. Its multi-layered energy gets you like every instrument in a huge amplified orchestra playing together at maximum volume. It spins up quickly, too. Accelerator travel is hugely long for good reason, yet the merest touch sends the needle round the dial like the next frame in a movie.

There is nothing else like the noise and throttle response of a top-spec big-block and the reason is the lightness of the internals relative to the displacement. It takes two men to lower the crank accurately into the block but, as a percentage relative to the massive 8.7 litres, the weight of reciprocating parts is much less than it is in, say, a 3.0-litre Cosworth DFV, or a modern 2.0-litre four such as Ford's Duratec.

The flywheel is tiny, and has to be to fit inside the Hewland's bellhousing and clear the ground, so the driver has to be very careful. Jones leans in and offers words of caution. 'It's easy to keep to 7000 on the way up,' he says, 'but they always get over-revved on the downshift when the driver gives the throttle a blip.'

The rest is reasonably comfortable and I lie back in the tub with plenty of room for

'I discover I have only been tickling the throttle. My foot sinks ten inches and the grenade goes off'

legs and feet, looking at a dash with an absolute minimum of dials and switches. The gearlever sits lonely on the expanse of tub, and I pull it across and back for first, then head towards the Grand Prix circuit. Already the way the engine spins and the weight of the clutch need managing, one slow and heavy, the other hair-trigger light, but soon I remember to hold one at a constant and feed the other against it.

There's a curious sense of ease and calm because the controls are just like those of any other sports car of the period, which is to say light and simple – but controlling the pent-up energy that lies behind feels like pulling the pin of a grenade.

Onto the circuit, steering eerily light and easy, carefully guide the lever across and forward for second, feel the gentle clatter of the dogs, see that the revs have fallen away

Above left
Octane's circuit ace Hales takes a confidence breather between sessions. A steep learning curve...



Above right
...but a rewarding
one. Witness the
art of mastering a
power-to-weight ratio
of 1024bhp per tonne.

to tickover almost as fast as they spin up. Let the clutch up with a jerk and gently squeeze the gas. It's massive but, so far, not other-worldly. Pull back for third. Another squeeze, another massive surge, ease it through Maggots, Becketts and Chapel, looking for the calm of the Hangar Straight. It's cold so I lean on the tyres as much as possible without trying to accelerate the car. Get at least a little warmth into them.

The car has an oddly delayed feeling to its responses, reinforced by the movement of that big body in my peripheral vision. There's a slightly numb feeling to the front as the car's nose jiggles over bumps – must be deliberately pinned down so it can't lift. Through Chapel in third and push the pedal again. And push some more – I discover I have only been tickling it... My foot sinks ten inches and the grenade goes off.

It's as if the pedal is a switch and the straight has shrunk to the size of a kart track, while the tach needle goes round the dial like a road car's in neutral. Find fourth – careful now across the gate, a miss will have the engine in kit form. Sag, lurch, clatter, shove the foot, *BLARE...* The same thing happens instantly, there's almost no difference in the needle's speed or the

hammer blow from behind. Fifth is marginally softer but the Lola T70 ahead slips back as if tied to a post and the end of the straight and Stowe Corner arrive in a matter of seconds. Six-five in fifth I now know is 165mph. And I'm still warming up.

I try to string together a lap, which is dominated by the way the engine closes the gaps between gears and calls for the next, the worry about blipping-up the engine which inhibits the downchange, and a need to get the front pointed so I can hit the apex. I try to work out where I can short-shift up so the need for another gear doesn't arrive in the middle of a corner, and to lean on the front's stiffness and carry a bit more speed so I can use the higher gear.

At last it comes together. I learn where to fill the gaps in the gearing between turns but, even so, the shattering blast of power summons the next in such short time. The Grand Prix circuit normally feels so wide and open but has halved in dimension.

In a moment of reflection between sessions I can see that it feels so utterly mighty because I'm not carrying the momentum into the corners that I'd like, then the acceleration that follows is so relentless, the comparison is stark – every

corner feels like a hairpin. Gassing it at the apex only picks up the nose and shoves it on. Jones explains that the front end is deliberately pinned down with no droop and that is the only safe way for modern tracks and the people who drive the cars now.

They weren't like that in 1971. In period, these cars were way clear of the ground and the suspension was soft. The good guys would shift the weight forward on the brakes to point the car in, roll it to take a set and then pile on the huge horsepower to keep it turning. It wasn't an absolute science even for them and lurid slides were the order of the day. As always, I marvel at the confidence they must have had at tracks like St Jovite and Mid-Ohio, provoking the car into a turn while sitting amid 40 gallons of sloshing gas where the road was humpy, bumpy and narrow.

History also says the cars would backflip when a crest flicked the nose high and the air got underneath, or speared off the road with chilling regularity when something broke. Universal joints would shatter, taking the suspension with them, and Jones says he replaces the splines and joints after every race, while the brakes get new pads and seals every time.



Left and below

In a sports racer so large and with so much power, suddenly the broad expanses of Silverstone feel confined.



All of which he reckons makes running a Chevron B19 'seem like child's play'. The revision of history means it's safer now, even if everything aft of the flywheel is still trying to tear itself to pieces. The drivers then were like test pilots, pushing untried technology for which the rewards were good. If you finished the race.

Stephen generously offers a final session, and I've asked Ian to add some castor to try to put a bit more weight on the nose. I'm expecting the power now and, as usual, the confidence of a few laps slows everything down a touch and it feels more a case of fitting all that performance into the track's dimensions rather than trying to hang on.

Added to that, the brakes are much better than I expected and I now have confidence in them, and the steering has gained some weight. I feel able to brake later and deeper into the turns, roll the car into the corner, wait for it to turn, then squeeze on the power and watch it just use up the track's width all the way from apex to exit.

Now the sheer power is less a breathless affair with me trying to keep up, and more an exhilarating draught. And the car is still

crushingly quick – I saw just under 7000rpm in fifth at the end of the straight: 191mph.

Jones must take some credit for a creative, more modern set-up and for knowing which bits might break and either replacing them on a regular basis, or making them stronger. As a driver you still have to watch all the usual things, like locking a front into a corner and running wide. It is easy to misjudge the braking point at 190mph; the car is big and, once it's out of shape, needs a lot of grass to recover. And, of course, treading the power too early will spin-up the 17-inch-wide slick tyres.

In most cases, the fatter they are, the worse it is when you spin either of them, but as long as you have the McLaren more or less straight, you can take the risk and the car's dimensions will keep it stable. The sheer power will always dominate the driving experience but the car certainly isn't a monster and, just as I found with the Lola T70, the power makes it easy to go very fast. Going as fast as the good guys would be a different matter, but at least you'd feel as if you were.

Like all well-sorted race cars, it gave me

'The drivers were test pilots, pushing untried technology, and the rewards were good. If you finished the race...'

the sense that closing that gap would always be up to me, but I sometimes wonder what the good guys would think, how Revvy and Denny would feel about today's set-up.

Could still be embarrassing though. Ian Jones tells the story of a visit to Road America for the CanAm reunion in 1996. 'There were 80-odd cars, all the good ones were there. Denny Hulme had done a 2.06 or something there in 1971 and the circuit hadn't changed at all since then. They spent all weekend trying to match it, with modern tyres and engines and everything else. Mate, back then, those guys were just bloody heroes.'

The McLaren M8E is now for sale. Call Ian Jones at Racing Fabrications on +44 (0)1284 828955.

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BIG SCREEN ACTION

RACING B-MOVIES, 1966-1971

Real-life racing provides all manner of thrills and spills
- but did the excitement always transfer to the big screen?
Time to explore a little-remembered era of cinema

Words: Dylan Michael

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Below
Columbia's 1968 spy
caper *Assignment K*
featured secret agent
Stephen Boyd pulling
an associate from
a burning F2 Lotus
at Brands Hatch.

Of the many films to feature motor racing, it's fairly safe to say that few have achieved any artistic distinction – and even fewer have managed to appeal to the vast audience that watches the sport.

Of course, debate will always rage among enthusiasts concerning the relative merits of Steve McQueen's pet project *Le Mans* [1971] and John Frankenheimer's epic *Grand Prix* [1966]. And although these two

movies stand well above the rest, few appreciate the incredible number of titles that use motor racing as a backdrop.

The output of racing films reached a peak between these two seminal pictures, with the international success of *Grand Prix* leading not only to the well-known Paul Newman vehicle *Winning* [1969] but also to a multitude of B-movies, each hoping to cash in. With many targeted at the undiscerning →



LEO MCKERN • JEREMY KEMP • ROBERT HOFFMAN in "ASSIGNMENT K"

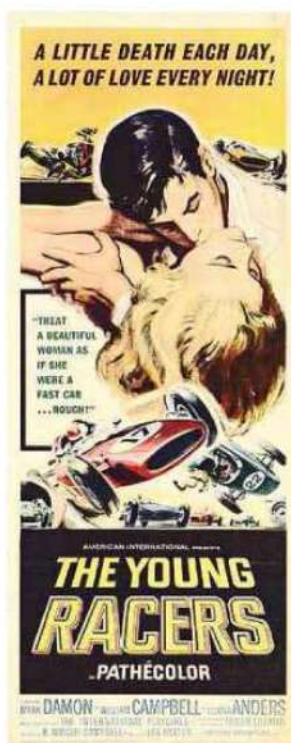
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'Many films can now be appreciated for their settings and previously unseen race footage'



drive-in crowd, it's not surprising that few found favour with critics. However, many are appreciated now by motor sport historians for their settings and occasional moments of previously unseen race footage. If you've seen Pete Aron fished out of the Monaco harbour or Claude Aurac struggle from his crashed Ferrari once too often, there are some interesting alternatives.

The first notable racing movie of the 1960s, *The Young Racers* (1963), was 32-year-old producer/director Roger Corman's 36th feature film. Armed with a \$150,000 budget, a skeleton crew and a script originally about bullfighting, he set out to capture the sights and sounds of the 1962 European Formula 1 season, visiting Monaco, Spa, Rouen, Reims and Aintree. The result was an international success, and it proved the feasibility of simply arriving at a race and using the paddock as a backdrop to the drama.

Corman's distributor, American International Pictures (AIP), had a long history of youth-oriented B-movie fare, including such cinematic delights as *I Was A Teenage Werewolf* and the series of *Beach Party* films, with singing heartthrob Frankie Avalon. Given the success of MGM's well-known Elvis Presley racing pictures, it was only a matter of time before Avalon put down his beachball and picked up a crash helmet. In the atrocious *Fireball 500* (1966) he starred as Dave Owens, stock car driver, singer, ladies' man and all-round tough guy, who unsuccessfully trod the fine line between laidback cool and rudeness –





proving beyond doubt that only Elvis could make such a potentially noxious concoction palatable.

The producers followed this with more of the same good ol' boy NASCAR nonsense in *Thunder Alley* (1967), which starred another singing heartthrob, Fabian Forte, who had also appeared in *Fireball 500*. Both films featured the work of West Coast customiser George Barris, who for *Fireball 500* created a replica of Richard Petty's Number 43 Plymouth (supposedly raced by Owens) and a barely recognisable Plymouth Barracuda, while for *Thunder Alley* he modified a Dodge Charger. The latter were licensed as 1:25 scale kits, sales of which rivalled the box office takings.

Fabian Forte would don overalls once again for the last of AIP's motor sport films, *The Wild Racers*, shot over the summer of 1967 in much the same style as *The Young Racers*, and featuring action from Formula 2 events at Rouen, Brands Hatch, Jarama and Zandvoort (cunningly presented as Formula 1 to the unsuspecting audience), along with the sports car race at Magny-Cours. An underrated and stylish film, it also contained extraordinary footage, much of which centered around the Winkelmann Brabham BT23 driven by 'King of Formula 2' Jochen Rindt.

After AIP's success the floodgates opened and, with the gradual relaxation of censorship laws, filmmakers could focus upon unsavoury characters and violent action for cheap thrills. 'Raw Flesh Against Steel!' exclaimed the advertisements for the crash-o-rama flick *Pit Stop*, which incorporated figure-of-eight racing and contained genuinely hair-raising sequences. With its grotesque array of protagonists and atmospheric black-and-white photography, this was exploitation film-making at its finest.

Less classy was writer/director/star William F McGaha's 1968 opus *The Speed Lovers*, which co-starred NASCAR driver Fred Lorenzen as himself, and placed the duo at the centre of an implausible race-fixing plot to negligible dramatic effect. Equally uninteresting were John Russell's dealings with a similar bunch of gangsters in *Fireball Jungle* (1969) and singer Marty Robbins' romantic exploits in the artistically barren *Hell on Wheels* (1967). Stock car

potboilers aside, feature-length documentaries exploited the dangers of oval racing: US cinemagoers could hear the sporting philosophies of Mario Andretti and Parnelli Jones in *Profile of a Race Driver* (1966), or see the remarkable story of stock car hero *Tiny Lund - Hard Charger* (1969).

Perhaps the most interesting documentary of the period chronicled the difficult first season of *Grand Prix* star James Garner's American International Racing team. *The Racing Scene* (1969) followed the outfit to the Daytona 24 Hours and Sebring 12 Hours, then to Lime Rock and St Jovite for the Formula A events. It combined first-rate on-track footage with an uncompromising look at their mixed fortunes.

The proliferation of adventure and espionage movies following the success of the Bond franchise led to the ➔

From far left
Although hardly box-office smashes, *Le Mans* and *Grand Prix* presided over a glut of motor racing movies in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Some were better than others!



'After the commercial failure of *Le Mans*, the vogue for racing films ended and the genre of the "road movie" emerged'

inclusion of racing sequences for added glamour in many films. Examples include Spanish caper *The Magnificent Tony Carrera* (aka *El Magnifico Tony Carrera*, 1968), which opened with an F3 Lotteria at Monza; the denouement of the atmospheric spy thriller *A Dandy in Aspic* (1968), played out against the dramatic backdrop of the Avus banking in Berlin during a Formula Vee race; and secret agent Stephen Boyd pulling an associate from the burning wreckage of an F2 Lotus at Brands Hatch in *Assignment K* (1968).

Stirling Moss appeared momentarily alongside racing fan and team owner Peter Sellers in the overblown spoof *Casino Royale* (1967). When asked in typical fashion to 'Follow that car, Moss did so – on foot!' Idiot,' remarked Sellers; 'I'll get Fangio next time.' The legendary Juan Manuel Fangio was himself no stranger to the big screen, appearing in two Argentinian productions, the comedy *Viaje de una noche de verano* (1965) and the racing drama *Turismo de carretera* (1968), along with his cameo in *Grand Prix*.

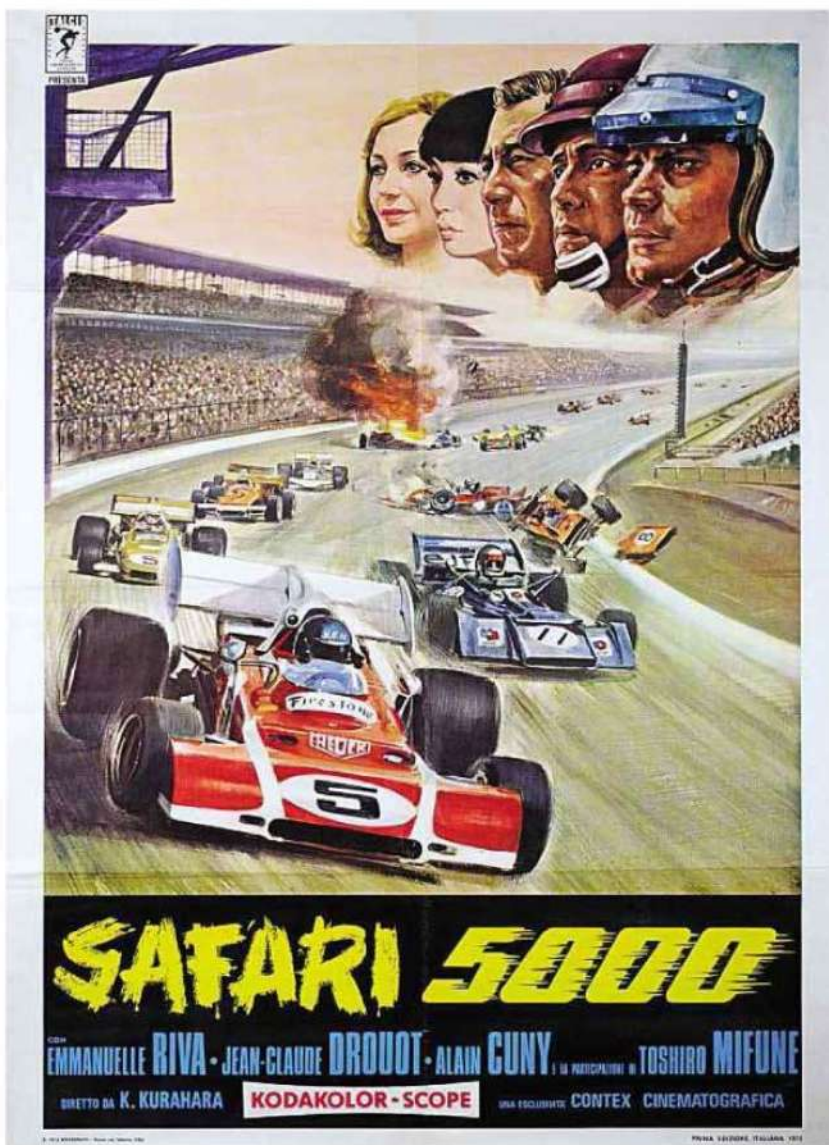
The big-budget Japanese production *Safari 5000* tried to rival the epic scope of Frankenheimer's film, and featured action from the Monte Carlo Rally along with the titular event. Unfortunately, in spite of being the highest-grossing Japanese film of 1969, *Safari 5000* made it to Europe only as a heavily edited version in 1972, with an ad campaign inexplicably featuring artwork of Jacky Ickx in a Ferrari 312 B2 at Indianapolis! Viewers were disappointed not only at the absence of Ickx in his Ferrari, but also of an intelligible plot.

The Italian film industry was booming and the filmmakers of Cinecittà were notoriously swift to exploit the latest cinematic trends down to the very last lira. After the release of *Winning*, several racing dramas went into production. The first, *Formula 1: Nell'Inferno del Grand Prix* (aka *Maniacs on Wheels*, 1970) attempted authenticity by featuring reigning World Champion Graham Hill and ex-Ferrari driver Giancarlo Baghetti (who also served as racing advisor). The starring role went to Giacomo Agostini, who portrayed a motorbike champion given his shot at F1 stardom.

Although his role was hardly challenging, acting-wise Agostini wasn't bad – he looked suitably unimpressed when first shown his four-wheel-drive GP car – and Hill wasn't really on screen for long enough to appear as hypnotically wooden as he had in *Grand Prix*. The racing sequences interspersed footage from the '69 Monaco, Canadian, American and Italian Grands Prix, with staged sequences shot mostly at Monza using F3 cars. The crew also attended the rain-soaked F2/F3 meeting at Albi and captured some exciting shots of the field slithering through the downpour.

Agostini soon returned for another racing adventure, co-starring with pop singer Mal in the risible *Amore Formula 2* (1970). Aimed squarely at the teen market, it opened to terrible reviews and mediocre box-office, ending his spell as a matinée idol.

Opening later the same year, *Le Mans – Scorcio alla per l'inferno* (aka *Le Mans – Shortcut to Hell*) was the third and final racing drama to emerge from Italy during this period. It starred American actor Lang Jeffries as an ex-driver turned manufacturer, haunted by the memories of the 1955 Le Mans crash and troubled by the young upstart he has hired to drive for him. Footage from the 1970 Spanish and Dutch



GPs along with the Italian Formula 5000 round was combined with more Baghetti-coordinated slipstreaming action from Monza, this time using a variety of Formula Two cars, predominantly a Tecno (doubling for a Ferrari 312B in the race footage).

With the typical resourcefulness and sensationalism of Cinecittà, footage of Jacky Ickx and Jackie Oliver's fiery collision in Spain and the aftermath of Piers Courage's fatal accident at Zandvoort were made integral to the plot: the combination of the latter with a staged accident was a decision of questionable taste.

After the commercial failure of *Le Mans*, the vogue for racing films largely ended and the genre of the 'road movie' emerged. These

more accurately reflected the climate of social disillusionment in which they were made, as a series of displaced loners threw off society's shackles and hit the road. Commercialisation, in the guise of the multiplex cinema, soon put an end to the era of the exploitation 'quickies', just as corporate involvement effectively ended the glory days of the privateer racer. Of course, a big budget and decision-making by committee are no guarantee of success – just ask the Toyota F1 team. Or take a look at Tom Cruise's 1990 effort *Days of Thunder*... △

Above

Big-budget Japanese offering *Safari 5000* was the highest-grossing movie in its 1969 home market – but wasn't released in Europe until a heavily edited version appeared in 1972. Its plot failed to impress.



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Scrap's Metal

A privateer entry in the 1926 Le Mans 24 Hours is only one aspect of this Bentley's extraordinary history

Words: Clare Hay Photography: Tim Scott

Arthur Donald Claude Thomas Thistlethwayte.

That's quite a clutch of names, but he became better known as 'Scrap' and, in 1924 when he was 21, Scrap Thistlethwayte came into a fantastic inheritance. It consisted of the family pile, Southwick House, along with some 8000 acres and a couple of villages in Hampshire. And in due course, Scrap would become known for entering a Bentley in a new French endurance race.

Like others of his era in similarly rarefied circumstances, Scrap had turned to motor sport, first racing a Vauxhall 30/98 – with a stylish two-seater open body by Martin Walter of Folkestone – in the Boulogne Automobile Week in September 1925. He also bought a 1500cc Frazer Nash, driven to first place in the Grand Prix de Boulogne by his friend Clive Gallop, a racing driver and engineer who had a hand in designing the valvetrain for the 3 Litre Bentley.

But neither they nor a subsequent 1½-litre eight-cylinder supercharged 'Flat Iron' Thomas Special could satisfy Scrap. Influenced by Gallop's Bentley 3 Litre Speed Model, Scrap had one specially built for a new and highly publicised French event. It was known as the Grand Prix d'Endurance de 24 Heures du Mans.

In its first year of 1923, the idea of a 24-hour race for production cars seemed absurdly ambitious. Cars had moved on from the early days of trembler coil ignition and acetylene lighting, but racing for 24 hours continuously? Surely no-one would finish! In fact, many of the entrants in that first haphazard race made it to the end, including John Duff, adventurer extraordinaire, and Frank Clement, the head of Bentley's experimental department and an experienced racing driver, in Duff's Bentley 3 Litre. If anything, the event proved harder on the road surface, and the French civil engineers responsible gained a crash course in road-building techniques.

Duff and Clement won in 1924 in a new Bentley 3 Litre so, the year after, WO Bentley himself entered a works-prepared 3 Litre driven by Bertie Kensington Moir and Dudley Benjafield – the former an experienced racing driver and the latter the owner of a tuned Bentley 3 Litre that he raced at Brooklands – alongside Duff's privately entered but works-prepared car, again partnered by Frank Clement. It was a disaster, one falling foul of minimum distance refuelling regulations, the other retiring after a fire caused by a carburettor float chamber breaking off.

In those days Le Mans fired the imagination of the small, select motor-racing fraternity. Thistlethwayte was something of a loner, with particular views on how things should be done, and he insisted on a 'Supersports' 3 Litre rather than the standard Speed Model. The former was built on a very short 9ft wheelbase intended for open two-seater bodies, with a catalogue speed of 100mph. The standard Speed Model has a wheelbase of 9ft 9½in, the extra length giving enough room for a full four-seater body that met the stringent regulations laid down by the organisers, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest. →

Bentley was already preparing two works 3 Litres and was happy to help Thistlethwayte and Gallop, and to run their 3 Litre alongside the two works entries – provided that, as WO made clear, Thistlethwayte could get a full four-seater body on the chassis that met the race regulations. The task was entrusted to his favourite coachbuilder, Martin Walter.

Walter shoehorned a four-seater body onto the very short chassis, with a long, semi-streamlined tail enclosing the back seats and a 25-gallon petrol tank. Back-seat passengers sit out over the axle, but then, the back of the car was only really intended to carry some of the ballast required by the Le Mans regulations. The rest went in front of the radiator, in the form of a lead-filled steel bar. The ballast was supposed to represent the weight of three passengers, Bentley having to point out to the race organisers that the regulations demanded a certain weight of ballast without specifying where it was to be located.

The Bentley mechanics and cars stayed at the Hôtel Moderne in Le Mans during the week before the race; the 'above stairs' crowd, who all knew each other, at the rather more grand Hôtel de Paris. The body was so tight on dimensions that, legend has it, a couple of the Bentley mechanics were detailed to distract the scrutineers and 'bend' the tape measure during scrutineering at the town hall. It passed, and three Bentleys – numbers 7 and 8 (the two works cars) and number 9 (the Thistlethwayte car – KM 4250, chassis 1179) took their place in the race line-up on 12 June 1926.

The race began with the classic Le Mans start, the cars lined up in front of the pits, the first driver for each car on the opposite side of the track. The starter dropped his flag, the drivers sprinted across, and raised the hoods on their cars before getting away for the first 20 laps (a shade over 200 miles). No petrol, oil or water could be taken-on other than at 20-lap intervals, and any work had to be carried out by the driver using only spares carried on the car. The pits could provide tools as well as oil, water and regulation petrol, and supply a spare wheel and tyre while changing a tyre and tube in the back of the pits. The regulations were strictly enforced by *plombeurs* with special pliers, wire and lead, who were present at every pit stop to cut off and replace the official seals.

Number 9 ran well right through the night but, at 9am on the Sunday morning, after 105 laps and while lying in joint third place, Gallop had to pull over with the engine running on three cylinders. One of the duralumin rockers had broken and the car was *hors de combat*. It proved to be another black year for Bentley, as number 8 had already retired with a broken valve, and Sammy Davis crashed number 7 into a sandbank at Mulsanne in the last hour of the race.

Thistlethwayte entered KM 4250 for the Boulogne race week later that year, for the speed trials and the hillclimb as well as the concluding Grand Prix de Boulogne on the Sunday. He finished third in the 3.0-litre class in the hillclimb, but Howey in a 5.0-litre Ballot

got into a slide in the same event and crashed into a tree, killing himself and a spectator, and injuring four others. Thistlethwayte scratched his entry for the Grand Prix.

Soon after, the ballast bar was taken off KM 4250, along with the Le Mans reserve oil tank nozzle which protrudes below the dash; both have since been refitted. The tank is not small because, with hour-glass pistons and generous racing clearances, the oil consumption of a Bentley 3 Litre in racing conditions was around 100 miles to the gallon! Scrap went sailing in 1927, returning in 1928 with a supercharged 7.0-litre Mercedes S-36/220.

This car was entered for the 1928 Tourist Trophy race, carried across the Irish Sea as deck cargo on his yacht, the *Schooner Charmian*. In need of spares, he wired London and had them flown across in a specially chartered 'plane, causing a press sensation. Scrap Thistlethwayte set the fastest time of the day with a lap at 74.39mph but his co-driver ran off the road and then the head gasket failed. He put up impressive performances in the same car in 1929, in the Brooklands Six Hours race (fastest lap of the day), the Irish Grand Prix (Dublin) and the Tourist Trophy (Belfast).

'Production cars had moved on, but racing for 24 hours continuously? Surely no-one would finish!'



Below
Not much room inside and minimal bucket seats too, but what an evocative dashboard. Note hand pump to pressurise fuel tank.



Above and right
Period shot shows number 9 after scrutineering for the 1926 Le Mans 24 Hours; no driver's door because the gearlever is in the way.



1926 BENTLEY 3 LITRE

ENGINE
2996cc four-cylinder, OHC, 16-valve, twin SU carburettors

POWER
80bhp @ 3500rpm

TRANSMISSION
Four-speed non-synchromanual, rear-wheel drive

STEERING
Worm and sector

SUSPENSION
Front: beam axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, friction dampers.
Rear: live axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, friction dampers

BRAKES
Drums front and rear


WEIGHT
1800kg

PERFORMANCE
Top speed 100mph



In the Irish Grand Prix, Thistlethwayte duelled for 26 laps with Tim Birkin in a blower Bentley before retiring with head gasket failure. Birkin said in his autobiography *Full Throttle*: 'Thistlethwayte drove brilliantly; he had marked out his course as an expert before the race, and adhered to it with an expert's regularity. He drove faster than anyone else.' It was Scrap's racing swansong. He died in 1956, aged 52, his later years uneventful.

As for KM 4250, after the war it had several enthusiastic Bentley Drivers' Club members as owners, one for almost 40 years, with minor changes to wings, lamps and windscreen along the way. It now has an unusual cylindrical fuel tank fitted, but the original mountings for the Le Mans tank are still there.

In 1988, KM 4250's sound mechanical order was proven on a drive from John o'Groats to Land's End on the centenary of WO Bentley's birth. Gregor Fiskens had known about this special Bentley for many years and, in 2010, negotiated its sale on behalf of a private client. The new custodian is a respected British collector and enthusiastic user of his old cars. Plans are already afoot to put KM 4250 back to its correct 1926 Le Mans guise. Looks like it could make much more history yet. 

Thanks to Fiskens of London for their help with this feature: www.fiskens.com, +44 (0)20 7584 3503.



Top and right
Think Bentley's all about Victorian engineering? That's a 16-valve engine under the bonnet; Scrap's Bentley outside his old place, Southwick House.

ROBERT COUCHER: AT THE WHEEL

This short-wheelbase Bentley 3 Litre 'Supersports' can hardly be described as elegant. Pure racing functionality is its purpose, it exudes intent, and looks akin to a fast military vehicle, with two large number 9s emblazoned either side of its bonnet, and proud Union Flags on both flanks. The wire wheels are perfunctory black. Leather straps abound. The skiff coachwork looks like an upside-down boat, possibly something to do with it being created by Martin Walter of the seaside town of Folkestone.

Ingress is through the minuscule nearside door and the cockpit is very tight. The upright leather-covered and laced seats are small buckets, and the view over the high scuttle is through a windscreen covered in wire mesh. The large steering wheel is close to your chest and the black dashboard is full of lovely AT instruments, some bearing the evocative script 'The Big Bentley' – although this 3 Litre is actually the smallest of WO's cars. The red line is set at just 3000rpm on the rev counter.

To start the Bentley, first check the fuel cap is on tight, then charge the fuel pump on the passenger side until 4psi comes up on the gauge. Flick the double magneto toggle switches up, retard the ignition via the lever on the steering wheel, then punch the big black starter button. There is a loud clang as the starter engages and the engine fires immediately, then settles down to a slow and low *boob-boob-boob-boob* idle, sounding much larger than 3.0 litres in capacity.

Time to try the clutch, which is either on or off. And, oh yes, must remember the throttle



pedal is in the central position. The large, drilled gearshift lever is located outboard as the body is so narrow, and it has a very long throw. Lift your foot off the clutch pedal – it has a sharp action – and the Supersports moves off easily, thanks to the lovely long-stroke engine with its huge flywheel inertia. The heavy steering lightens instantly and, from the off, the little Bentley feels light and sprightly.

Going for second requires a deliberate pull on the long shifter, a double de-clutch and the gritting of teeth. But, hey, it goes in fine. You want to get through the whine of third gear and into the quiet of top gear as soon as possible and, I must admit, it takes practice, with some angry gear-crashing when you get it wrong.

But once it's flowing along, the Bentley is a revelation. The steering is slop-free and alive, the brakes powerful, the ride – despite the short chassis – is pliant, and the engine has gobs of mellifluous torque. This nimble racer can really be thrown around the lanes with precision and it is clear why most WO Bentley types agree the 3 Litre is the best to drive. And this is one of the best 3 Litre Bentleys of the lot.



GAVIN STAPLETON

Time with... DESIRÉ WILSON

Formula 1, Le Mans, Enduro, the Indy 500...
Meet the lady who's been racing since she was five years old

Words: Steve Havelock Photography: Steve Havelock, Desiré Wilson

The British public sees Desiré Wilson racing once a year at the Goodwood Revival, muscling Cobras or Astons in the RAC TT and hurling barge-like Mercedes or little Ford Anglias in the St Mary's Trophy. On-track she is a formidable competitor. Off-track she is quiet and charming. 'I am almost a Jekyll and Hyde character,' she says. 'I can come across meek and mild in public but on the track I'm a terror.'

Her distinguished career is a rarity in a sport that certainly was (and still largely is) dominated by men. Desiré was the first woman to win a National Formula Ford Championship, first to win a Formula 1 race, first to race in the American CART series and, in 1978, she was voted South African Sportswoman of the Year. Some stats? She has won two World Championship Endurance races and finished seventh in the Le Mans 24 Hours; and raced more than 90 types of car on more than 60 different tracks in 13 different countries, notching up 23 wins, 16 second places, 42 thirds, 17 track records, 12 pole positions and 28 fastest laps in the process.

Born in South Africa in 1953, Desiré manifested a competitive streak when she was just five years old – in micro-midget racing. 'The cars were made for children but they still did 60mph on dirt ovals and small asphalt tracks. My dad was a 250cc motorcycle champion in South Africa and had no boys, so I was destined to be his driver,' she says.

After high school, there wasn't enough money for college so Desiré went to night school and became a bookkeeper. 'I worked for a Toyota dealer and started racing properly when I was 17 or 18. I moved up through the ranks in Formula Vee and I met my husband, Alan Wilson, who was racing Formula Ford 1600s. We got married when I was 21, we both raced FF1600 for a year and, the following year, he said that one of us should go for the Championship. Because I was the faster driver, he gave up his racing to support me, which was

quite something for a guy to do. I won the 1976 South African Formula Ford 1600 Championship.'

On the strength of this Desiré secured the prestigious 'Driver to Europe Award' and finished third in the 1977 Formula Ford 2000 European Championship, with victories in Zandvoort and Luxembourg. 'I realised that England was the centre of motor racing in those days so Alan and I moved, even though we didn't have any sponsorship. I took part in a celebrity race for women and that race changed my life. It was in Ford Escorts. I won and got fastest lap.'

The victory was pivotal, as Desiré's talent was spotted by John Webb, then-owner of Brands Hatch, Snetterton, Mallory Park and Oulton Park circuits. 'He basically created a whole lot of formulae in this country that were the grass roots racing of British motor sport. He saw my potential and said "What do you want to do and what can I do to help you?" Nobody had ever really said that, because being a woman in a man's sport was always very, very difficult.'

With Webb's help, things happened very quickly. 'I was offered a Formula Ford 2000 drive and, although I started halfway through the year, I won a couple of races and finished fifth in the Championship. I then got into the British Aurora Formula 1 Championship, which was a series for one-year-old grand prix cars which replaced F5000, which John had also created. I won my first race in the series in 1980 at Brands Hatch driving an ex-Jodie Scheckter Wolf. I had several seconds and thirds and I think I had 12 top-three finishes in the two-and-a-half years I did it. Because I did really well, I was offered other drives.'

In 1980 Alain de Cadenet asked Desiré to partner him in his World Championship sports car. They finished third at Brands Hatch in their first race together before winning the Silverstone Six Hours and the Monza 1000km. 'We beat a lot

Right and above
Desiré Wilson:
captured on camera
at Goodwood; and
winning the 1976
South African FF1600
Championship.





STAN CLINTON

'You never know what might have happened if I had been

Above
Momo sponsored it but there's not much steering in this shot: Desiré Wilson gets some air in the March Cosworth CART car.

of good grand prix drivers who were racing factory Porsches: Patrese, Alboreto and Cheever. Because we were successful, I built up a good reputation.'

And Formula 1 beckoned, yet success was frustratingly out of reach. 'I attempted to race in the British Grand Prix but we had a lot of trouble with our Williams. Before the Grand Prix the tyre tests had gone well, so I was devastated that I didn't qualify for that race because I believe that I should have. But they had switched chassis. Unfortunately things don't always work out.'

Five agonising months stretched out before Desiré was invited to drive in the 1981 South African Grand Prix by Ken Tyrrell. 'In that era, being a South African was fairly difficult, with apartheid and political instability, and it was difficult to find sponsorship. I was a little rusty and qualified 16th, but just four places behind team leader Eddie Cheever. But I made some mistakes in the race and eventually crashed out.'

Without sponsorship, she didn't have the funds to continue in F1. 'Even Ken needed sponsorship in those days. Michele Alboreto

took over the car and drove the rest of the season. You never know what might have happened if I had been given 15 races to show my potential rather than just one! But I did drive for Ken Tyrrell and he was just the most incredible person to drive for.'

Although her F1 career was shortlived, there was no shortage of offers to drive sports cars in America, so Desiré packed her bags and moved Stateside for 1982, racing a Porsche 935 and Ferrari 512B in the IMSA GTP series. She also competed in the World Endurance Championship in the Ford C100, giving the car its best ever result: fourth place in the Brands Hatch 1000km.

The Indianapolis 500 also beckoned in '82. 'I had probably the worst Indy anyone could want. My team mate, Gordon Smiley, whom I had raced with in England in the Aurora series, was killed on the first day of qualifying, so we withdrew for the weekend. When we came back, I had five engine failures. The team never got it all back together. It bothered me, there is no doubt; most of the time [you as] a driver can shut off when you need to shut off, but I always said

that Indianapolis was not important to me after that. Gordon died because he was one mile an hour off the pace trying to qualify and it was sad.'

In 1983, Desiré drove CART Indy cars for Team Wysard/Kreepy Krauly in the March Cosworth 82C and 83C. 'Derek Daly didn't want to drive for them any more, so they offered me the car and at the time I was still hungry, so I agreed. The mechanical failures were awful and I think we finished two of eight races. My first race at Cleveland was actually one of my better races. It was crazy. It was 100°C and 100% humidity and it was a 3½-hour race with eight pit stops for fuel. It was gruelling but I finished tenth, so I was terribly happy because half the field fell out through exhaustion and dehydration but I just kept pushing myself. They don't have races that long any more. They are now two hours, basically.'

That same year, Desiré also drove in the Le Mans 24 Hours. 'It was with a German team, Obermaier, which was arranged by Porsche of Germany and I finished seventh in a Porsche 956. I was happy with that.'



Left and below
Partnered with Alain de Cadenet, Desiré won the Silverstone Six Hours and Monza 1000km; racing in F1 for Ken Tyrrell.



Top and above
Early days in micro-midget racing on South African dirt ovals; taking the Ford C100 to fourth at Brands, 1982.



given 15 races to show my potential rather than just one!

However, in spite of her successes, Desiré was again finding sponsorship hard to land. 'The mentors of the late '70s and early '80s all went away; commercial sponsorship consumed the whole motor racing industry, and a lot of successful male drivers had male supporters behind them. They can bond by fishing or playing golf. It's difficult for a man to bond with a woman in sponsorship because there are all kinds of connotations, and lines have to be drawn. And women don't support women.'

Very few women have reached the top in motor sport, so I ask Desiré if she would be in favour of women-only race series. Her reply is emphatic.

'Absolutely not. A racing car is a racing car and it shouldn't matter if you are a man or a woman. But men still have a problem with women. Many of them were patronising. I was always racing against men, so it didn't matter to me who I raced against. What I found was that, while you were the underdog and while they were beating you, you were best friends. But the minute you started getting on their level or going faster than

them, nobody would talk to you. Most of my team mates were so busy trying to beat me, they forgot there were other people out there.'

In the late '80s Desiré drove for the Saleen team but her career had begun to quieten down by the early '90s. 'I didn't officially retire from racing but I was getting maybe one drive a year. You can't be competitive and show what you can do with just that. I always said that the day I'm no longer competitive would be the day I give up. Now I race at Goodwood once a year. That's the only motor sport I do but I really enjoy it.'

Any regrets, Desiré? 'I didn't make much money out of motor racing because a lot of my drives were unpaid. I am disappointed because I would have liked some more opportunities just to prove that I could be good in grand prix racing. Never World Champion, no. But could I have run in the top five in the right circumstances with the right car? Yes. Would I have liked the opportunity? Yes. Am I angry that I didn't get the opportunity? Not at all. It's just the way the cookie crumbles.'

Time with...
**IN
ASSOCIATION
WITH**
Chopard



Desiré Wilson is not professionally associated with Chopard

Stratos IT'S BACK

Forty years after the birth of the Lancia Stratos, the legend returns – as exciting and unconventional as ever. Time for new and old to meet in an exclusive *Octane* back-to-back

Words: Dale Drinnen Photography: Martyn Goddard



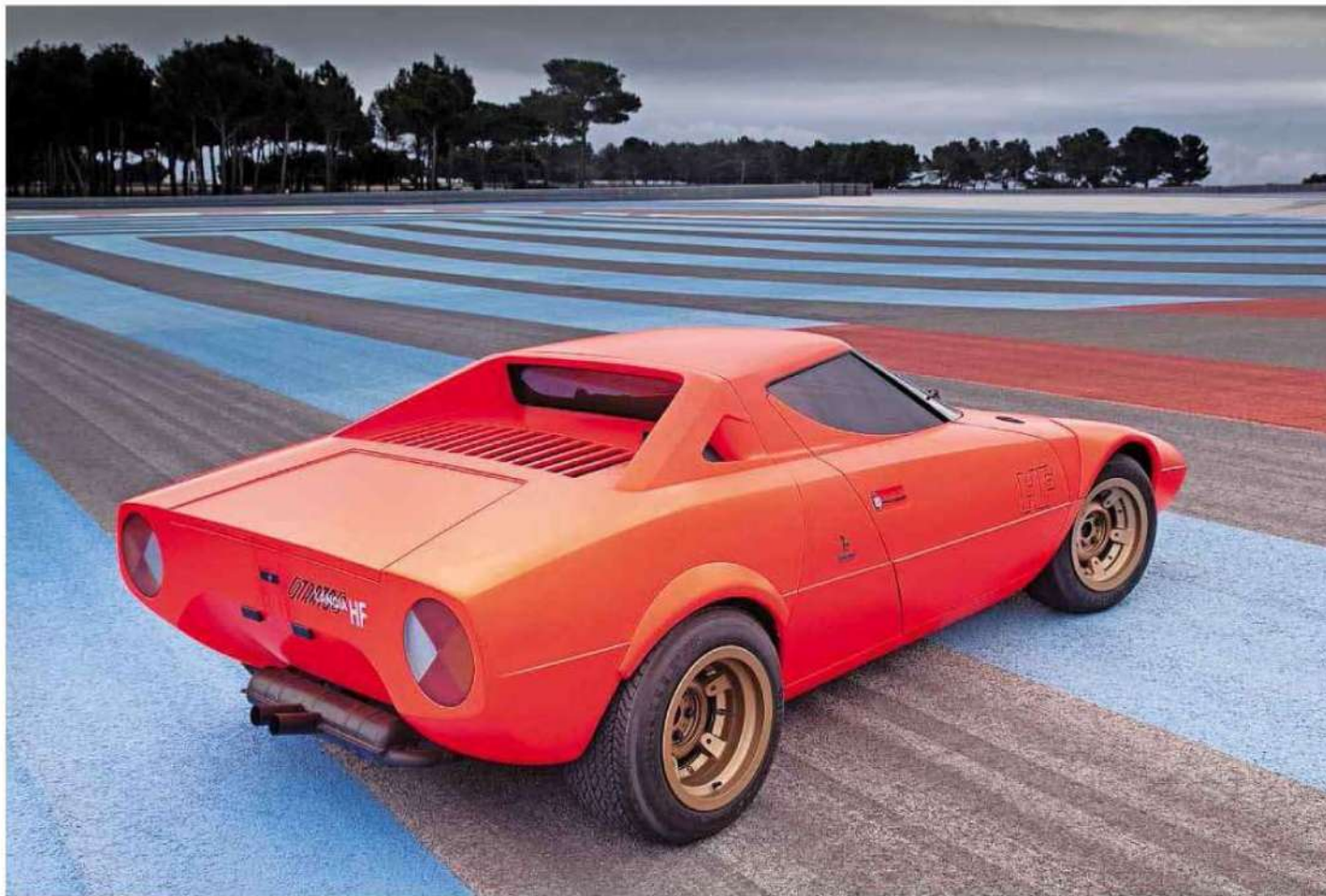
It's almost spooky when you see the thing surrounded for the very first time by all its illustrious predecessors. They weren't kidding when they called it the New Stratos – walk around, check the angles, it's the same stubby, arrogant little doorstop shape, but smoothed and updated; climb inside and there's the same feeling of businesslike purpose, but better finished and appointed. Fire the engine and the familiar goosebump feeling creeps up the back of your neck as the exhaust whoop swells, inches behind your right ear.

Everything just has that same underlying Stratos menace, that prickly, barely contained tension that seems inherent in the ancestral DNA. It's like watching the Sex Pistols take the stage

at your sister's wedding: you know something big could happen at any second, something totally brash and borderline, but whatever it is, it definitely will be exciting, and you will tell the story to your grandchildren.

Make no mistake, this isn't a Lancia retro-copy, nor even a 'continuation', and when *Octane* brought the latest Stratos together with every version that came before it, that fact was blindingly apparent. The New Stratos is, in effect, a Stratos Evolution, what Lancia would build today if it had stuck it out, like an Italian Morgan Aero or Porsche 997. Except the manufacturer wasn't involved at all: everything sprang from the collective enthusiasm of a few private individuals who wanted to do something special.





Which fits pretty well, looking back on how the whole affair started exactly 40 years ago. The original Stratos didn't initially have much in the way of manufacturer's involvement either. It only came about because renowned design house and sub-builder Carrozzeria Bertone was facing excess production capacity in the late 1960s, and wily Nuccio Bertone saw Lancia, recently saved from collapse by Fiat, as a perfect candidate for the sort of low-volume image-enhancer he could gladly provide.

All he lacked was some bait, and for that he turned to young staff genius Marcello Gandini. Gandini had already co-styled the acclaimed Lamborghini Miura for Bertone, and this time he would be entrusted with the entire design. Nuccio's instructions basically consisted of (1) make it mid-engined, the hot-button of the day, and (2) make it wake 'em up over there.

To keep rival Pininfarina – who already had an inside track at Lancia – in the dark (and Lancia too, since they knew no more about Bertone's intentions than anyone else), they named the plan Project Zero. By the time the finished concept appeared at the October 1970

Above
Gandini styled the original Stratos prototype to fill a gap in motor sport regs. The result is sublime.

Turin Show, however, it had gained another name, pilfered at the last minute from a model aeroplane kit found lying in the Bertone studios. It was called Stratos.

The massively theatrical Stratos Zero had nothing in common with the car we now know as Stratos. But it served to accomplish its objective. It caught Lancia's attention, and started wheels turning among people like well-networked motor sport boss Cesare Fiorio. Upon careful study of FIA regulations, Fiorio found a loophole for a model to replace the successful but flagging Fulvia rally fleet – a gap big enough to drive a mid-engined, low-volume image enhancer through. Newly in effect for the 1973 World Rally Championship, the homologation limit was only 400 units, and even cash-strapped Lancia fancied a piece of that action. In early '71, Nuccio Bertone got the go-ahead to build a serious prototype.

This was really the First Stratos; everything we now recognise as brand characteristics came not from the Zero, but from the prototype it spun off. Once again, Gandini was assigned the complete vehicle and, under guidelines from that regulations



STARTING FROM ZERO

Concept cars and their production offspring rarely share much beyond, well, a concept; about the only common ground between the Bertone Zero (left) and the Stratos was the idea of a mid-engined wedge. Ironically, though, the former vehicle actually contained more existing Lancia componentry than the latter: the engine, transmission and associated subframe for the Zero were lifted wholesale from a Fulvia 1600HF, bought secondhand by Nuccio Bertone from a friend to keep things hush-hush.

The rest of the car was another matter entirely. With no design target beyond setting off a bomb, it was a tiny aluminium doorstop,

weighing only 710kg and, at 840mm tall (barely 33in), it stood well below the average driver's belt buckle. Entrance was via the huge, almost horizontal tilt-up windscreen; the occupants lay prone, feet out in the car's nose, with knees roughly along the front wheel centreline.

But it did indeed drive, and Bertone essentially sealed the deal when he motored it across town, through everyday Torino traffic, to show the assembled Lancia brass at company HQ. Legend says he entered the property by zipping straight under the front security gate, and if the legend really is merely legend, it still tells you volumes about the kind of car the Stratos has always been, right from Zero. Complacency was never in the design spec.

Right
Stradale's mid-mounted 2.4-litre Dino quad-cam V6 is a screamer; simple interior features doorbins for helmets.



gap, what Fiorio asked for wasn't a road car with competition possibilities, it was a competition car that could sell just enough road units for homologation.

Gandini's answer took rallying to a whole new level. To a steel monocoque safety cage he attached subframes with four-wheel, fully adjustable, double-wishbone suspension, a transverse mid-mounted Ferrari Dino V6 and five-speed transmission, four huge disc brakes, hinged clamshell bodywork, and little else besides a couple of seats. The breathtaking shape looked like he'd hacked it from modelling clay with a machete and wiped the edges with a damp towel; then he painted it Screaming Neon Matt Blood-Orange and popped it on the 1971 Bertone stands at Torino and Geneva.

That retina-searing masterpiece now belongs to Chris Hrabalek, creator of the 2005 Fenomenon concept car from which today's New Stratos grew, and the world's foremost Stratos collector (he started with a toy version at age three and hasn't stopped yet). It's among the vehicles Chris brought to the New Stratos launch at the Paul Ricard circuit in southern France to show us the new car's bloodlines, and is easily the single most significant Stratos in the world. It's Gandini's exclusive personal vision, and Chris says 'If any car ever deserved to be called an original work of art, by the hand of the original artist, this is it.'

What strikes you first is how few differences exist between the Gandini car and the lime-green road Stratos. Yes, an authority like Chris can name thousands, and side-by-side you can notice a subtle

divergence in the lines and the addition of the distinctive spoilers. But in terms of fundamental principles, the biggest changes were the substitution of glassfibre bodywork for the prototype's aluminium and, following durability problems in preliminary competition, a rear suspension switch to Chapman struts.

There's also the matter of engine specifics; only the proto Stratos uses the 2.0-litre all-alloy version of the Dino V6. All others have the ally-head, iron-block 2.4 from the 246 and Fiat Dinosaurs. Otherwise, it was mostly a matter of simplifying to suit the car's role as a dedicated hunter-killer. The proto's roll-up windows, for example, were ditched in favour of a bare-bones thumb screw arrangement that clamps the glass in position on its tracks to allow extra room for the famous door panel helmet trays. As Hrabalek points out, 'It's probably the only time the prototype was more posh than the production car.'



LANCIA STRATOS HF

ENGINE 2418cc V6, DOHC per bank, three Weber IDF carburettors **POWER** 190bhp @ 7400rpm **TORQUE** 166lb ft @ 4000rpm
TRANSMISSION Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive **STEERING** Rack and pinion **SUSPENSION** Front: double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar. Rear: Chapman struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar **BRAKES** Discs front and rear
WEIGHT 980kg **PERFORMANCE** Top speed 143mph. 0-60mph 6.1sec





Neither car is particularly sumptuous, though. The minor fittings and accessories are straight from the Fiat parts bin. Lots of things are recognisable straightaway as 850 Spider componentry (also Bertone-built during the same period), down to the door hinges and boot compartment lamp.

The minuscule size and weight are immediately evident behind the wheel: steering is exceptionally light even when motionless, the front wheel inner-arch is so close it's virtually a knee brace, and the pedals are correspondingly offset rightward and take practice to heel-and-toe. Even if the Stratos isn't very long, it is incredibly wide, with ample elbow room and remarkable overall comfort. Until, that is, the sun comes out: the trademark *Star Wars* windscreen microwave cooks on all but the darkest days, and ventilation is almost non-existent.

So is rear visibility, but then you don't need much with Stratos performance; 40 years on it's still seriously, genuinely quick in real-world driving and with an illicit, immoral, race-car kind of thrill few passenger cars have ever matched. In the mid-ranges, where it counts on public highways, the acceleration is shockingly instant and remorselessly fierce, and the wee beast will shoot through gaps like a soul possessed.

It's also downright clairvoyant, with wonderfully intense reflexes, and, as with the best superbikes, you find yourself constantly going faster and pressing harder, like a lab rat blitzing the reward lever, totally addicted and glad of it. All this to a glorious V6 soundtrack that would make Mozart weep, and while generating unqualified fear and envy in every surrounding witness. The reaction of ordinary civilians to your enraged Stratos entering

traffic on maximum attack is one of the great guilty pleasures automotive life can bestow.

But of course it was the rally cars that made the Stratos reputation. Thanks largely to tech wizards Gian Paolo Dallara and Mike Parkes, the road-going Stratos HF (commonly now called the 'Stradale') developed into a three-time World Champion, 1974 through '76, and claimed countless other non-Championship events for privateers. From the standard Stradale's 190bhp, output rose with the base two-valve head to around 260; with a four-valve configuration, 280bhp was possible. In an era when the pro rally norm was hotted-up saloons with big lights, the Stratos hit the sport like Genghis Kahn at a pub-league football match.

A rally Stratos is therefore an animal of considerably higher intensity; it's a bit off-putting even to crawl into one. There doesn't seem to be a surface anywhere without mysterious gauges, switches and widgets, and on Hrabalek's rare works Safari Rally veteran the outside is as busy as the cockpit. With bull bars at both ends, extra lamps, extra spare tyres and Dumbo-ear mud flaps, it's almost more Land Rover than race car.

It's also possibly the only Stratos ever to feel truly heavy, in both the steering and its general reactions, and the straight-cut gearbox takes a firm but sensitive hand plus a considerable amount of revs, not the best combination for the novice. But the whole impression is quite solid and reassuring, and it's perplexing that the Safari Rally was among the few events the model never won.

It certainly does go, too; this one has the beefy four-valve engine, and although a racing circuit is hardly its natural habitat, the brilliant power-to-weight ratio still

Below

As if the road-going Stradale wasn't arresting enough, along come the Safari (left) and Turbo (right).

'Although a racing circuit is hardly its natural habitat, the brilliant power-to-weight ratio still makes it positively orgasmic out of the corners'



makes it positively orgasmic out of the corners, and with far better low-end torque and flexibility than might be expected from pure competition trim. Despite so much furniture hanging off the bodywork, it's also reasonably flat through those corners, and it's easy to see why this was a rally car that more or less did it all, regardless of terrain or circumstances – and if anything could sound better than the Stradale, this is it.

There was indeed one world the Stratos didn't conquer, however. The Group 5 Stratos Turbo 'Silhouette' was an ill-fated attempt at converting the package to endurance racing. Two were built and, although our subject car won the 1976 Giro d'Italia (akin to the Tour de France, and more tarmac rally than enduro), not much else was accomplished. The short wheelbase simply wasn't suitable for high straight-line speeds or the mega-horsepower provided by a lone KKK turbocharger the size of a jumbo pizza and Kugelfischer fuel injection. The gutsy Dino motor was touching 560 horses, and in a notoriously all-or-nothing fashion.

The sister car overheated and burned to the ground at Zeltweg, a total loss; the mighty Giro winner is here, warmed-up and waiting for a driver. It is quite frankly more than a bit daunting, and Hrabalek's advice after towing the monster to life offers

scant reassurance. 'When you take off, the first thing you think is "a road Stratos is faster"... then suddenly the power comes on and the car rockets sideways almost as fast as forwards.'

Getting into the driver's seat regardless, you can't help noticing the door is only a gossamer skin of plastic and there's no side bar on the rollcage, while the dominant item in there with you is a whacking, huge, double-extra-large throttle pedal. Nothing for it but to swallow hard and press the starter.

And nothing happens at all. No crank-over, no main power, not a warning light nor a needle-quiver. After wiggling the battery cables and relays and trying the booster box, the Turbo goes back in the trailer amid a welter of mixed emotions. And somehow the symbolism is apt. This was the last permutation of the original

'The New Stratos is an incredible follow-on from the iconic original, intentionally keeping the "subliminal intimidation" factor in its lines'



NEW STRATOS

ENGINE 4808cc V8, DOHC per bank, electronic fuel injection **POWER** 540bhp @ 8500rpm **TORQUE** 369lb ft @ 3750rpm

TRANSMISSION Six-speed automated manual, rear-wheel drive **STEERING** Electro-hydraulic rack and pinion

SUSPENSION Front and rear: double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar

BRAKES Discs front and rear **WEIGHT** 1247kg **PERFORMANCE** Top speed 170mph (est); 0-60mph 3.2sec (est)



THE CONCEPT RECONCEIVED

If Chris Hrabalek had gained no other notoriety in this life, he could still claim credit for possibly the most impressive final degree project in the history of higher education. His full-sized Fenomenon Stratos mock-up (left), the culmination of his studies at the Royal College of Art, was an effort worthy of professionals far beyond his experience: very obviously inspired by the Lancia pocket-supercar, while copying nothing outright.

Like the Bertone Zero and every other exercise in pure creativity, the Fenomenon naturally had some elements that maybe wouldn't translate all that well into the real world; both doors, for example, hinged from one central pillar placed smack in the middle

of the windscreen, and unlike the Zero, it wasn't a runner, just an automotive talking point. Underneath, though, was some solid thinking; the design was planned around a Ferrari V8 and six-speed sequential gearbox, mounted in-line, covered in carbonfibre bodywork on an aluminium chassis.

Shown to the public at large in 2005 at Geneva and Frankfurt, it was an instant hit with the critics, Stratos fanciers, and the generally trend-spotting worldwide. It actually developed such an avant-garde international following as to feature in Japanese Manga. Most importantly, like the Zero nearly 40 years before, it caught the eye and captured the imagination of people who could help turn the concept into reality. Which is, after all, why they call them concept cars.



Stratos line, abandoned without full exploration and for reasons beyond its own abilities. Fiat had decided the mass-appeal 131 Abarth had PR value over the thoroughbred Lancia and pulled the plug on Stratos competition efforts pre-season in 1977. The great experiment was over; total production of the series had been only 492 units.

OR MAYBE THE GREAT experiment was only suspended for a while. It certainly wasn't over for young Austrian designer Christian Hrabalek; the Stratos was what led him into automotive design in the first place, and it's worth noting that when Chris initially showed the Fenomenon he was a few years shy of Marcello Gandini's age when the Zero debuted.

Equally devoted to the Stratos ideal was German businessman Michael Stoschek, successful race and rally driver and owner of car component supplier Brose, and to him, the Fenomenon seemed the perfect basis for bringing the Lancia super-wedge back to life. Once again wheels started turning and, in 2008, Stoschek commissioned Pininfarina to turn Chris's baby into a working car.

Above
Stratos character is truly alive in here, even if the gauges, vents and switchgear are pure Ferrari.

Final testing took place over the summer of 2010, and official handover of the New Stratos from the builders was only three weeks before this press launch. In addition to the obvious involvement of Chris and his design firm, Stoschek was a crucial influence in the car's ultimate direction, and final detailing was by Pininfarina's senior

designer Luca Borgogno.

Like the old Stratos before it, New Stratos uses a Ferrari engine and gearbox, in this case from the potent 430 Scuderia, and it also borrows the Scuderia's underlying chassis. What it does thereafter, however, is tremendously different, no doubt largely due to Stoschek's hands-on Stratos rally experience.

Every system in the car has been modified to reflect the Stratos precepts of 'small, powerful and nimble'; the engine got extra power, the diff ratio was lowered for better acceleration, the wheelbase was shortened to improve responsiveness and agility, and the complete suspension was reworked by ZF Sachs. Brose even produced clever electric windows that allow roll-up glass while retaining the helmet trays and still saving weight, and there's a compact air-con unit to alleviate that nasty sun-baking problem. ➔

Visually, the New Stratos is an incredible follow-on from the iconic original, intentionally keeping what Borgogno calls the 'subliminal intimidation' factor in its lines. The interior is admirably racing-simple, with analogue gauges, carbonfibre buckets, a retro-style instrument binnacle and mouse-fur dash, yet sufficiently modern ergonomics and accessories to make the car practical in a contemporary road environment.

Best of all, the driving is precisely what you'd want from a latter-day, evolved Stratos. Engine torque starts early; at 2000rpm it's manageable and uncompaining, and lasts well across the rev range. Top speed has been sacrificed to mind-altering mid-range thrust, just like in the old Stratos, and the traditional tendency of mid-engined, short-wheelbase cars to turn and bite at the tenths limit (a notorious trait of the old Stratos, once that sweet-handling 90% was used up) is greatly reduced by the electronic traction and stability controls. New Stratos is eager and bold and tremendously quick, and very, very usable.

So yes, the Stratos is back, and with a spirit worthy of its namesake. Where it goes from here, however, is presently far from certain. The one current example is the property of Michael Stoschek, who has no great desire to become a car manufacturer.

But a short run of additional Pininfarina production might arise if the demand is there, with pricing likely to be in the half-million euro range unless you have your own Scuderia donor handy. There is also fascinating talk of a GT2 racing project, and Chris Hrabalek has already made preliminary studies.

Whatever happens, though, the Stratos is an idea that just won't go away, and as the Zero begat the Gandini and the following first generation, who's to say the Fenomenon and the New Stratos won't evolve a generation of their own? As the saying goes, keep watching this space.

Potential buyers can request purchase information through the 'contact' link of the New Stratos website, www.new-stratos.com.

'Top speed has been sacrificed to mind-altering mid-range thrust, just like in the old Stratos. It's eager, bold, tremendously quick, and very, very usable'





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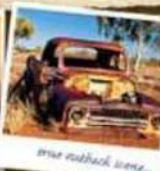


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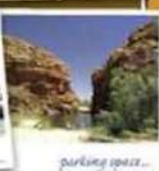
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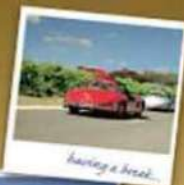
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AUSTRALIA SEPTEMBER 2012



JAGUAR E-TYPE 3.8 SERIES 1 FHC

The E-type was a game-changing sports tourer. Although the XK was far from being over the hill at the turn of the 1960s, when the E-type appeared at the 1961 Geneva Auto Salon, everything that had come before from Jaguar was rendered obsolete.

Even the way the E-type arrived at the show was special. A member of Jaguar's PR team, Bob Perry, left Browns Lane in 9600HP (right), the seventh E-type prototype and second fixed-head coupé, at around 7pm on 14 June, driving through the night, arriving at Geneva the following day. He drove to the city's main Jaguar distributor for a 20-minute wash and polish, before carrying on to the Parc des Eaux Vives for its public unveiling by Sir William Lyons. It was one of those epic drives that has become legendary, and it demonstrates what the E-type was – and is – so good at.

The big news with this car – apart from its beautiful styling honed by Malcolm Sayer, and created to look like an evolution of the D-type – was its price-to-performance ratio. The E-type was priced at £2097 for the roadster and £2156 in fixed-head coupé form: around half the price of the Aston Martin DB4, and it could outrun its Newport Pagnell rival, thanks to a claimed top speed of 150mph.

That *potential* maximum was backed up by *The Autocar* in its 1961 road test of 9600HP, who recorded 150.4mph. OK, that car had been tweaked slightly and shod with Dunlop racing tyres, but the figure was seized upon by Jaguar.

A proven 150mph top speed, allied to new standards of handling, meant the leaping cat would maintain its place at the top of the sports car tree for many years to come.

9600HP is owned by Jaguar historian Philip Porter, who runs the E-type Club, www.e-typeclub.com.

1961 JAGUAR E-TYPE S1

ENGINE 3781cc straight six, DOHC, three 2in HD8 SU carburettors

POWER 265bhp @ 5500rpm

TORQUE 260lb ft @ 4000rpm

TRANSMISSION Four-speed manual, rear-wheel drive
STEERING Rack and pinion

SUSPENSION Front: double wishbones, torsion bars, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar.
Rear: lower wishbones,

twin coil-over-damper units

BRAKES Discs front and rear, servo-assisted

WEIGHT 1234kg

PERFORMANCE

Top speed 150mph.

0-60mph 7.0sec



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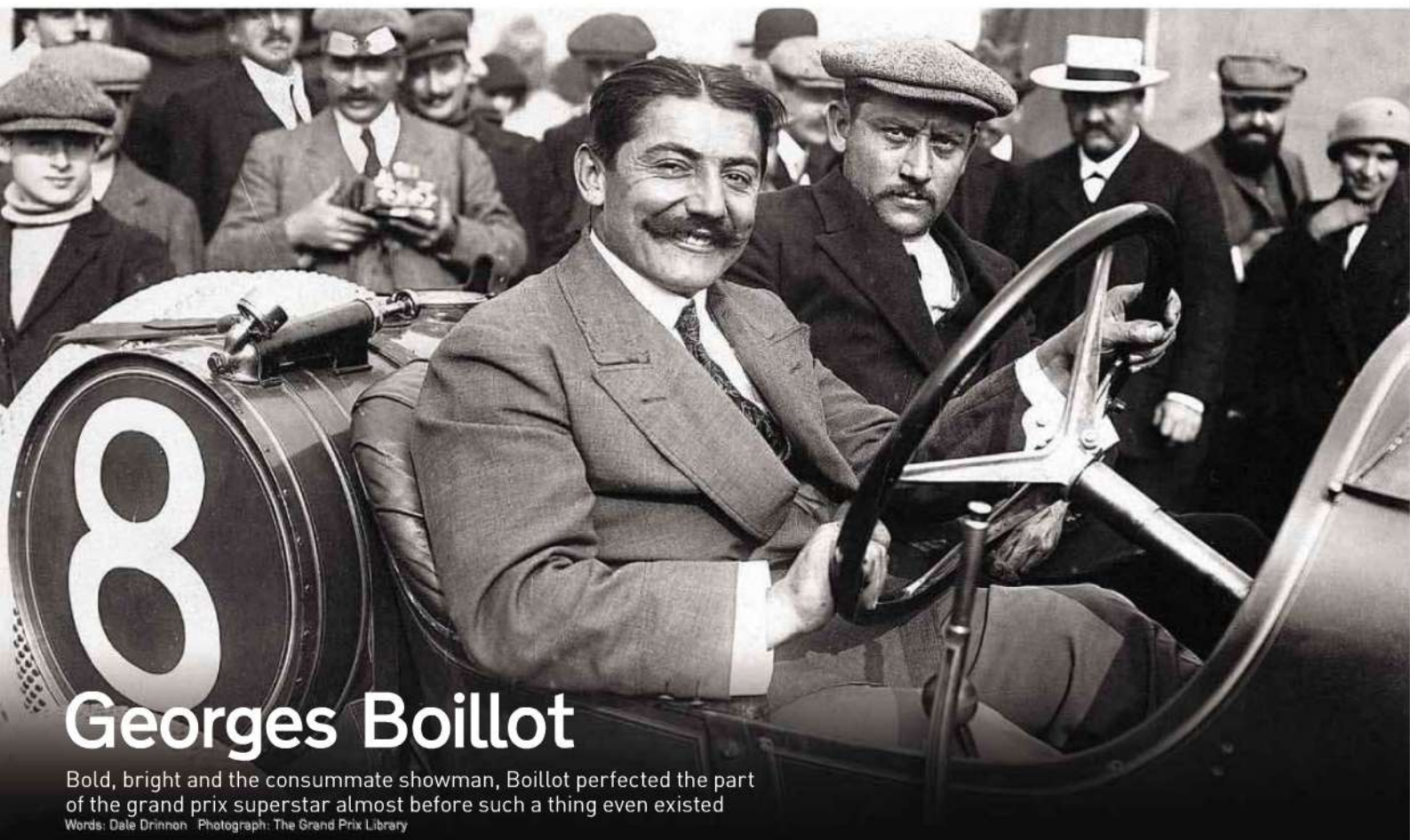
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Gone but not forgotten



Georges Boillot

Bold, bright and the consummate showman, Boillot perfected the part of the grand prix superstar almost before such a thing even existed

Words: Dale Drinnon Photograph: The Grand Prix Library

It's possible that no-one has grasped the supposedly modern concept of the racing driver as entertainer quite so thoroughly as did Georges Boillot at the dawn of the profession. He was charismatic on track and off; he never simply sat in the car, he struck a pose in it, even in the heat of competition, executing every gearchange and steering input with operatic flair, even eschewing protective headgear that might diminish the adoring public's view of his Olympian visage.

He always arrived with a flourish, whether at the finish line or a dinner engagement (as befitted his status as sporting idol of all Belle Époque France), and he'd depart with a greater flourish still. The camera loved him, with his jubilant moustache and expressive face, forever alight with the pure joy of being him. In a later age, you could imagine TV crews beating each other senseless to be first to capture his post-race wisdoms.

Whether vain, theatrical or opportunistic, Boillot was certainly a paragon of the boundless European confidence of his pre-Great War era. Georges Louis Frederic Boillot, born in 1884 in the small eastern town of Valentigney, made it from garage mechanic to grand prix champion with impressive alacrity, debuting in 1908 and winning the French GP in 1912, then the one and only GP and probably the biggest sporting occasion in Europe, if not the world.

He was the first Frenchman to do so and, in 1913, became the first driver to win it twice. In

1914, he took pole at Indy on his first visit and would have won if not for mechanical problems. Boillot was the prototypical driver of motor sport's pioneer period: fast, determined, tough, and totally fearless.

He was also clever. The revolutionary Peugeots with which he won were the product of an independent skunk-works run by Boillot, team mates Paolo Zuccarelli and Jules Goux, and novice engineer Ernest Henry. They introduced the world to the twin-cam engine.

A century on, historians still debate which of the group deserves top creative billing, but few dispute that Boillot was the ringleader, or the general incredulity that surrounded such a breakthrough by what many considered three mechanics and a draughtsman. That the French engineering establishment was incensed is apparent by the tag 'Les Charlatans' awarded them by Peugeot's regular design staff; how gleefully Boillot milked the controversy is obvious by the publicity photo showing he, Zuccarelli and Goux in grubby lab coats, smoking boffin pipes and wearing expressions as smug as a freshly fed tomcat's.

Any race featuring Georges Boillot was therefore one to remember; his last is often called the greatest grand prix ever. When the 1914 French GP ran that July, Archduke Ferdinand was six days dead, the First World War was looming, and 300,000 patriotic Frenchmen came to watch their hero defend his title against a five-car Mercedes assault.

'He was charismatic on track and off; he never simply sat in the car, he struck a pose in it, eschewing protective headgear that might diminish the adoring public's view of his Olympian visage'

And he gave his all, attacking the day-long, 467-mile event on the limit from the off.

The challengers, however, cannily hunted as a pack, and while Boillot eventually dispatched their rabbit for the lead, he wounded his car mortally in the process; the next Mercedes blasted by him with a mere 40 miles remaining. On the final lap, the limping Peugeot sputtered to a halt and Georges collapsed weeping on the steering wheel. Mercedes swept the podium; the crowd rewarded them with stunned silence.

The fighting started only three weeks later. Boillot enlisted immediately, of course, and served as personal driver for General Joffre himself before wangling a combat pilot position in 1916. He won the Croix de Guerre that spring for bravery in action, as well as the Légion d'Honneur; then one day in May he ran into a flight of German fighters, five of them by reliable accounts. He got one, his fourth kill of the war, before the others got him.

It was his final performance, and there was no audience at all.

Above
Georges Boillot in his special-engined Peugeot and with characteristic grin, having become the first driver to win the French Grand Prix twice.

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Shopping trolley

Next time you're in the supermarket, check out the cleverness of what you're pushing

Words and photography: Delwyn Mallett



Every canal and stream in Britain seems to have a few jutting from its surface. They lurk in car parks and alleyways, drunks take 'em for joyrides, and every kid has probably shared one with his mum's shopping. They have four wheels but even Lewis Hamilton's cornering skills would be tested to the limit in the shopping aisle grand prix. They are so hard to steer that it's surprising Ralph Nader didn't also declare them 'unsafe at any speed' and have them banned.

Invention of the shopping trolley is credited to Sylvan Goldman of Oklahoma City, in 1937. Goldman owned a chain of grocery stores operating under the inspiringly mad name of Humpty-Dumpty and noticed that women tended to stop shopping when their wire baskets became too heavy to lug from shelf to shelf. The first law of retailing says more is definitely better, and Goldman sought a way to increase the shopping load.

Inspired by a folding chair, he got his handyman to make a metal version and add wheels to the legs and a handle to push the thing around, with a basket resting on the seat. The first effort desperately wanted to self-fold and an improved version was quickly knocked up, with a raised seat leaving room for a second shelf. Hey presto! Two baskets, twice as much shopping, twice as much profit.

Despite the obvious advantage of not having to carry heavy baskets around, the new

'Inspired by a folding chair, he added wheels to the legs and a handle to push the thing around, with a basket resting on the seat'

device met with surprising resistance: men were too macho to push and women did too much pushing of babies in prams. Undaunted, Goldman hired male and female 'plants' to push the carts around his stores with fake shopping. The idea caught on and Goldman was soon advertising this new, efficient way of shopping, exclusive to his stores – but not for long. There was more money to be made selling shopping trolleys to other stores and, in 1947, Goldman started The Folding Basket Carrier Co. But competition soon arrived in the form of a better trolley.

Goldman's trolley had to be folded for storage and erected for shopping but, also in 1947, Orla E Watson of Kansas City patented the tapered 'nesting' basket with flip-up rear panel. Goldman sued Watson over patent disputes but the pair settled their differences and production continued. Since then, trolleys have changed little. Goldman made his millions and sold his company in 1961.

The shopping trolley arrived in the UK in 1950 at Sainsbury's Croydon store. Now, it's estimated that each year the worldwide cost of 'wandering' trolleys amounts to £500 million. One British supermarket eventually secured a prosecution for stealing a trolley, only to have the case dismissed on a technicality. Because the woman had put a coin in the slot to detach the trolley, she was deemed to have entered into a contract with the supermarket. This, despite the fact that when asked, 'When did you gain possession of the trolley?' she replied, 'When I nicked it.'

Somewhat bizarrely, the world's largest advertising conglomerate started life as a manufacturer of supermarket trolleys – well, sort of. In 1985 Martin Sorrel, the ex-financial director of Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency, set out to build his own empire. Looking for a listed company with which to launch his drive, he purchased a significant stake in Wire and Plastic Products, who made precisely that. However, dominating the glamorous world of shopping trolleys was not on Sorrel's agenda; instead, he embarked on a marathon of media acquisitions and changed the company name to WPP.

Oh, and remember, if you have a touch of the Howard Hughes, shopping trolley handles, just like peppermints in restaurants, inevitably show traces of a whole range of disagreeable fluids – including the bodily.

Above

Whoever thought a row of trolleys could look like a work of art? See one soon in a canal near you.

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Where bling began

There's nothing subtle about a Franck Muller watch. On the contrary, he was the first to create watches that *really* get noticed

Words: Nick Foulkes

I like Franck Muller. He's a character in a business that's populated by spreadsheet jockeys and MBA-clones, and that's a rare and valuable commodity. And one day he'll be recognised as one of the great watchmakers of the late 20th century.

Franck Muller invented horological bling – at least in the modern sense of the term. Long before the dustbin lid-sized Jacobs, he was creating watches that got noticed. He was a sort of Versace of the wrist: daring, provocative and colourful, both in character and product. He was, indeed, watchmaker by appointment to the late Gianni, even designing timepieces for him. Gianni was turned on to Franck by that horophile par excellence (and noted car collector) Sir Elton John. Lady Di's favourite minstrel went so far as to call him the Picasso of watches when he wrote about him in Andy Warhol's *Interview*.

I got to know about Franck in the early 1990s. I was very taken with his Cintrée Curvex. This ergonomically shaped tonneau-cased watch – with its etiolated art nouveau numerals and bright enamel dial available in all sort of colours – became a super-cool timepiece. At the time mechanical watches were making a comeback but they tended to be relatively small and quite serious – what Franck did was dare to dream. He made expensive Swiss watches great fun and, like Swatches but for the very rich, Franck Mullers became addictive.

The first time Gianni Versace saw them in a shop, he bought the entire window display. And Dmitry Medvedev once told *Paris Match* that he was in thrall to his Franck Muller watches, and accounted for his collection by saying that he liked to colour-coordinate the dials with his clothes.

So powerful was the Muller myth and so much of a star did Franck become – I still have a photograph of him as the Terminator astride his Harley-Davidson, shot for *Vanity Fair On Time* – that the celebrity status enjoyed by him and his watches has eclipsed his credentials as a top-flight watchmaker.

Not conventionally academic, he left regular education aged 15 and enrolled in watchmaking school. I seem to remember

him saying that it was a toss-up between that and mending domestic appliances. Bear in mind that this was during the early 1970s, when it was believed that quartz technology and Japanese manufacturing had delivered a knock-out blow from which the Swiss watch industry would never come round. Learning how to make mechanical watches was like learning how to make top hats or drive steam trains.

Franck started to repair and rebuild antique watches from the 18th century, establishing a reputation among auction houses and collectors. Then he decided to have a go himself. In 1986, he created a free-oscillation tourbillon wristwatch with jumping hours and a regulator dial.

He was off to the races.

And now every year brings a new ultra-, mega-, hyper-complicated Franck Muller wristwatch. But it is such watches as the Master Banker (a three-timezone watch with date, operated by a single crown) that really impress me: a technical tour de force that manages to look good too.

Then there is the Vegas. The story goes that Franck went to Nevada's neon metropolis to meet Steve Wynn and the experience inspired him to create a watch that played roulette. And the Crazy Hours, where the hands dart all over the dial; and the Secret Hours, which reveals the time only when a button is pushed...

The most noticeable Mullers of recent years have been the Conquistadors, particularly the Conquistador Kings – best described as Cintrée Curvex on steroids. The watch created to mark the Singapore Grand Prix is crafted from the automotive alloy Ergal and ultra-light titanium, and makes use of ceramic components while featuring a flying tourbillon. For presence on the wrist it rivals the Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Offshore, and makes you wonder what Muller would have been capable of as a white goods repair guy.

The Muller Conquistador Grand Prix costs £77,100 from Marcus, 170 New Bond Street, London; +44 (0)20 7290 6500, www.marcuswatches.co.uk.

Above Titanium, ceramics, a flying tourbillon movement, and yours for just over £77,000: Muller's Conquistador Grand Prix.



'The first time Gianni Versace saw Franck Muller watches in a shop, he bought the entire window display'

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MERLIN EVENTS IN 2011

JANUARY 1ST At the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton, Somerset, BA22 8HT (just off the A303) 10am - 2pm. Meet and optional road run. Big car park, restaurant and reduced entry to museum. No prebooking - just turn up. 100+ cars expected	NEW YEARS DAY MEETING
APRIL 1ST-3RD Based at Telford and touring beautiful Shropshire. Visit to Stokesay Castle, The RAF Museum at Cosford, Ironbridge and Attingham Park.	SPRING CLASSIC TOUR
MAY 19TH - 31ST Fabulous holiday tour through Western France to the Pyrenees into Spain to Calahorra and Segovia with historical visits near Madrid. Across the central plains to Leon then through the Picos De Europa and Cantabrian Mountains to Santander.	ST MALO TO SANTANDER TOUR
JUNE 21ST-22ND Touring Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds from our base hotel near Oxford. Visits include Buscot Park and Broughton Castle	MID-WEEK TOUR
JULY 16TH-17TH From our base hotel near Winchester this tour visits eastern Hampshire on the Saturday whilst on the Sunday it finishes at the Classics at the Castle show at Sherborne Castle	HANTS & DORSET TOUR
JULY 17TH The South of England's Great Classics and Supercar Show. Over 1,000 cars displayed from Veterans to Supercars. Plus trade and club stands, crafts and autajumble stalls and Charterhouse Auction. All in the stunning lakeside grounds of 16th century Sherborne Castle (DT9 5NR) North Dorset.	CLASSICS AT THE CASTLE
AUGUST 20TH 25TH After the Liverpool to Douglas Ferry we stay at one of the Isle of Man's best hotels. We tour this beautiful island visiting Castle Rushen, the Historic House of Keys, The Great Laxey Wheel and of course drive the famous TT Course. We also take the electric tram to the summit of Snaefel.	ISLE OF MAN TOUR
SEPTEMBER 22ND - 26TH This attractive region of France between Calais and Paris is full of historic attractions. We stay in an impressive chateau hotel from where we visit the spectacular chateau and riding stables at Chantilly. Also included is the imposing Castle at Pierrefonds	PICARDIE TOUR
OCTOBER 28TH-30TH Stay at a seaford hotel in Torquay and tour the south Devon coast and the wild expanses of Dartmoor. Take a nostalgic steam train ride to Kingswear, spend time in magical Dartmouth before enjoying a boat cruise on the River Dart to Totnes	AUTUMN CLASSIC TOUR
DECEMBER 2ND-4TH Merlins popular annual festive social weekend, this year at the excellent St Pierre Hotel and Country Club near Chepstow, South Wales. We tour the Wye and Usk Valleys before the Saturday evening Christmas Turkey	CHRISTMAS CRACKER

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Car wars

Britain's once-thriving model car industry went the same way as the makers of the full-sized vehicles during the 1970s and '80s

Words: Giles Chapman

Dinky, Corgi and Matchbox diecast cars – especially in their nirvana state of 'mint' and 'boxed' – are part of the automobilia firmament. It's more than just the models themselves that dwell in my mind, though. The era they're from and the people behind them have come to fascinate me.

Frank Hornby, the Meccano inventor, introduced Dinky Toys in 1934, scaling them at roughly 1:43 so they'd flatter his O-gauge Hornby trains. Instead of machine-bent tinplate, they were made of mazak, a zinc-based alloy, so they could be die-cast, a kind of metal injection-moulding. By the late 1930s, the 38-series sports cars and 49-series American sedans represented superbly proportioned replicas of cars like the Alvis 4.3 and Lincoln Zephyr.

Dinky Toys were sold loose in toy shops [the hallowed individual boxes arriving only in 1952], but were the preserve of the middle classes evinced by the Brown family in Richmal Crompton's *Just William* books. So Meccano was caught napping by two demobbed London chancers, coincidentally both called Smith – Leslie and Rodney.

As backstreet sub-contractors making diecast widgets, they were unremarkable. Lesney Products' first premises were a decrepit former Tottenham pub. But then Jack Odell, a third partner, hit on the idea of producing tiny metal toys children could take to school in their pockets, as they might take a dead beetle in a matchbox. A little steamroller proved a best-seller among initial offerings.

The 'Matchbox' series numbered 19 commercial vehicles by the time the first car was issued, an MG TD, in 1954. Dismissed by some as 'Christmas cracker trash', the mouldings were actually very fine. Central to Matchbox's phenomenal success was their sale in newsagents and tobacconists, their low prices bringing them to the less well-off.



Left
Traditional toyshops like this were the battlegrounds for the makers of diecast model cars.

'Dinky Toys were the preserve of middle-class families such as the Browns in the *Just William* books'

In 1956, Meccano's Dinky Toys were assailed afresh. The two Jewish émigrés behind Mettoy, a Northampton toy firm, caused a sensation with their Corgi Toys range. Cousins Philip Ullmann and Arthur Katz had roots in the German toy firms around Nuremberg, an industry that thrived on innovation, and Corgis – made in a spanking new Swansea factory – offered novelty from the start.

Not only were the first 1:43 scale cars marvellously accurate, but they also featured plastic windows and, before long, detailed interiors, headlights made of real glass and, beginning with the Aston Martin DB4 in 1960, opening bonnets. Dinky retaliated: it came up with the first (badly) working steering system on a De Soto police car. But Corgi was relentlessly dynamic.

Throughout the 1960s, a glorious battle raged for the attention of car-mad schoolboys and their spending power. At Lesney, Jack Odell's passion for detail saw the ever-changing Matchbox line-up

reach 75 models, and he coined the Yesteryear name for a series of vintage models. Meanwhile, over at Corgi, chief designer Marcel Van Cleemput was a toymaker of legendary ingenuity, perfecting ever more nifty features like a 'working' colour TV screen in the back of a Lincoln limousine.

Other British brands like Lone Star's Impy (see page 118) and Tri-ang's Spot-On were expunged in the savagely competitive triangle between London, Merseyside and South Wales. In the process, miniature reproductions of just about every classic car you care to mention came from one, both or all three. But in 1969, Mattel upset Britain's toy car establishment. The wheels of Dinky and Matchbox cars were often visually poor, but the cheap, hollow plastic wheels of Mattel's Hong Kong-made Hot Wheels cars offered minimal rolling resistance, so they could rocket along specially made tracks.

Our three local heroes soldiered on during the 1970s, never quite diversifying enough and, it must be said, steadfastly refusing to shift manufacture abroad. Meccano went bust in 1979, Lesney-Matchbox in 1982 and Corgi in 1983.

Most collectors seem to feel – like me – that these dates seal the golden era for British toy cars. But the drive and detail obsession of their creators draws me back to them time and again.

Artist profile

Stefan Marjoram

His day job is directing computer animation at the Aardman studio, but Marjoram has gone back to basics for his car imagery

Words: Mark Dixon



PAUL SAUNDERS



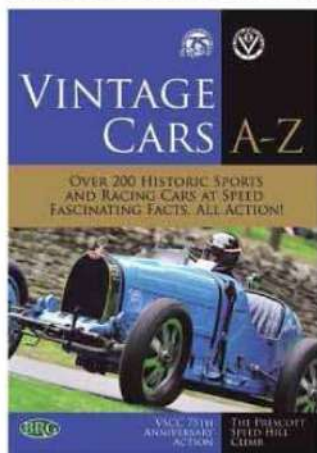
STUDYING ANIMATION at college has proved useful for capturing the essence of a racing car in the paddock or on the grid, says Bristol-based freelance animation director Stefan Marjoram. 'I like sketching from life, and animation teaches you to work quickly,' he explains. 'We use "thumbnails" at work to experiment with different poses and expressions, and I'll use that technique to sketch a car in the couple of minutes it may be waiting on the start line.'

His day job involves directing computer animation for the Aardman studio – home, of course, to Wallace and Gromit – but away from work Marjoram likes to attend car events and race meets; he's been experimenting with creative photography for a while but has recently gone back to basics with pen or pencil and paper. 'A pen is good for quick sketches because you can't go back and rub out mistakes!' he claims. These sketches may then be developed into artworks on a computer, using Photoshop or ArtRage programs – the Brasier racing car, left, was sketched at rest in a local garage, then worked up into the finished image.

Marjoram will soon be documenting the *Bloodhound SSC* Land Speed Record project in a variety of media – artwork, photography and film – and has just started to sell prints of his work: see www.stefanmarjoram.com/art.htm.

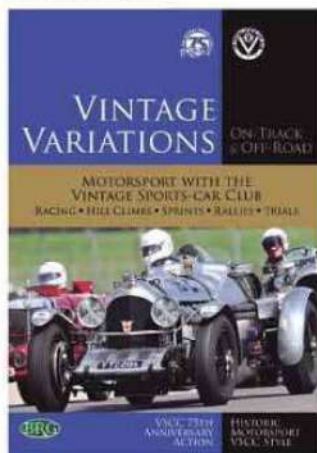


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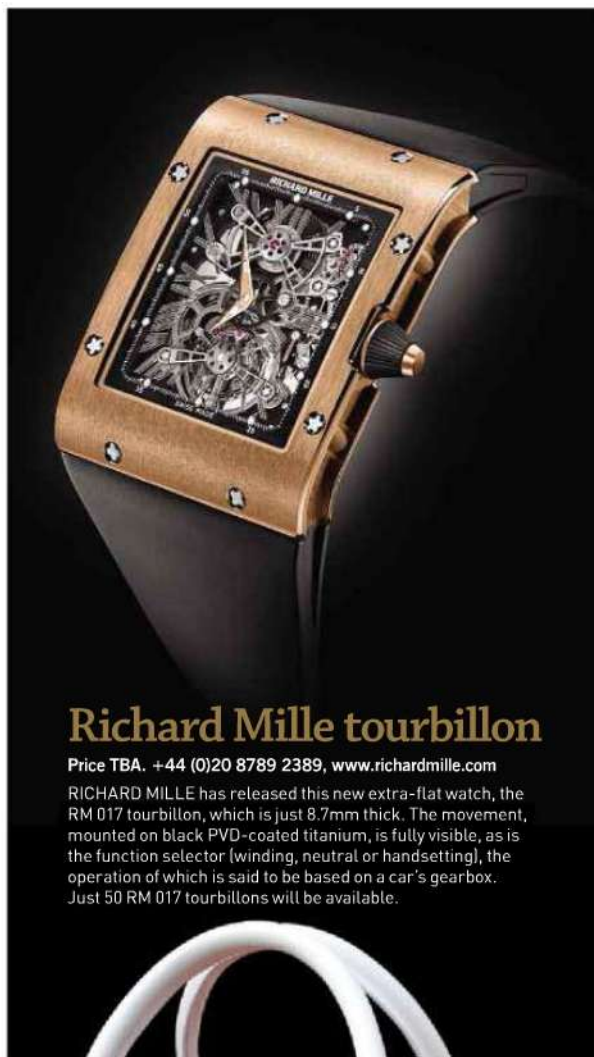
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RICHARD MILLE has released this new extra-flat watch, the RM 017 tourbillon, which is just 8.7mm thick. The movement, mounted on black PVD-coated titanium, is fully visible, as is the function selector (winding, neutral or handsetting), the operation of which is said to be based on a car's gearbox. Just 50 RM 017 tourbillons will be available.



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FEELING A BIT LONELY in your garage (or lounge, or office...)? Exciting Figures has been producing these lifesize cut-out figures for a few years now but has recently added to the range, with Ettore Bugatti (left) and Ferdinand Porsche. McQueen (far left) is still a favourite, of course, and Barry Sheene is on the way.

Polka dot scarf

£35.99. +44 (0)1252 821937
www.grey-car.com

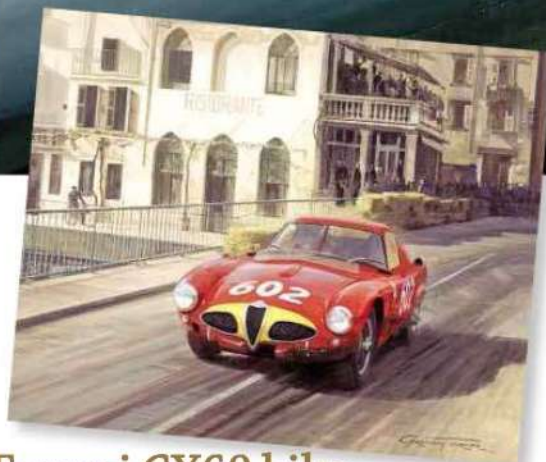
BENTLEY BOY Tim Birkin's signature silk polka dot scarf has been replicated by motoring specialist Grey-car. The scarf, which is made from 100% pure silk, in blue with white dots, measures 148x24cm in size. It is woven and dyed, then hand-finished with 43 individually tied tassels.



Mini bag

£295. +44 (0)1761 479524
www.cbfil.co.uk

RECOGNISE THE NUMBER? 33 EJB is the registration of the Monte Carlo-winning Mini Cooper in this issue, and 37 is its rally number. This leather holdall from Caracalla, endorsed by Paddy Hopkirk, has a waterproof lining, internal zipped pocket and detachable shoulder strap.



Turner prints

From £59. +44 (0)1296 338504
www.studio88.co.uk

GRAHAM TURNER has released prints of two of his latest paintings. The first is Graham Hill at the wheel of the BRM P57 in the 1962 Dutch GP, available on 91x50in canvas (£189) or on 66x43cm art paper (£99). The second is Fangio driving the Alfa Romeo Disco Volante in the 1953 Mille Miglia, on art paper: 50x43cm (£79) or 40x30cm (£59).

Ferrari CX60 bike

£1650 for Octane readers, incl shipping. RRP £1995
+44 (0)7985 448055, www.motorsportmodel.com

YES, ANOTHER 'brand extension' from Ferrari, but when it's in the form of a high-spec mountain bike it's hard to moan. It's based around an aluminium frame, with full suspension – Suntour forks and multilink rear – plus 27-speed Shimano gears and hydraulic disc brakes. It weighs in at 13.8kg, which isn't bad in this price bracket. And of course it's red.



Mini T-shirt

£24.99. +44 (0)1572 822662
www.gearboxgifts.com

GOOD OLD 33 EJB just pops up everywhere this month. Here the Monte-winning Mini Cooper of legend adorns this new T-shirt, illustrated by artist Nicholas Hunziker and sold via Gearbox Gifts. The left-hand sleeve features the number 37, the right-hand the Monte Carlo logo.

Carrera slot car set

£79.99. +44 (0)1908 605686
www.hobbyco.net

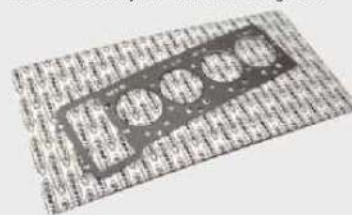
WE CAN'T RESIST a decent slot car racing set. Carrera isn't as well-known or as widely available as Scalextric, but their cars are usually more detailed and can be used on Scalextric track. This new pairing of Ford Capri RS and Opel GT comes with a 5.3m length of track (with stainless steel rail guides, so it can be used outside), designed for the classic slot car figure of eight layout, plus the usual hand controllers and mains transformer. Lots of fun!



Climax gasket

£66.12. +44 (0)1303 245300
www.pipercams.co.uk

COMETIC GASKETS have introduced a new multi-layer high-quality head gasket for the classic Coventry Climax FWB/E engines.



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£145. +44 (0)1462 684300
www.cambridgemotorsport.com

THIS NEW 40A alternator is extra-compact, features two internal cooling fans and weighs just 2.7kg, so is ideal for anyone building a classic track-day car.



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www.webcon.co.uk

WEBCON'S one-piece 40DCO manifold for the Ford Pre-Crossflow has now been joined by this two-piece design, which allows more flexibility on throttle linkage choice.



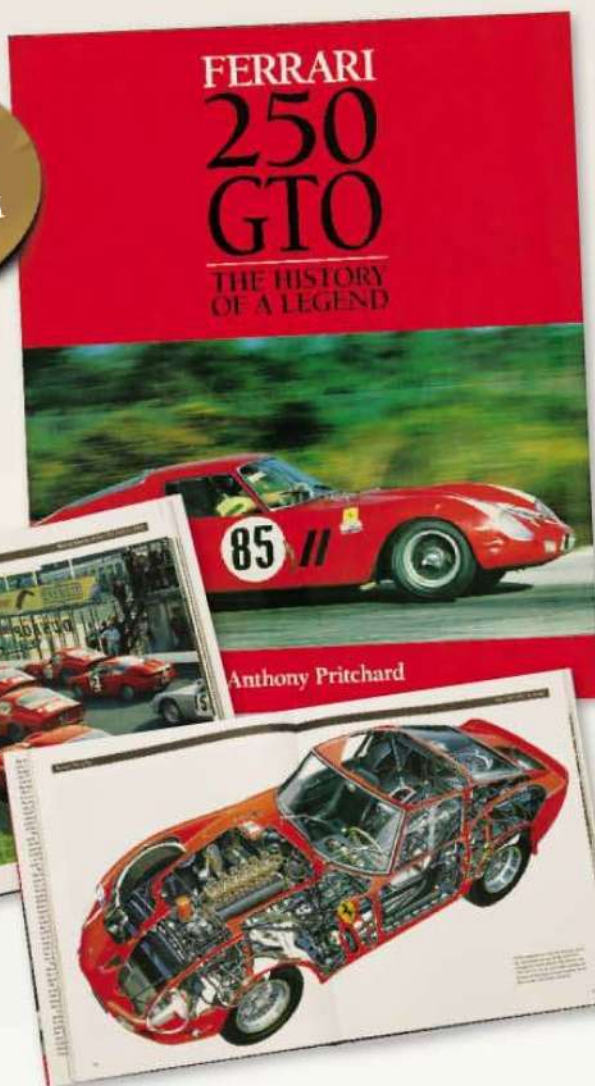
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Ferrari 250GTO the history of a legend

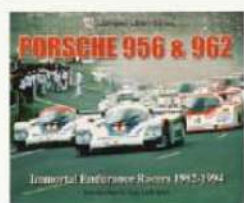
ANTHONY PRITCHARD, Haynes, £50
ISBN 978 1 84425 546 7

IT'S NOT THE LAST WORD in stylish presentation – from the slightly clunky layout and glossy paper, it has the feel of a book that might have been printed 20 years ago – but Pritchard's book about Ferrari's most famous sports racer deserves a place on any Ferrari fan's bookshelf.

Leaving aside any question marks about aesthetics, which are always a matter of personal taste, this is a satisfyingly solid piece of work, a substantial hardback of more than 350 pages. The large number of period images include many in colour and are used big and bold, while the text and captions are easy to read, so the book certainly fulfils its purpose.

It falls naturally into two halves, the first devoted to the GTO's development and racing history, and the second a detailed record of every GTO chassis history, with contemporary pictures of each car and, where appropriate, a list of races and results. Many photos will be familiar to anyone interested in sports car racing of the period but some will be new, for Pritchard has gone to considerable trouble over the picture selection. There are plenty of atmospheric colour shots but our favourite is probably the black-and-white pic of Reale/Marsala's filthy, battle-scarred GTO, which has clearly scraped a wall on the 1966 Targa Florio, powering around a building daubed in Ferrari, Bandini and Baghetti victory slogans. And it's just one of many compelling images.

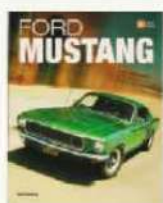
The last book to focus purely on the GTO was Keith Blumel and Jess Pourret's 1998 volume *Ferrari 250 GTO*, published by Bay View Books. Twelve years ago that book (which was quite a bit slimmer than Pritchard's new volume) sold for £25 new; now it averages £225-250 on Amazon as a collectable, which is something to bear in mind if you're in two minds about shelling out £50 for this one.



Porsche 956 & 962

KARL LUDVIGSEN
Iconografix, \$32.95
ISBN 978 1 58388 269 6

THE PREMISE of these Iconografix softbacks is simple: lots of pictures – in this case, one per page – with short captions. Karl Ludvigsen has trawled his personal archive to provide over 120 photos, mostly B&W but some in colour, of the Group C and IMSA Porsches, beginning with design models and cars in-build, moving through the 956's debut at Silverstone in 1982, and ending with Porsche's 1994 version of Jochen Dauer's 962LM road car. Picture reproduction is good.



Ford Mustang

BRAD BOWLING
Motorbooks, £17.99
ISBN 978 0 7603 3808 7

THE MOST NOTABLE feature of this small but colourful softback is that, while covering every era of Mustang from 1964 on, it majors on the later cars rather than the earlier – about two-thirds of the book relates to post-1980 models, perhaps reflecting the changing tastes of a new generation of enthusiasts. It's heavily picture-led, with brief descriptions and Did You Know? panels, and includes no fewer than 54 variants; we were rather taken by the 1992 police-spec GT in full state trooper livery.



MGF and TF

DAVID KNOWLES
Crowood, £25
ISBN 978 1 84797 202 6

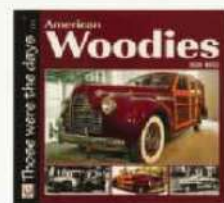
GET PAST the uninspiring cover and you'll find a remarkably varied history by MG marque expert Knowles, with fascinating pictures of the concepts and test mules that resulted in the MGF, and, at the other end of the time frame, the future projects that never saw the light of day, due to the collapse of MG Rover. The story of the production cars is fully detailed, of course, and brought right up to date with the latest Chinese-built models, but it's all the 'might have beens' that really grab your attention.



Classic car auction yearbook 2009 2010

ADOLFO ORSI, RAFFAELE GAZZI
Historica Selecta, €39.90
ISBN 978 88 96232 02 6

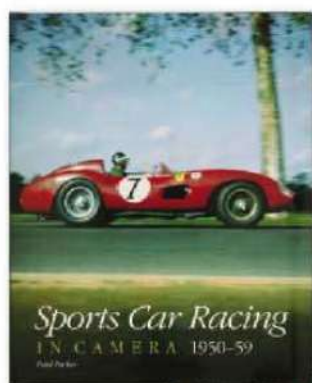
IF YOU HAVE an interest in classic car values – whether as a collector or a trader – this annual compilation of worldwide auction results, from August to August of consecutive years, is a must. Published in English, it covers nearly 4000 cars sold at auction, with crucial info such as chassis numbers, price estimates and actual results, all grouped by car marque. The year's ten highest-grossing cars are profiled in detail and there's market commentary from the big auction houses too.



American woodies 1928-1953

NORM MORT
Veloce, £14.99
ISBN 978 1 845842 69 7

A MIXTURE of colour photos and period adverts, the latest in Veloce's prolific *Those were the days...* series kicks off with the 1928 Ford Model A station wagon; its main focus, though, is the golden era of the woodie in the 1940s. Besides the familiar Fords and Chryslers, plenty of less-well remembered models from marques such as Packard and De Soto are featured – there's even an Austin Seven-derived American Bantam woody. Engrossing, informative and good value.



Sports car racing in camera 1950-59

PAUL PARKER
Haynes, £35
ISBN 978 1 84425 552 8



INTEREST IN THE XJ220 is growing and this new history has the advantage of being written by its project manager, Mike Moreton. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, but it still comes as a shock (in a chapter contributed by Jaguar director of styling and engineering, Jim Randle) to learn that the XJ220 was financed entirely by the goodwill of Jaguar suppliers and developed by a team of 12 unpaid volunteers. Jaguar just couldn't afford to bankroll it.

Besides such personal insights, the book's other strength is the large number of photos taken during development and production, many of them previously unpublished. It might have benefited from slightly more ruthless picture editing – a factory visit by Diana, Princess of Wales, occupies more than half-a-dozen pages – but there are some fascinating in-build shots, including one (used frustratingly small) of more than half-a-dozen XJ220s being bodied simultaneously at Abbey Panels.

While this isn't a particularly handsome book in terms of layout and design, it's easy to read and is in full colour throughout, and at £25 is decent value too.

WE PREVIEWED some of the images from this book in issue 90 but they were just a tiny sample of the hundreds that Paul Parker has collated here: mostly in black-and-white but including some superb colour too. Generally, pictures are used at half-page size or larger, so you can drink in the period detail – we loved the 1959 shot, left, of a Cooper T49 at Goodwood, with handlebar-moustachioed Ken Stratton doing his best Terry-Thomas impression, and an ex-WD gun tractor behind the picket fence.

Although ostensibly a picture book, every photo has a lengthy, informative and often pleasantly digressive caption accompanying it; so, for example, a shot of three DB3 Astons at Southampton Docks in 1953, en route to Sebring aboard the *SS America*, leads to a short history lesson about the ultimate fate of the *America* (broken in two after running aground off the Canary Islands).

There's as much to read here, then, as in many a conventional history, with the content divided between cars, drivers, teams and anything else that takes Parker's fancy. Good value, given the quantity and quality of images.



Jaguar XJ220 the inside story

MIKE MORETON
Veloce, £24.99
ISBN 978 1 845842 50 5



The Bentley Brooklands

Merrell, £125 standard edition,
£295 limited edition bound in leather
www.classicdriver.com



BENTLEY HAS now delivered the last Brooklands super-coupé to its owner, so it cannot be accused of anything so vulgar as using a posh book to help sell a few cars. In fact, the book is actually the pet project of one highly enthusiastic Brooklands owner, who wanted to convey what's so special about this magnificent machine. Bentley gave its blessing, but was not the prime mover.

Octane regulars Tony Dron and Simon de Burton have penned the words, with the former describing the conception and production of the car, along with in-depth driving impressions, while the latter explores the Grand Touring ethos of the Brooklands – including the famous Blue Train races of 1930 – before pulling the short straw of a drive from London to the Côte d'Azur. Evocatively photographed, this road trip is the poetic finale to a book that's as immaculately crafted as the Brooklands itself.

Tornado 21st century steam

JONATHAN GLANCEY
Books on Track, £24.99
ISBN 978 09566770 0 6



ON 21 DECEMBER 2009, when Britain was hit by the kind of heavy snow it hadn't seen in decades, most of the electric trains in Kent stopped running. One train that had no trouble with the snow that day was the Cathedrals Express, hauled by a steam locomotive designed in the 1940s – but built in the early years of the 21st century.

Tornado is an exact replica of the 49 A1 Pacifics built by the old LNER shortly before nationalisation in 1948. All were scrapped in the 1960s, so a group of enthusiasts decided to make a new one – as you do. This amazing project was completed in late 2008; you may remember it featuring in a *Top Gear* 'race' from London to Edinburgh in 2009, with Jeremy Clarkson at the regulator.

Its story is told in this superb book by *Guardian* writer Jonathan Glancey, and sales of the book will help defray some of the project's £3m cost. Great cause, great book.

DVDs



Heights of danger

www.cherryred.co.uk/sfe, £11.99

FANS OF British B-movies and classic rallying alike will enjoy this delightfully naive 1953 thriller from the Pathé film unit, in which a plucky garage owner and his children enter their MG TD in the Rallye des Alpes, and take on the baddies (in a Riley RM). Cue some great location filming in France and Switzerland, not to mention early-'50s Prescott... The Enid Blyton-style dialogue – 'wizard driving, dad!' – is wonderful.



Clarkson: the Italian job

Zentertain Video, £15.99

NOTHING TO DO with Minis, but Clarkson's entry into a classic touring car race at Lydden Hill is the excuse to visit Italy for some 'training' at Imola and Fiorano in a whole host of new supercars. It's all beautifully shot – just like an episode of *Top Gear* – and the finale at Lydden Hill, in which Jeremy races a hot rod Mk1 Escort Mexico against a field of '70s/'80s saloons, is genuinely exciting. It's almost worth buying the DVD just for this.



2010 Goodwood Revival

<http://shop.goodwood.com>, £20

BY COMMON CONSENT, this year's Revival was one of the best yet; Goodwood's 'official' DVD covers the main races from start to finish, with superb multi-camera (including in-car) footage. Presenters Ben Fogle and Natalie Pinkham make a valiant attempt to sketch out the Revival's other attractions but the racing takes up most of the DVD's running time, so it's not altogether satisfying as an overview of the whole event.

1:6

LANCIA
D50

BY PATRICE DE CONTO

Price €30,000

Material handbuilt resin/metal

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

No, we haven't put the comma in the wrong place – this model really does cost thirty thousand euros. See it close-up, however, and you can understand why. Yes, it's to a massive 1:6 scale, but that's less significant than the exquisite level of detail that justifies all those zeros. Former pharmacist turned modelmaker Patrice de Conto has built eight of these super-sized replicas of Ascari's 1955 Monaco Grand Prix car (the one he famously put into the harbour): every aspect of the real car has been modelled from Lancia's original drawings, including a full tubular chassis. There are even grease nipples on the suspension – and a dog-eared 1955 issue of *L'Automobile* behind the rear wheel... Quite remarkable.

Model
OF THE
MONTH

1:43

1 CITROËN DS PLANE

BY NOREV

Price £44.95 Material diecast metal

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

This quirky offering in Norev's Provence Moulage range is a replica of the flying DS from 1964 French comedy crime caper *Fantômas*. The DS model is metal, with plastic wings, and the base is detachable.

2 LANCIA STRATOS TURBO

BY SPARK

Price £44.95 Material diecast resin

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

Finely detailed Stratos model is of 1976 Le Mans entry – definitely different.



3 MG TD

BY NEO

Price £48.95 Material diecast resin

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

We're not sure about the tyres, but otherwise this little MG looks super.

4 LAMBORGHINI URRACO

BY LOOK SMART

Price £114.80 Material handbuilt resin

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

Expensive but lovely model of Bertone's prototype Urraco. 308GT4, anyone?

5 TALBOT SUNBEAM TI1600

BY CORGI

Price £19.99 Material diecast metal

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

Re-tooled Corgi model in its 'Colin McRae' range is excellent – a bargain.

6 HONDA S800

BY EBBRO

Price £28.95 Material diecast metal

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

Well-priced miniature of a Suzuki 1000km race car: simple and charming.

7 BMW 1800TI

BY MINICHAMPS

Price £37.95 Material diecast metal

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

Nicely finished and weighty, this 1964 Spa 24Hrs model is a satisfying model.

8 CHEETAH

BY SPARK

Price £44.95 Material diecast resin

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

Fascinating, well-executed model [note pinstriped nose] of the '60s Cobra eater.

9 ALFA ROMEO 6C 2500S

BY KLAXON

Price £64.75 Material handbuilt resin

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

Italian-made handbuilt of 1950 Mille Miglia entry is good value at this level.

10 ISO GRIFO IR8 TARGA

BY NEO

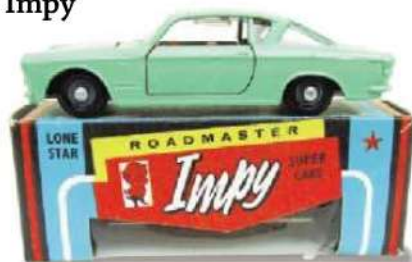
Price £48.95 Material diecast resin

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★

Attractive paint and well detailed interior add to open Iso's appeal.

Models shown are available from Grand Prix Models, +44 (0)1295 278070, www.grandprixmodels.com

Classic models

Fiat 2300S Coupé
by Impy

'THE CARS WITH EVERYTHING' was the confident claim made by British toy company Lone Star when, in 1966, it launched its Impy diecast range.

Of course, the market was awash with diecast cars at that time, but Lone Star thought it had something better than its competitors. Rather than taking on the market-leading Corgi and Matchbox ranges directly, Impys were pitched between the two in size – small enough for the pocket money market but big enough to include what the initial catalogue called '13 engineering features'. That meant opening bonnets, boots and doors, jewelled headlamps, a rudimentary steering system and sprung

suspension. They were common enough gimmicks on the larger 1:43 models but Lone Star deserves credit for squeezing them into a 3in-long diecast that sold for only 15p!

The initial batch of eight Impy cars consisted of a Jaguar MkX, Ford Zodiac estate, Zodiac police car, Corsair, VW Microbus, Mercedes-Benz 220SE, Chrysler Imperial and a 'Gran Turismo coupe' (actually based on a Corvette Stingray). This cosmopolitan mix reflected the fact that Impys were designed to sell in export markets – in fact, by the end of 1967, 80% of production had been exported, including one shipment of three million models destined for the USA. Further

new models followed, with the emphasis on sporty European cars: Volvo P1800, Alfa Romeo Giulia Spider, and the Fiat 2300S, which came in a pleasant shade of green.

So far, so good... until the Americans fought back with Hot Wheels, cars with 'spectraflame paint' and low-friction wheels that ran so fast they could loop the loop on plastic tracks. Sales of Impys – and even Matchbox – plummeted. In desperation, Lone Star fitted similar wheels to its Impy cars and relaunched them in 1969 as 'Lone Star Flyers'.

By that stage, though, kids were far too caught up in the Hot Wheels craze to care.

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Blue is the colour

1966
Alfa Romeo Giulia
Sprint GT
RICHARD MEADEN
CONTRIBUTOR



A few months ago I had no intention (nor the means) to own another car, let alone an Italian one five years older than me. But I hadn't bargained on the perfect storm of a so-called friend relentlessly egging me on to buy a 105-series Alfa, the excellent and horribly tempting website www.classicalfa.com, and an all-too-easily secured loan. I didn't stand a chance.

To be honest, I didn't fight the urges too hard. Indeed, I'd been harbouring the Alfa virus since my aforementioned friend, Simon Tate, let me drive his lovely '65 1600 GTA racer back in the spring.

Perhaps because I yearned for a GTA, but could never afford one in a month of Sundays, I was drawn to the idea of a GTA rep. A step-front model was top of the wishlist but, not surprisingly, I couldn't find both requirements within my budget. Then fate intervened.

My now thrice-daily visits to classicalfa.com threw up an interesting car: 1966 Giulia Sprint GT, right-hand drive, mildly tweaked for gentle road rallying and resprayed in its original shade of *Bluette*. Better still, it was located near Newbury, so not too far away. My stomach began to fizz.

A quick call to Simon confirmed my gut feeling wasn't simply indigestion, and so I phoned the vendor.

Good news was that the car hadn't sold, but the bad news was that someone had beaten me to the call. Still, they weren't due to view the car until after the weekend and today was Saturday! As luck would have it Simon was due to visit Newbury that very afternoon, so I dispatched him as my deputy.

To cut a long story short, once he saw the car he realised that he'd actually driven it about 16 years ago, when it was owned by a good friend of his. Suffice to say I made the trip to Newbury the following day, had a sweet drive and a long chat with the vendor, before shaking hands on the deal. I'd bought an Alfa!

Since then I've completely fallen for the little Sprint GT. The shape is surely one of Bertone's very best, and the driving experience is precise, delicate, enthusiastic, and – to someone used to more youthful performance cars – surprisingly modern. And having had misgivings about the colour, I now wouldn't change it for the world.

No doubt a few trials and tribulations lie in wait, but for now I've got the warm satisfaction of having filled a hole in my motoring life I didn't know was there.

Richard is a contributing editor to *evo* magazine; his debut feature as an *Octane* contributor will appear next month.

'I had a sweet drive and a long chat with the vendor, before shaking hands on the deal. I'd bought an Alfa!'



Above and right
The dangers of the internet: daily surfing turned up this gorgeous blue Alfa and a click of the mouse sorted a bank loan too.



GUS GREGORY



Hot stuff

1928 Ford Model A

MARK DIXON
DEPUTY EDITOR



I SPECULATED in issue 89 that the reason for my Model A being down on power and consuming more water than petrol might be a blown head gasket. Amazingly, I was right.

My favourite vintage car fettler Derek Magrath took the head off and found that the gasket had indeed failed. He also reminded me that the distributor was worn, the carb needed a rebuild, and there was a crack in one of the fan blades...

In for a penny, in for rather a lot of pounds, but it was all worth it because, when the A returned from Derek's ministrations, it was back to its usual sweet-running self. The head had been skimmed by 16 thou, and that nice Rob Davies of Model A parts supplier Saturn Industries conjured up a new four-bladed fan and everything else required. I haven't yet found something that Rob can't supply for an A – contact him by emailing elwellrob@hotmail.com or calling 07772 394104.

Derek reported that the valves are quite sloppy in the block but after some discussion we agreed to leave them alone. As Derek said: 'It's at that happy point where everything's a bit worn but it's all working in harmony.' I know just what he means.

I'd been hoping to make a late-autumn road trip in the A, up to Yorkshire to see Dougal Cawley and family at Longstone Tyres, but that's been put on hold by a radiator that's leaking a bit more than is acceptable even for an A. Its last owner had recored the rad, using what he told me was a modern truck core, and certainly it's never come close to overheating, but I think the A transmits rather more in the way of road shocks than a modern truck does.

Taking the radiator out was easy enough but I've not managed to pin-point exactly where the water's exiting the core, which is a three-row type that's densely packed with cooling fins – it just gets uniformly damp, quite quickly. 'Try dusting it with talcum powder,' advised Derek, before quipping: 'I always use the rose-scented variety...'

Winter work

AS THE YEAR draws to a close, the XK140 is running strongly and it seems that all mechanical issues have been sorted out. At the recent *Octane* track day it performed very well and my friend, Max Wakefield, driving a Porsche 911, commented on how fast it went down the main straight. Being a polite fellow, he didn't comment on my sedate cornering style.

The XK is in full road trim and I am disinclined to turn it into some track day weapon by stripping the bumpers off it and

fitting lightweight seats. No, I want to continue refining the car, making it a comfortable mile-eater for those longer road trips. But as winter is almost here the first thing to do is to have the underside re-Waxoyled before salt is sprayed on the roads.

Before attending to the bodywork the Jaguar needs a good clean. So I have tried some Permaclear Pro Dry Clean Car Wash & Wax (www.permaclear-carcare.co.uk). You just spray it on then wipe it off, saving the need to lug buckets of soapy water around, and it leaves a nice waxy covering on the paintwork. The XK looks noticeably sharper now.



1955 Jaguar XK140

ROBERT COUCHER
INTERNATIONAL
EDITOR



OCTANE'S FLEET

DAVID LILLYWHITE

EDITOR

1971 MGB GT, 1971 Saab 96, 1973 Citroën SM, 1976 Zip Shadow Kart, 1991 Peugeot 205GTI



ROBERT COUCHER

INTERNATIONAL
EDITOR

1955 Jaguar XK140



MARK DIXON

DEPUTY
EDITOR

1928 Ford Model A Phaeton, 1928/30 Ford hot rod, 1963 Fiat 2300S coupé, 1971 Range Rover, 1978 Porsche 928



KEITH ADAMS

ASSISTANT
EDITOR

1975 NSU Ro80, 1976 Rover SD1, 1982 Alfa Romeo Alfasud, 1988 Saab 900T16S



SUE FARROW

ADVERTISING
SALES

1968 Jaguar E-type 2+2



DELWYN MALLETT

CONTRIBUTOR

1936 Cord 810 Beverly, 1946 Tatra T87, 1948 Ford Tudor, 1952 Porsche 356, 1957 Porsche Speedster, 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300SL, 1960 BMW R69S, 1963 Tatra 603



JOHN SIMISTER

CONTRIBUTOR

1961 Saab 96, 1972 Lancia Fulvia 1600HF, 1987 Peugeot 205GTI



SARAH BRADLEY

CONTRIBUTOR

1929 Ford hot rod, 1956 Chevrolet pick-up, 1969 Plymouth Roadrunner



RICHARD MEADEN

CONTRIBUTOR

1965 Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GT



MARTYN GODDARD

PHOTOGRAPHER

1965 Austin-Healey 3000, 1974 Norton 850 Commando



WINSTON GOODFELLOW

US CONTRIBUTOR

2007 Shelby Mustang GT



Tatra troubles

1946
Tatra T87
DELWYN MALLETT
CONTRIBUTOR



HAVING AGREED to display my T87 on the Tatra Register UK's stand at the NEC Classic Car Show, fixing the gushing oil leak [see *Octane*, issue 89] became a priority. Spending more on oil than petrol to get there was not an inviting proposition, the impact on my wallet being almost as horrendous to contemplate as the impact on the environment.

The best guess regarding the source of the leak was somewhere at the back! Not very precise but, as the air-cooled engine is pretty well entirely shrouded in tin-wear, as close as I could get. With quite a bit of its superstructure removed, and top of engine de-oiled, a short run produced a tell-tale trickle.

Clearly on the right track, I attempted to remove the last piece of tin 'twixt me and a barely visible pipe lurking within. However, several hours of struggling, with every socket extension and wobbly angle drive in my armoury of tools, established what I feared most – this bit of tin was not designed to be removed with the engine in the car.

I reckoned that if I took out the rear bulkhead, upon which lives most of the electrical gubbins, I might just be able to access the pipe. With contortions and lacerations to the wrist, I forced a spanner into the gap and tightened the loose nuts on the oil pipe.

Hoping this had cured the leak I headed for Brum. Joy! No oil. And the Tatra looked good. A breathtakingly beautiful T77a brought over from Holland by Dutch member Kees Smit won Best in Show, so a good weekend for all Tatra fans. The drive home beckoned and the other, as yet unaddressed fault loomed. Was the dynamo charging properly? No.

First flattened battery in the 40-minute queue to get out of the NEC! Second failure at Oxford Services – tow start gets me going. Second battery gives up ghost near High Wycombe and deposits me on hard shoulder. Third on-board spare gets me going. I arrive in Farnham with only about a single candlepower of light illuminating my way. Battery dead flat. Anyone know a good dynamo specialist?



MGB-engined 205?



1971
MGB GT
DAVID LILLYWHITE
EDITOR

OK, WE'RE MOVING AGAIN. The MGB's engine is back at Angelworks Technologies, where Ben Rushworth is investigating why it destroyed a big-end bearing so quickly.

Ben's pointed out fretting marks on the back of the damaged bearing shells, which show that they had started to move around in the con-rods, but luckily those lovely K1 rods haven't been damaged and neither have the cylinder bores. But the reground and balanced crankshaft is badly scored.

Ben isn't convinced by my theory that it was swarf [from the worn-out old engine] trapped in the re-used oil cooler that caused the failure, because he thinks if there had been swarf or dirt then it would have been more likely to get caught in the

main bearing oilways rather than the big-end galleries, due to the direction of oil flow.

All the same, in hindsight I would have replaced the oil cooler anyway, rather than having it flushed through, especially as an oil cooler is just £75 from Moss Europe. I mentioned my theory to historic racing stalwart Julius Thurgood and he said: 'We put a bandsaw through old oil coolers, so there's no chance of reusing them.'

Meanwhile, I've ordered a bag-full of high-tensile nuts and bolts for my historic race kart so I can reassemble it, and briefly lent my Peugeot 205GTI to 205 fanatic (and top road-tester) John Simister, who proclaimed it a good 'un, though he suspects the clutch is on the way out.

No problem; in the year I've owned the little 205 it's covered 14,000 troublefree miles. Not bad, eh! And, as you'll see from the picture, I even used it to transport the MGB engine. That lump of iron probably weighs almost as much as the entire 205.





Below
A fresh MoT certificate
for Martyn's Big Healey,
in good time for its
winter lay-up.



1965 Austin-
Healey 3000
MARTYN GODDARD
PHOTOGRAPHER

Test time

THE NIGHTS WERE drawing in and golden leaves falling, which meant it was 'that MoT time of the year' for my Austin-Healey 3000 Mk3, ABH 119C. In fact the number plate is now 171 YNO, the cherished registration number from my old everyday hack. 171 YNO arrived in 1990 on my first rally car, a 1961 Austin A40, and then went on to grace my well-used Lancia Delta Integrale 8V before ending up on my now Government-scrapped Alfa Romeo 146Ti.

New sets of die-pressed 3/4in aluminium numberplates were fitted, delivered by post from Tippers Vintage Plates in Cornwall. These period black-and-silver plates look great and were the last item on the Healey checklist.

I haven't driven a big mileage this year but the small CTEK battery conditioner keeps the battery well charged. However, I still sprayed a good helping of damp start down the SU air filters before firing up the

big six-cylinder and taking it for a test run along the Esplanade in Birchington-on-Sea, Kent, to polish the front discs and warm everything up, en route to Station Garage MoT test centre.

This was my first visit to this particular test centre and it's always been my policy to hang around at test time, as the garages that undertake MoT testing rarely encounter 1960s automobiles. This way, I can help identify the location of the button for the screen washers, the bonnet catches and the footwell dip switch. In this case I needn't have worried, as there was an XK150 coupé in the adjacent spray booth belonging to the proprietor, who is an *Octane* subscriber.

New test certificate in hand after the replacement of an errant seatbelt nut, I drove back to my garage to store the Healey for winter – but I am already planning a road trip for next year.



Book your *Octane* Classic car track day! Goodwood Motor Circuit, 19 May

Come and join us – with your car – on the next *Octane* Drivers' Club track day. The date? Wednesday 19 May. Venue? The Goodwood Motor Circuit in Sussex. With a strictly limited number of places available, this is your chance to spend a truly memorable day with the *Octane* team.

Historic motor racing instructor Mark Hales will be on hand to give you one-to-one driving tuition and tips in your own classic car throughout the day, and the *Octane* editorial team will be driving a selection of their own classics on the circuit.

The full day starts at 8am, and breakfast, lunch and snacks throughout the day are included.

You'll receive individual recordings of your laps to take away on a USB stick, provided by ChaseCam.

Numbers are strictly limited on the *Octane* classic car track day, so book your place now to avoid disappointment.

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1963 MINI 1071 COOPER S

Presented in its original colour combination of Almond Green with Old English White roof and green interior. Prepared with competition use in mind this wonderful car features many performance upgrades including adjustable suspension, stage 3 head on the original block, lightened flywheel, 1 1/2 inch SUs, competition distributor, 10" Minilites, 4 speed synco gearbox with all new gears, competition fuel pump and centre exit RC40 exhaust. Complete with its Heritage Certificate.



1980 MORRIS MINI 95 PICKUP

Having recently undergone a restoration in its original colour scheme of white bodywork with contrasting black vinyl interior, this is a most charming example of the ever popular Mini pickup. A well known car to ourselves that will undergo a full road test and service prior to sale and comes complete with new chrome work including bumpers and mirrors. A new black mohair tonneau cover was also fitted during the restoration and the car still sits on its original steel wheels.



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1978 MINI 1275GT WOOD & PICKETT 'MARGRAVE'

This well known and magazine featured Mini was supplied new in March 1978 by HR Owen of London to an international lawyer who bought the car as a present for his son after graduating from Cambridge University. The Wood & Pickett conversion came to a not inconsiderable £12,600 and featured the 'Pram-Back' conversion, full leather interior, Margrave dashboard, Wilton carpets, electric windows and a sunroof. Fully restored by Wood & Pickett in recent years this concours winning car is ready to be shown and driven.



2001 MINI 1.3i COOPER S500

Finished in British Racing Green with silver roof and bonnet stripes. This example is one of the very last Coopers to be produced and has covered just 600 miles from new with one owner. Having recently come out of a private collection and seeing dry usage only, this fabulous Mini really is in as new condition. The car will be prepared through our workshops prior to sale to include a full service with road test and fresh MOT. A rare opportunity to acquire one of the best Coopers we have seen.



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OCTANE'S MONTH IN MOTOR SPORT Chequered Flag

Edited by Paul Hardiman

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NEWS



Saab rallies to the cause

Carlsson's Team Saab scores class win on RAC Rally

A HEROIC YEAR-LONG effort by the Saab Historic Rally Team fielded five cars on the Roger Albert Clark Rally – and three finished, with a class win. Conceived to fly the flag for the marque when its survival looked in doubt, the team celebrated Erik Carlsson and Stuart Turner's victory in a factory-prepared 96 on the 1960 RAC Rally. Top team result went to Nick Pinkett and Mark Casey (car 69, far left), winners of class B1 in their 96, even after changing an engine at the roadside in the dark. Colin Hope and Nick Patrick finished 31st in their 96 V4 (on right in background); Richard Simpson/Debby Myers retired their 96 V4 (centre, left); and 'Magic'/Craig Wallace holed their 900's gearbox. 'It was a great success,' said organiser Jim Valentine, who finished 42nd in his 96 Sport (on left in background), 'even though we only had nine hours' sleep in four days.' Full RAC story on page 129.

Below
At Eden Camp, Stuart Turner and Erik Carlsson with the 1960 RAC winner in front.



Winter Challenge

To celebrate the centenary of the Monte Carlo Rally, the 2011 Winter Challenge destination is Monaco, from start points of Chester and Noordwijk on 20 November. The traditional Alpine route via Beaune, Aix-les-Bains, Gap and Digne finishes in Monte Carlo five days later. It's aimed at pre-1962 cars (later ones may be allowed in at the Classic Rally Association's discretion, but they can't win overall), and period clothing is a must. Entry costs to follow. More at www.classicrally.org.uk.

'80s touring cars return

MOTOR RACING LEGENDS has launched an all-new series for touring cars, as raced in the British and European Championships between 1977 and 1985. Thanks to help from JD Classics, the series will be for real race cars from the era, running in Groups 1, 2 and A. 'This was the era of TWR XJ-S and BMW 528, Alfa GTV6, Audi Coupé and Ford Sierra XR4i, piloted in their day by such stars as Win Percy and Andy Rouse', said MRL's Duncan Wiltshire. More from www.motorracinglegends.com.



Caterham goes French

WITH THE 2011 Academy already sold out, Caterham has launched a French version of its series for novice racers. Similar in format to its UK cousin, taking aspiring racing drivers through the race licence process and then putting them through their first season, it's supported by motor sport magazine *Sport Auto*. The €39,995 package includes a road-legal Academy Seven with technical support, plus circuit racing, hill climbs and sprints. See www.caterham.co.uk or call +44 (0)1883 333700.

In brief

Stanhope ford

This County Durham river crossing, an important feature of Le Jog and other rallies, is threatened with permanent year-round closure (it's already closed from October to March). A Facebook group has been started to publicise its possible loss, attracting more than 1000 supporters, and a petition can be found here: www.gopetition.com/petition/40467.html.

Tour Brit entries open

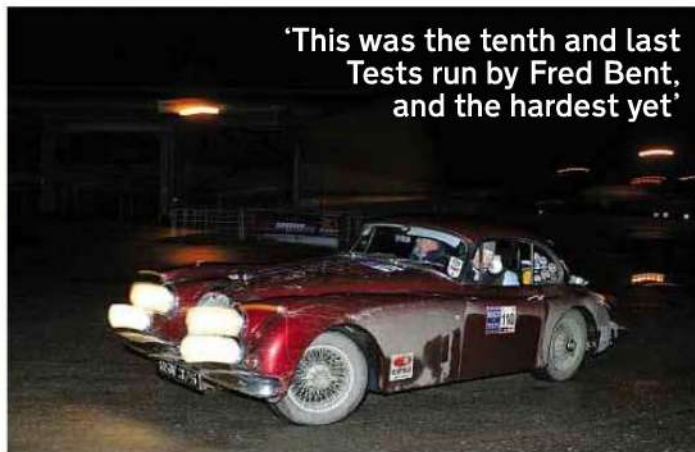
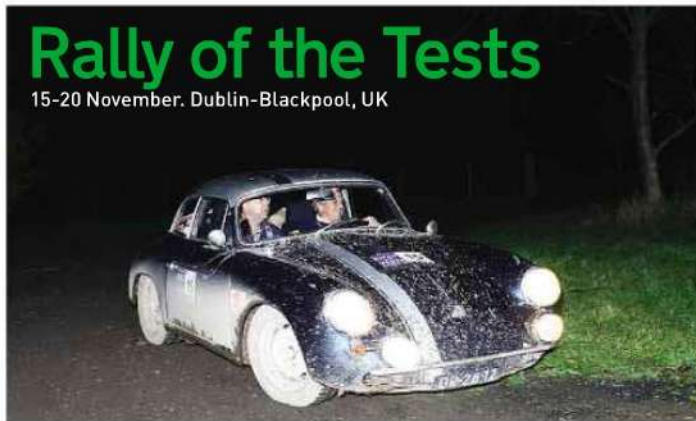
Entries for the 2011 Tour Britannia, 17-19 June, have already opened, with £100 reduction on the £3200 fee if the £995 deposit is paid before 14 February. More at www.tourbritannia.com.

Help for Heroes

The Vintage Sports-Car Club raised more than £6000 for Help for Heroes at its 4 December Winter Driving Tests, raised by club doctors performing race licence medicals for free, in return for 'suggested minimum' £75 donations.

Rally of the Tests

15-20 November. Dublin-Blackpool, UK



'This was the tenth and last Tests run by Fred Bent, and the hardest yet'

TONY LARGE

THE RALLY of the Tests left the mainland for the first time, starting in Dublin and spending three days in Ireland before finishing in Blackpool, where the first Tests started in 2001, devised by the Classic Rally Association to emulate the RAC Rally from the late 1950s. This also marked the tenth and last Tests run by clerk of the course Fred Bent, and the competitors rated it as the hardest yet.

While 55 crews, from as far afield as the USA and Norway and the Netherlands, opted to start from Dublin, a further 11 joined in Anglesey for the Home Run. Two tests within 100 metres of the start line set the scene – and there was to be no let-up as the event went on, with Dermot Carnegie

and Iain Tullie taking the lead early on in their Alfa Romeo Giulietta. The grand finale of the three days in Ireland was a visit to the Mondello race circuit complex, interspersed with detours to nearby Punchestown.

From Anglesey, a cross-country route via north Wales and tests in Shropshire led to the event highlight: the Swynnerton Training Area in Staffordshire. Bent had designed an intricate route but it was important to keep the car on the road – those who didn't ending up looking like refugees from a wet Glastonbury Festival.

Crews then headed north to Wortley Hall, followed by more tests and regularity sections and on to the final competition of the day, a time control section on Oliver's

Mount, Scarborough. The final day's slog to Blackpool included a test around the Lightwater Valley theme park, before crews arrived in the shadow of Blackpool Tower, where they were greeted by a local jazz band.

Carnegie and Tullie had kept their lead until the end, second were Paul Wignall and Nigel Raeburne more than five minutes down, and in third were John Bateson and Mark l'Anson. Howard Warren of sponsor CES and Guy Woodcock were third on the road but, being in a post-'62 Porsche 911, were only eligible for a class award. First of the seven Dutch crews home was Jan Ebus and Jan Berkhof in a Porsche 356B.

Full results at www.ClassicRally.org.uk.

Clockwise from top left

Jan Ebus in 356; Howard Warren's 911; Charles Graves' XK150; and winner Carnegie's Alfa.

AC Owners Club sprint

6 November. Goodwood, UK

WE COULDN'T RESIST this grid picture from the ACOC's popular season-ender, with Toni Valenti's 8.3-litre AC 428, the Finburgh family Jaguar C-type shared by Nick and Christina, and Marc Riley's Creamer-JAP lined up ready to be sent off on timed laps at 20sec intervals. Cars are 'seeded' so the fastest is sent off



first, but if competitors catch each other during their flying lap the baulked party is allowed another run. Paul Conway scored FTD in his Morgan Plus 8 (99.35sec), while fastest AC was Andy Shepherd's Ace at 107.56sec.

Mountain Challenge

12-17 September. France

WILLIAM BALFOUR proves he has reached the check point – the summit of the Col de l'Iseran – in his Talbot AV105 with a photograph on the Classic Rally Association's first Classic Mountain Challenge. Each morning, organiser Keith Baud gave competitors a list of target cols to be attained en route from



Geneva to Monte Carlo, between which they plotted their own routes. Scores were awarded according to the sum heights of cols ascended: 28 Cordons Bleus, eight Cordons Blancs and two Cordons Verts for 38 starters.

1000 miles, 22 stages, 12in of snow – and -17°C

26-29 November. Roger Albert Clark Rally, UK



'The toughest UK rally for more than a decade, on deep snow and ice'



GORDON CRAWFORD

BELGIANS STEFAAN STOUF and Joris Erard scored an inspired victory on the seventh Roger Albert Clark rally, the toughest UK rally for more than a decade. On deep snow and ice, Stouf had to contend with strong challenges from Nick Elliott/Dave Price (Escort Mk2) and Rob Smith/Shawn O'Gorman (Vauxhall Chevette).

However, a puncture in the largely snow-free Ae Forest ruined Elliott's bid and Smith slid off in the snow of Newcastleton late on Sunday as he piled the pressure on Stouf. Running narrow Dunlop snow tyres on 15in wheels served Stouf well and he went into the final two stages on Monday morning with a lead of nearly two minutes.

However, coming back strongly from a nightmare in Dalby Forest on Friday evening were 2009 winners Gwyndaf Evans and John Millington (Ford Escort Mk2). After nine miles of deep snow in Dalby they had dropped over three minutes, putting them down in 25th place. However, the arrival of some more suitable Pirellis sent them into Saturday with more confidence.

With Sunday's stages in Scotland claiming Elliott and Smith, Stouf was elated to arrive back at Carlisle on Sunday night with a useful lead over Andrew Haddon and Mark Crisp in their famous ex-Ari Vatanen Escort Mk2, 'DKP 191T', that had suffered a temporary 'off'. But Evans, having been

very quick on the less snowy stages, was only 12sec down on Haddon, in third.

With the planned loop of four stages in Kielder Forest impossible, heroic rally manager Colin Heppenstall pulled another miracle out of the bag to arrange two five-mile stages in Kershope instead for Monday's final leg. Stouf was cautious while Evans attacked and swept into second as he closed to within 1min 18sec at the finish.

'This is the highest level you can reach in historic rallying and not many people can achieve a result like this,' said Stouf. 'If you can win the RAC in front of Gwyndaf Evans, that's pretty good.'

Top left and above

Phil and Mick Squires' Escort Mk2; winners Stouf and Erard hook a left-hander; David Greer/Brian Crawford's Opel Ascona 400. All in action on the Twiglees Forest stage near Lockerbie.

VSCC Winter Driving Tests

4 December. MoD Arncott, Oxfordshire, UK

THE VSCC's Winter Driving Tests moved from its usual venue of Westcott, near Aylesbury, to another MoD site, St George's Barracks in Arncott, the other side of Bicester. Oxfordshire got away relatively lightly in the big freeze, though recent snow kept a few entrants away, but a hardy bunch came to pit their wits against the 12 manoeuvring tests.

As ever these were devised by Malcolm Elder, with names such as Regiment Ramble, Corp Plug, Division

Diversion and Command Conundrum, with the incentive for members intending to race next year of bargain licence medicals on offer from the club's band of GP members.

Once the calculations were all done, the provisional results showed Edward Williams had forfeited the fewest points (527) in his Austin Seven Ulster in the Modified Sports Car class, with Tim Jones also taking a first-class award in the same category.

In Standard Sports Cars, Edmund Burgess was the standard-bearer in his Bugatti Brescia, and in Touring Cars, Clive Hamilton-Gould was cleanest in his 1930 Morris Minor Tourer on 599 points, with Toby and Charles Stapleton's shared 1929 Ford Model A taking a second and third class award on 663 and 765 points dropped respectively.



PAUL HARDIMAN



Left

Dan Stanton-Wright holds the door shut while opposite-locking dad's Chummy; and Paul Weston enjoys his Frazer Nash TT Rep.

1958-1979

Sprite and Midget

£4000-25,000

One's an Austin-Healey, the other an MG. Either is a great-handling choice for the track from under £5000

Words: Paul Hardiman Photography: Jakob Ebrey



'THE BEAUTY OF THE MIDGET,' says arch A-series exponent Rae Davis, 'is that there is so much you can do with them, whether it's a modsports-type car or a hillclimber.' A complete raceable car for the MGCC Midget Challenge – with three classes to choose from, or MGOC Class A for basically standard cars – could be had from £4000 up, though an FIA-spec car is nearer £25k – and you can spend more than that building one.

Engine

The technology here is the same as for Mini racers – though the rules are generally looser than for Appendix K cars, with MGCC rules allowing 1380cc, which '99% of 1275 blocks will go straight out to, although you must offset the bores,' says Rae Davis. 'Cooper S conrods, although they're heavy, don't break, and the cranks are pretty good too. You could build a decent engine using standard parts for £4000, although the sky is the limit.'

A proper big-valve unleaded exchange head is around £600; a complete roller-rocker 1380cc race engine £3180 outright from Peter May. Check your chosen series rules carefully, as some classes allow roller rockers and free carbs and manifolds.

Transmission

Straight-cut close-ratio gearsets with a new first gear are £560 from Rae Davis Racing; a full-house Quaife dog box is around £2500. 'Midgets tend to unload their inside rear wheels in corners, so if you're using an LSD it needs to be a plate type,' says Davis. Halfshafts are a known weakness but RDR offers a two-piece replacement for £140 a side, 'which stops the hub wandering about'.

Suspension

'The general rule is stiff on springs, anti-roll bar and dampers at the front, soft on the rear springs but firm on the damping,' says Davis. Front anti-roll bars are available in four diameters from 5/8in to 7/8in. The next job is to get some negative camber on the front; RDR makes a special top

trunnion that stops the outside wheel going into positive camber in corners, without needing excessive negative in a straight line 'when you're only using three-quarters of the tyre width and you can't stop them'. RDR uses longer-lasting Nylatron spring pan bushes, but the wishbone/spring pan needs local welding reinforcement. Spring rates are 371lb/in standard, while racers use anything up to 600lb/in, available from a wide range of sources including Moss Europe.

Dampers are an important factor, and RDR has developed an adjustable valve that screws straight in. Some race categories allow telescopic dampers, available from Frontline. Pre-1973 cars used beefier steering racks that have a faster ratio than later ones – but you need the corresponding mounting brackets and steering arms too, as they take bigger balljoints. Midget steering should be light, so if it's stiff, off-kilter mounts might be straining the rack housing slightly, needing careful shimmying to eliminate. Recon early-type racks cost around £80.

Wheels and tyres

Standard 13in maximum diameter and no point going too wide says Davis, as too much grip just pulls the centres out of the tin wheels (so they're prohibited in MGCC racing). A 5in Minilite type is best, with some classes allowing wider, and MGCC specifying KN alloys. The MGCC roadgoing class and MGOC Class A use 175/60x13 Yokohamas as a control tyre. Dunlop Racing tyres are mandatory for Appendix K (Heritage GTS, Lenham GT Challenge).

Brakes

You're usually stuck with the original tiny discs front, drums rear, when there's not much you can do apart from change to decent friction material. Both Frontline and Peter May produce a 9in or 10in disc conversion, which may be allowable in some series, and there is the option of Metro four-pot calipers too. 'Circuit cars don't want much back brake,' says Rae Davis.

'A raceable car for the MGCC Midget Challenge could be had from £4000, though an FIA-spec car is nearer £25k'

Body and interior

MGOC rules allow seam-welding. Bolt-in roll hoops cost from £250, though as Davis says: 'If you possibly can, get a cage fitted by a specialist. It not only looks so much better, I know which I'd rather be sitting in if I did roll it.'

Minimum weights vary from 510 to 705kg depending on age and class. Finally, don't forget the old racer's dodge of reversing the steering wheel to give more elbow room and a straighter-arms stance – there's not much room in either a Sprite or a Midget.

Specialists and parts suppliers

Rae Davis Racing
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MG Owners' Club racing
www.mgoc-championship.co.uk
Masters Historic Racing (Lenham GT Challenge)
www.themastersseries.com
www.lenhamspridgetregister.com/LenhamGTChallenge.htm
Equipe GTS
www.equipe-gts.com



MASTERCLASS

Mark Hales

THE THEORY BEHIND THE ART OF HEEL-AND-TOE

LAST MONTH we looked at the misnomer commonly known as heel-and-toe, which almost always involves rolling the foot to the right to tweak the accelerator while the rest of the foot presses the brake pedal. This is to synchronise the engine speed with the lower gear you've just selected. I also mentioned paddle- and sequential shifts, and the proposition that the technology might make heel-and-toe irrelevant. But I don't agree and the proof was there at a recent test session.

A putative racer was undergoing a day's instruction in a Ginetta Junior. The Junior is powered by a Ford Zetec with a synchromesh gearbox that has fairly wide gaps between the ratios. The kid had come straight from 100cc karting, didn't have a road car licence and, although he could shift the gears, wasn't familiar with heel-and-toe. The real revelation was that the on-board telemetry suggested the downshift was probably costing him nearly a second a lap. It sounds like an exaggeration until you work out that, at each of the seven corners where it was necessary, the penalty was a little over a tenth each time. In Ginetta Juniors a second is the difference between front row and mid-grid. If that young man graduates from there to a Ford Duratec single-seater, those don't have a sequential shift either, and he would still need to heel-and-toe.

While the Hewland in a National Formula Ford doesn't have synchromesh, it's true that a modern road car's is very effective – and in small to medium-sized modern cars, very unobtrusive. The synchros can equalise the gear speeds very quickly and allow the ratio to slot in swiftly and without effort, but the problem as far as the driver is concerned is that the clutch still has to be engaged. And because it will have to be slipped until the revs of engine and gearbox input shaft are equal, this is what takes the time. Bigger, more powerful cars – whose gears have to be stronger to stand the engine's torque – give synchromesh a much tougher task. Heel-and-toe is relevant to smooth progress in any of these, and minimises the braking effect on the rear wheels caused by the drag of the engine spinning up.

The faster you go in any one gear before shifting will effectively widen the gap to the next one. So the gap will be at its widest when you are using the engine's maximum revs – as you do on track. No sane person drives a road car to the red line in every gear for a whole journey, and you don't need to do that to see the practical consequences either, but you will need an empty piece of road. Drive the car at a steady 40mph in second and note the revs on the counter. Shift up to third and steady the car back at 40mph again. Note the revs again. Depends on the car obviously, but it will be a difference somewhere between 500 and 1000rpm. So, if you were going to shift down from third to second at 40mph, you would need to raise the revs by five, six hundred (or whatever the exact figure was) in order to synchronise the engine's revs with road speed.

Now get the car right up near its max in second, let's say 6000rpm, and shift up to third. The road speed is higher (obviously), but you'll see the difference in engine revs after the shift is

also greater – probably closer to 3000rpm. So, thinking about the reverse action, in order to shift down from third at that speed, the difference is the amount you have to add to the engine's revs to synchronise with second.

The faster you travel in the higher gear though, the more you have to rev the engine to meet the lower one, and since you can easily go fast enough in say, third, to reach a road speed that wouldn't be possible in second, a downshift at too high a speed is what is likely to over-rev the engine. The corollary to that is that delaying the downshift until you are travelling more slowly means you have to rev the engine less to meet the next gear, and therefore the engine braking will be less, and there will be less likelihood of compromising the grip of the rear tyres.

Part of successful heel-and-toe is the confidence to leave the shift until close to the corner where it can have least influence on the braking. It is also a fact that when sequential gearshifts started to be more common, a lot of engines were damaged because the driver felt tempted to shift down a long way from the corner without any apparent need to consider the consequences.

All you have to remember, then, is that the gap between the gears is exactly the same when you shift down as it is when shifting up and you need to start the downshift process at a speed which the car is able reach in the gear below – or preferably less. But if you're not able to

match the revs to suit, you may not have enough time between braking and turn-in to select the gear, then ease up the clutch sweetly and drag the engine up to meet the lower gear. If you are braking to the limit of the tyre's adhesion, the additional energy required to spin-up the engine might be enough to lock the wheels – exactly what you don't want when you are trying to turn-in smoothly.

The latter is an easy trap to create for yourself because, once you've begun to ease the clutch up gently, there's a terrible temptation to release it when the corner is on you sooner than you'd expected. That's when you get the yelp from the tyres and the looks from those experts lining the terraces. Having encountered this much, there is then the temptation on the next lap to begin downshifting even further away from the corner in an attempt to create more space to complete the job. This obviously makes the problem even worse and the most likely consequence of that is always too many revs hung on the engine, or locked wheels, or both.

By heel-and-toeing, a skilled driver not only reduces stress on the mechanicals, they do something much more important. They create space in the drive by making the gearshifting activity concurrent with the rest of the cornering process. It can happen when they want it to, rather than when the mechanicals have pulled it all into line, and they can have it finished and be ready to turn-in neatly, which is the most important detail.

Any road car with a manual gearbox is ideal for you to practise all this, although modern diesels have such close ratios that a lot of the work is already done for you. Still useful though, and it happens in your own time.

“The real revelation was that the on-board telemetry suggested the downshift was probably costing him nearly a second a lap”

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CARS FOR SALE

No king's ransom for Elvis Mercedes

Big Merc is a big bargain in Bonhams' first sale at Mercedes-Benz World, Brooklands



CHRISTMAS came early for a German collector who bagged a 1970 Mercedes-Benz 600 once owned by Elvis Presley. It was one of the stars at Bonhams' first end-of-year sale at Mercedes-Benz World, and sold for £80,700 before dealers and collectors realised what they'd missed.

With its estimate of £150,000-200,000, potential bidders ruled themselves out, judging it too expensive; others may have been waiting for the car to approach that estimate. Recent transactions of £77,000 (2009) and £54,000 (2010) make this seem very reasonable for a car American Elvis fans tried to prevent going abroad.

While the weather deterred tyre-kickers, business was brisk as bidders battled through snow to participate in the seasonal flurry of UK auctions.



TOP TEN PRICES NOVEMBER

\$682,000 (£433,950)
1969 Pontiac GTO Judge Ram Air IV Convertible RM Auctions, Ohio, USA 5-6 November

\$505,000 (£321,600)
1903 Sunbeam 10/12hp four-cylinder rear-entrance tonneau Bonhams, London, UK, 5 November

\$437,250 (£278,200)
1960 Chrysler 300F Convertible RM Auctions, Georgia, USA 15 November

\$418,000 (£265,950)
1969 Chevrolet Camaro ZL-1 Coupe RM Auctions, Georgia, USA 15 November

\$400,000 (£254,450)
1963 Chevrolet Corvette Convertible, ex-Bunkie Knudsen Mecum, Ohio, USA, 5-6 November

\$385,000 (£244,950)
1953 Cadillac Eldorado Supercharged Convertible RM Auctions, Georgia, USA 15 November

\$374,000 (£237,950)
1957 Chevrolet Corvette Factory Airbox Convertible RM Auctions, Georgia, USA, 15 November

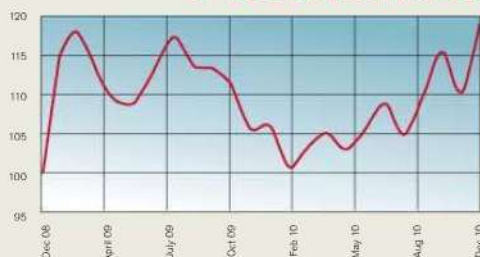
\$368,500 (£234,950)
1970 Shelby GT500 Convertible RM Auctions, Georgia, USA 15 November

\$341,000 (£216,950)
1957 Desoto Adventurer Convertible RM Auctions, Georgia, USA, 15 November

\$308,000 (£195,950)
1970 Pontiac GTO Judge Ram Air IV Convertible RM Auctions, Georgia, USA, 15 November

HAGI
F-INDEX

The HAGI Ferrari index



Left column represents baseline of 100 set at 31 December 2008.
HAGI F charts Ferrari classic prices.

THE HAGI F, monitoring the performance of rare collectable Ferraris, advanced 7.75% for November, to stand at a new high of 118.69. Considering the 4.47% loss for the previous month, growth for the year 2010 to date of 12.11% is impressive, particularly in the light of a double-digit decline in 2009 when stockmarket recovery coincided with speculative selling.

Throughout 2010, the upward trend has been underlined by periodic small retracements. November saw little auction activity in HAGI F constituents, but trading outside that arena was strong. Our observation is that collectors are positioning themselves for 2011, suggesting confidence within the community.

There is also growing interest from younger players in newer models such as the 288GTO and F40. There have also been strong prices among several mainstream collectable models from the 1960s and '70s where quality has been clearly evident. Meanwhile, some high-end models that have featured in high-profile transactions have traded more quietly at lower levels.

See www.historicautogroup.com for more.

Meet the experts

Octane's team of leading market analysts attend sales worldwide to bring you the definitive reports and trends

Keith Adams



Years of buying and rather less selling have left Keith with too many cars and a strong classic market knowledge – plus a hankering for an investment.

Paul Hardiman



Our man at the dealers and auction halls in the UK is in the driving seat when it comes to commenting on the very latest classic car price trends.

Dave Kinney



Auction analyst Dave publishes the USA's classic market bible, the *Cars That Matter* price guide, and is an expert on the US classic car auction scene.

Dave Selby



The man with his finger on the UK and Euro market pulse. A senior analyst for HAGI, he shares his 20 years' experience with Octane.



UK, EUROPE AND AUSTRALIA Market report

By Dave Selby

UK AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS



7 NOVEMBER, CHARTERHOUSE, SHEPTON MALLET, SOMERSET

If crimpene's your thing, this sale had a great selection of road-wear to complement your 1970s lifestyle, including an 11,000-mile 1974 Ford Escort that made £5750, and a restored 1971 Ford Transit (above) for £4600. And when did you last see a 1973 Viva HC 1300? This time-warp 25,000-miler could have been yours for £2070, a possible record.



17 NOVEMBER, BONHAMS, HARROGATE, YORKSHIRE

Our pick was the Ford Consul Capri 1500, one of the prettiest Fords of its era with great Dagenham-does-Detroit styling, but a rare Ford sales flop. The 1964 Goodwood Green example was the nicest we've seen and, at £9775, a lot of money for a Consul Capri, yet somehow it seemed cheap. You'd spend a long time looking for another as good.



1 DECEMBER, BRIGHTWELLS, LEOMINSTER, HEREFORDSHIRE

Two tiny charmers attracted plenty of attention, with £7700 paid for a one-owner, 65,000-mile Mini Countryman (above) and £4510 for an outstanding, 34,500-mile 1958 Austin A35 saloon. So £4950 for a decent Daimler 250 V8 seemed a bargain by comparison.

SO FORCEFUL IS the growing cachet of originality and the momentum of preservation classes in top concours gatherings that soon you're going to need something really derelict to stand a chance in any of the top velvet-lawn events. In other words, rust is fast becoming an appreciating asset, with a currency all its own.

It's the kind of knowledge I could have done with 20 years ago, because on that basis I've squandered a chain of top concours contenders. And if down-at-heel dereliction is your thing, an auction in Australia had just the delicacy for you. It wasn't quite in the same league as the fabled 'Bugatti in the Lake', but it was a Bugatti and it made waves down under when it sold for £68,000.

To describe the mortal remains of the 1926 Type 38 open tourer as a 'restoration project' was verging on hyperbole – it doesn't even have an engine – but that didn't stop seven telephone bidders battling it out with six commission bids on the book and five bidders in Bonhams' Sydney saleroom on 13 November. A restored Type 38 would never have generated so much interest.

In the end the prize was won for a jaw-dropping £68,000, seven times its estimated worth. Bonhams would only reveal, teasingly, that the buyer was a 'northern hemisphere telephone bidder', prompting speculation that the Bugatti was bought by American collector Peter Mullin who, in January 2010, paid £227,000 for the decayed remains of the 1925 Type 22 that had slumbered on a Swiss lakebed for 70 years. Besides his many other valuable cars, Mullin owns the world's largest private Bugatti collection, and recently opened it to the public.

As a touring model the Type 38 is less prized than the celebrated racing versions. However, the straight-eight configuration – in this case 1991cc – adds cachet, providing a link to the immortal Type 35 grand prix cars.

The only problem is that this Type 38 is engineless, its original unit having been sold off and a Chevy V8 installed in its place; that too is long gone but I bet it would have made for an interesting ride.



Left
Scruffy Triumph Dolomite roadster at Brightwells was very appealing and made a deserved £34,650.

Originally bodied as an open tourer by Compton of Middlesex, chassis 38195 was the earliest of a handful of Type 38s that found their way to Australia via the London agent. By the 1960s it had been dismantled and parted from its engine, and that's how it arrived at auction, a collection of loosely assembled parts, yet still an entity.

It'll be interesting to see what its fate is. Type 38s with conventional touring bodies are not hugely valuable in Bugatti terms, at £150,000-200,000, say; however, rebuilding into something more rakish could help augment its value and further offset the costs.

Over many decades all manner of sporting kit has made its way to Australia from the Mother Land, and the Bonhams auction also featured a 1949 Jaguar XK120 roadster, the 17th of the 240 largely handbuilt early XK120s with alloy bodies over ash frames. These early cars are prized and priced separately from later 'production' XK120s.

With early racing history and now restored, preserving such period mods as a C-type cylinder head, this important XK120 sold for £154,000. That's around twice as much as good production XK120s have been making at auction; even so, at that money it still seems something of a bargain.

The Triumph Dolomite is quite possibly the most elegant Triumph

ever made, and certainly among the most valuable. No, I'm not talking about that 1970s thing, but the late 1930s model that was a final flourish as the company careered towards receivership.

If it had all ended there, the Dolomite, with its Art Deco adornment and flamboyant waterfall grille – sometimes described as a fencer's mask – would have been a fine way to go, for the glamorous roadster, with its charming dicky seat (that's a rumble-seat in American), gathered concours laurels all over Europe.

The consensus is that around 200 Dolomite Roadsters had been made when Triumph called in the receivers in the summer of 1939. These days sightings are exceptionally rare and the 1939 Dolomite roadster (above) that came up in Herefordshire at Brightwells on 1 December is reckoned to be just one of 12 surviving original-bodied cars. Mechanically overhauled, yet with the body and chassis left as was, this 1767cc charmer made £34,650.

This rarity served to prove what had been lost when Triumph was revived after the war under the Standard banner. From 1946, the company produced the 1800 Roadster (you know, the one John Nettles trundled around Jersey in) – possibly the last production car in the world with a dicky seat.

DECEMBER'S UK SALES



6 DECEMBER, BONHAMS, BROOKLANDS, UK

Bonhams sold several cars for the right numbers on its first visit to Mercedes-Benz World at Brooklands. A 1955 300SL Gullwing (above) in near-perfect order, having covered only 5000 miles since restoration, was given pride of place in the atrium of M-B's high-tech new British HQ and was appropriately the high sale, fetching £441,500 including premium. A 1913 Rolls-Royce 40/50hp Silver Ghost with imposing limousine coachwork by Barker brought the right money at £419,500, as did the 1964 Maserati 3500GTi, formerly the property of late Maserati guru Bill McGrath, at £78,500.



4 DECEMBER, HISTORICS, BROOKLANDS, UK

Two days before, Historics held its third auction just over the River Wey at the Brooklands Museum. Top sale was a 1958 Mercedes-Benz 190SL (above) that in its absence – due to snow – sold for £68,884, half as much again as expected. Two E-type 3.8 coupés – 1963 and 1964 – fetched £26,820 and £58,000 respectively; a 1938 MG TA and a 1933 MG J2 reached £24,305 and £25,702; and Historics made a strong £16,762 for a 1966 Austin Mini Moke. Twenty-seven cars were sold from 59 offered (46%), with negotiations continuing on eight lots in the week after the sale as *Octane* went to press.



6 DECEMBER, BARONS, ESHER, SURREY, UK

Adding further spice to UK's December auctions was Barons' final sale of the year. Weather was a factor, but only one car was withdrawn. Biggest seller was the 1959 Aston Martin DB MkIII drophead coupé – in stunning condition – which topped out at a strong £175,459. Proof that freezing weather can't arrest the march in Aston values.

USA Market report

By Dave Kinney



YEAR'S END IS THE normal time to talk of the milestones and accomplishments of the past 365 days, to mark the highs and lows, and to finish with at least a nod to the immediate future. I won't be doing that this time. Instead, it's time to review three things that did not happen.

First off, the impending doom in the market for collector vehicles – the scenario in which everything not deemed 'useful' to the everyday budget would be jettisoned – did not materialise. And happily, no signs currently point in that direction.

It's important to note that, as recently as 12 months ago, this was a discussion point among some of my colleagues, and not all of them are members of the Flat Earth society. The predicted drop in classic Ferrari prices? Er, nope. The collectable Maserati collapse? I didn't see that in 2010, and doubt you did. In fact, investors not only in the US but seemingly all around the world continue to buy quality, snapping up superb examples for increasing prices.

The second thing that did not happen is the disappearance of fossil fuels. Although we have arguably reached a point where it's all downhill from here, and production will continue to be more expensive for smaller returns, dead dinosaurs continue to provide us with enough go-juice to keep petrol-fired vehicles on the road.

This does not mean, however, that all collector vehicle owners should not become proponents of more public transport and smaller, more fuel-efficient cars. We should become enthusiastic about non-mandated hybrids, electrics and pedal-powered vehicles as they will leave more fuel, as well as more space, for the occasional jaunt in a D-type, 275GTB/4 or Mazda RX-7. Selfish and greedy? You bet! The way the world works? That too. Even at current prices, gasoline in North America remains ridiculously cheap when compared with most developed countries.

The third thing that did not happen in the collector car world was the death of the land-based automobile

auction. Yes, the internet has changed the way we do business, and the way we order parts for cars. It seems many of those one-of-a-kind bits were not quite as hard to find as the sellers wished they were, and that's a good thing.

In fact, almost every facet of commerce has changed. Buying a car on eBay or another website can be quick, convenient and low on fees. Cars, as a rule, look great on a small screen with a picturesque background. Most of us realise that what turns up in the drive might be a bit different from what we bid on, a lesson that can be hard – or at least expensive – to learn. Terrestrial auctions offer more of a chance to see, touch, feel, smell, start-up and possibly drive the car we wish to acquire. A community of online buyers is quite a bit different from the group of punters that show up for a land auction. I've dealt with both, and I'll take the real over the virtual any day.

In short, if you bet against Ferraris, fuel supplies and auction houses in 2010, you lost.

US HIGHLIGHTS RM'S ROBSON COLLECTION

13 NOVEMBER, RM AUCTIONS, GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA, USA



1957 DE SOTO ADVENTURER

With lesser-spotted US '50s convertibles in demand at the moment, it's no surprise to see this De Soto doing so well. Looking good in gold with a white interior, it has performance to match the style, with 345bhp from its 345ci Hemi.

RM said this was the finest example it had ever offered for sale, which no-one disputes: it was as close to perfect as could be reasonably expected, and sold at the high end of its \$250,000-350,000 estimate, coming in at \$341,000 when fees were added. High-style '50s convertibles continue to bring big money; the major exceptions are for cars with high build numbers, but this was one of only 300 built in 1957.



1978 PONTIAC TRANS AM GOLD

It's time to get beyond the *Smokey and the Bandit* connection and recognise this American muscle car as something more than a toupée'd star of yesterday. It is, in fact, a reasonably sized and reasonably quick automobile that more than lives up to its boy-racer appearance.

This one, in Anniversary Solar Gold with gold cloth interior and 6.6-litre V8, reads only 15,000 miles on the odometer. Forget that the engine only produces 220 horses; this was an era when manufacturers intentionally sandbagged the numbers to keep them low. It sold for \$49,500; a decade ago you would have felt lucky to reach a tenth of that. Naughty, but in a nice way.



1953 PACKARD CARIBBEAN

It seems that prices for Caribbean convertibles are continuing on a downward spiral. This car brought just \$77,000 against a not unreasonable low estimate of \$125,000. It's tough to make the call whether these cars have fallen out of favour, or if the rising prices of the past few years have brought more to market than can be absorbed.

Still, it's just the thing if you are looking to swan about as a foppish '50s dandy, as this car represents the polar opposite of late-'40s austerity. In Polaris Blue with aqua and white leather, with a 180bhp 327ci straight-eight and column shift auto, it's aged nicely. At \$5210 new, these were a king's ransom in their day.

ARTCURIAL AND BONHAMS GO HEAD-TO-HEAD Rétromobile's all-star sales

Artcurial: 4 February. Paris, France
Bonhams: 5 February. Paris, France



THE NEWLY INVIGORATED

Artcurial is going head-to-head with Bonhams in Paris during the extended Rétromobile weekend. The move looks set to be one of the most intriguing auction showdowns of 2011, as Artcurial's team includes a few former Bonhams staff. But the arrival of a second sale at the event means that, ultimately, it will be car buyers who end up winning.

For Bonhams' first sale at the Grand Palais – where it will be celebrating the 110th

anniversary of the first motor show – it has come up with the ex-Lord Raglan Bugatti Type 51 (above). *Octane* tested the car in the last issue and can confirm that, following its '80s restoration, it's very healthy indeed. Given that Paris is home territory for the Bugatti, its €1,300,000 upper estimate looks very realistic.

Down the road at the Rétromobile show itself, Artcurial appears to have assembled an enviable lot list. Heading the auction is

a remarkable collection of limousines (right) from the Heads of State Limousine Museum: a highlight is the ex-General de Gaulle Presidential Simca, with coachwork by Henri Chapron, estimated at €150,000-200,000. Amazingly, all the limousines are being sold without reserve.

Top and right
Bonhams' €1.3m Bugatti Type 51; Artcurial's limousine collection includes cars run by Charles de Gaulle and JF Kennedy.



ONE TO WATCH



AC Cobra 289

21-22 January. Gooding & Company, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

THIS IS A CAR that defines the differing sensibilities of American and European collectors. We can't even agree on what it's called, or its country of origin. To the English, it's an AC Cobra. To the Americans, it's a Shelby Cobra.

Yet the 1964 Cobra 289 that's coming up at Gooding has more to say about our cultural divide. It's described as a 'barn find', which in English generally refers to a rusty mass of infectious-looking tangled metal. This car is anything but that.

Although stored for 33 years, it is well-preserved and must be one of the last unrestored 289s on the planet. Neither has it been hiding its light under a bushel, for in the summer of 2010 it featured in the post-war preservation class at Pebble Beach.

As for notions of value, authenticity and originality are virtues that are hard to quantify. Over the last year 289s have been selling at auction from £250,000 to £650,000 for a Le Mans car. Gooding's estimate for this 'barn find' is £335,000-400,000 (\$525,000-625,000).

Its Pebble Beach appearance can be construed as either pro or con. Certainly, as it's already had its 'coming out', that pleasure is denied the new owner; on the other hand its appearance at Pebble Beach – which some cynics dub a 'quiet auction' – will have brought it to wider notice. What's more, now that it's been showcased in its authentic state, that may increase the likelihood of it being restored.

Dave Selby

LOOK OUT FOR...



Bugatti Type 57C

Once owned by French circus impresario Jérôme Médrano, this supercharged 1937 Type 57C will be ushered into the ring at Artcurial's Rétromobile sale with fanfare and drum-roll. If it sells for its estimated £590,000 (£700,000), whether it will receive a round of applause from trained seals remains to be seen.

Barons

Auction Calendar 2011



Confirmed dates for our 2011 programme

7 & 8 FEBRUARY 2011

Classic, Historic and Thoroughbred Motor Cars

14 & 15 MARCH 2011

Classic, Historic and Thoroughbred Motor Cars

18 & 19 APRIL 2011

Jaguar Heritage + Classic and Collectors Motor Cars

14 & 15 MAY 2011

Meet the team at Beaulieu Spring Motor Mart and Autojumble

6 & 7 JUNE 2011

Classic, Historic and Thoroughbred Motor Cars

25 & 26 JULY 2011

Classic, Historic and Thoroughbred Motor Cars

10 & 11 SEPTEMBER 2011

Meet the team at Beaulieu International Autojumble

19 & 20 SEPTEMBER 2011

Annual British Heritage + Classic and Collectors

31 OCTOBER & 1 NOVEMBER 2011

Classic, Historic and Thoroughbred Motor Cars

12 & 13 DECEMBER 2011

Annual Yuletide Classic - Historic, Collectors and Sports Cars

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AUTOSPORT SEASON OPENER

Coys sets a sporting pace in Birmingham

15 January. Coys, NEC, Birmingham, UK



'Group B rally cars are very much in fashion, and Coys is pitching this RS200 Evo at £120-140K'

THE AUTOSPORT Show, held in Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre, is one of those motor sport events where all the right enthusiastic buyers – and sellers – are out in force.

Last year's Autosport sale scored well, making more than £800,000, with 28 of the 42 cars offered finding new owners. For 2011, the lot list is again packed with a prize selection of competition and road cars.

Those that stand out from the early consignments include the ex-Andrew Hedges Sebring Sprite, one of only six examples built by John Sprinzel, with alloy coupé bodywork by Williams and Pritchard.

One definitely set to create a stir is the 1969 Le Mans Piper GTR, which appeared at the 2005 Goodwood Festival of Speed and the following year's Le Mans Classic. Other notable entries include a 1959 Ford

Zodiac Mk2 historic rally car, a 1963 Elva Courier and a Ford RS200 Evo (pictured above), first registered in 1990. The car on offer was originally built for King Hussein of Jordan, and made a brief appearance on BBC's *Top Gear*.

Group B rally cars are very much in fashion at the moment, and Coys is pitching this rather special RS200 at £120,000-140,000. We await the Autosport sale with interest.



B-J'S BONUSES

15 January. Barrett-Jackson, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

ONCE AGAIN, it's down to Barrett-Jackson to organise an off-the-scale huge classic car auction for the popular Scottsdale week. Choosing a star car from a lot list that spreads into the hundreds is always going to be difficult – especially given the sheer number of high-quality Corvettes. But we couldn't allow the passing of a 1965 Amphicar without a word or two. The car on offer is freshly restored to what Barrett-Jackson describes as 'beautiful standard', and was in the collection of musician Alan Jackson. Amphicars are rare, especially ones that work on land *and* water, and this one's offered without reserve.



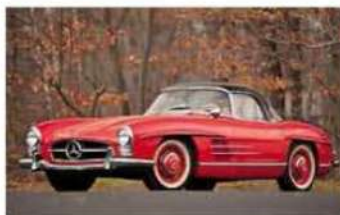
ROUTE 166

21-22 January. RM Auctions, Phoenix, Arizona, USA

ELEVEN TOP FERRARIS have been consigned to the RM Auctions sale at Scottsdale. Top of the bill is this 1949 Ferrari 166MM Touring Barchetta, described by RM's chairman and founder Rob Myers as 'one of the most meticulously documented Ferraris we have ever had the pleasure of offering'.

Chassis number 0024 M was originally commissioned for the 1949 Paris motor show. It raced in the 1951 Mille Miglia in the hands of Aprile Palmer, who bought the car shortly afterwards.

The sale also sees the return of the 'British are back' evening, with some fine UK classics on offer.



TIME CAPSULE

21-22 January. Gooding and Co, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

GOODING AND COMPANY calls cars like this 'time capsule' collector vehicles, and it's easy to see where their enthusiasm comes from. As the market continues to pay a premium for the best low-mileage cars, more examples find their way onto the auction circuit. This 1962 Mercedes-Benz 300SL with only 7367 miles on the clock is described as the 'lowest-mileage Roadster in existence' by David Gooding. It has been in safe storage for the past 50 years, and comes with all the paraphernalia you'd associate with a 'new' car, including the original bill of sale. Normal values don't apply here: estimate is \$850,000.



AUCTION CALENDAR

15 JANUARY

COYS, NEC, Birmingham, UK
+44 (0)20 8614 7888
www.coys.co.uk

17-23 JANUARY

BARRETT-JACKSON, Scottsdale, USA
+1 480 663 6255
www.barrett-jackson.com

20-21 JANUARY

RM AUCTIONS, Phoenix, USA
+1 519 352 4575
www.rmauctions.com

20-26 JANUARY

MECUM, Kissimmee, USA
+1 815 568 8888
www.mecum.com

21-22 JANUARY

GOODING & COMPANY, Scottsdale, USA
+1 310 899 1960
www.goodingco.com

4 FEBRUARY

ARTCURIAL, Paris, France
+33 142 99 20 56
www.artcurial.com

5 FEBRUARY

BONHAMS, Paris, France
+44 (0)20 7447 7447
www.bonhams.com/cars

7-8 FEBRUARY

BARONS, Esher, Surrey, UK
+44 (0)8454 306060
www.barons-auctions.com

26 FEBRUARY

H&H, Stoneleigh, UK
+44 (0)8458 334455
www.handh.co.uk

2 MARCH

BRIGHTWELLS, Leominster, UK
+44 (0)1568 611166
www.brightwells.com

4-6 MARCH

RM AUCTIONS, Fort Lauderdale, USA
+1 519 352 4575
www.rmauctions.com

5 MARCH

BONHAMS, Oxford, UK
+44 (0)20 7447 7447
www.bonhams.com/cars

5 MARCH

HISTORICS AT BROOKLANDS, Weybridge, Surrey, UK
+44 (0)800 988 3838
www.historics.co.uk

8 MARCH

COYS, London, UK
+44 (0)20 8614 7888
www.coys.co.uk

11 MARCH

GOODING & COMPANY, Amelia Island, USA
+1 310 899 1960
www.goodingco.com

12 MARCH

RM AUCTIONS, Amelia Island, USA
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1963 Facel-Vega Facel II



1938 Bentley 4 1/4-Litre



1934 Packard Twelve



1929 Cadillac



1910 Buick



1898 Lacroix & DeLaville



1960 Cadillac Eldorado



1912 Gobron-Brillie



1927 Lancia Lambda



1929 Rolls Royce PII



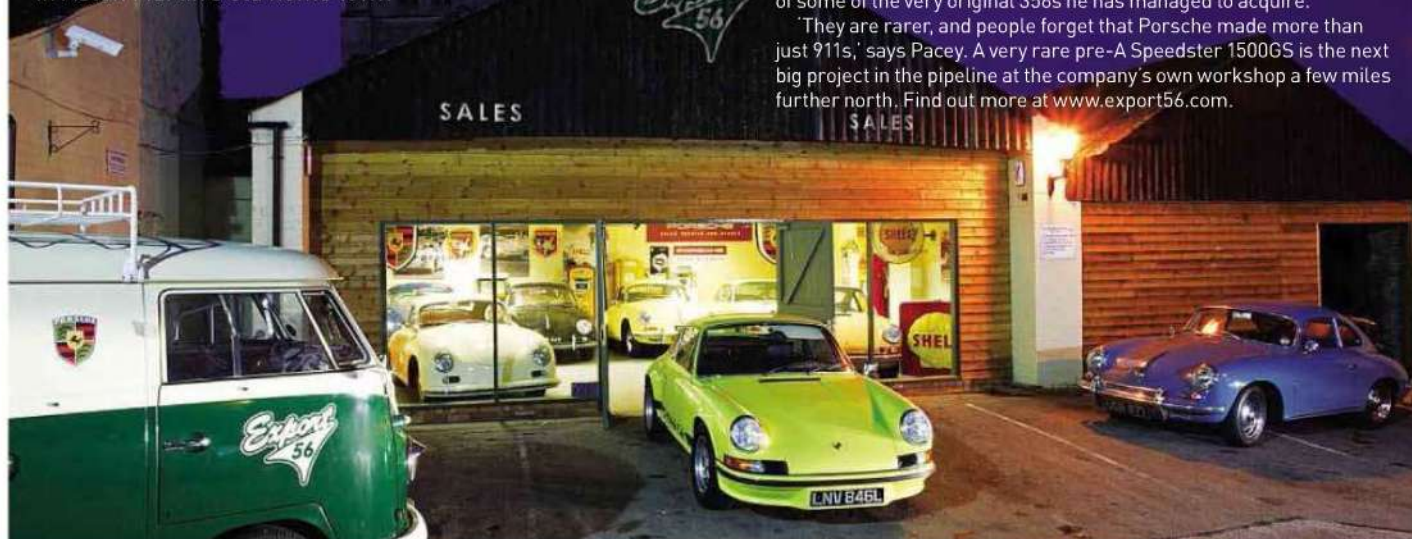
1920 Kissel Gold Bug

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EXPORT 56

New Porsche showroom opens in Aston Martin's old home town



EXPORT 56 has opened its new showroom in the centre of Newport Pagnell, which gives some of the 30-plus cars in stock extra visibility. Boss Mick Pacey recently completed the restoration of the left-hand-drive RS 2.7 in the centre, for sale at £200,000-plus, but is more proud of some of the very original 356s he has managed to acquire.

'They are rarer, and people forget that Porsche made more than just 911s,' says Pacey. A very rare pre-A Speedster 1500GS is the next big project in the pipeline at the company's own workshop a few miles further north. Find out more at www.export56.com.



PREMIUM ALLARD

J2X on sale in the UK

SUFFOLK'S Premium Classic Cars has been appointed European distributor of the Allard J2X MkII – a Canadian 'continuation' granted Allard chassis numbers. 83 were built between 1951 and '54, now worth £350k. Allard Motor Works of Montreal has revived the looks with a Chevy smallblock in place of Cadillac power. Price? £95,000. See www.premiumclassiccars.com.



EWING RALLIES

Going it alone worldwide

JAMES EWING has set up as an international motor broker, having split from business partner Marcus Ross. He says: 'I will be brokering the best deals for clients, buying and selling collectors' cars, and can help with sourcing vehicles.' The keen rally navigator specialises in competition cars; stock includes a race Mustang and a rally Reliant Sabre. See www.jamesewing.co.uk.



ECLECTIC EXPANDS

New hands on deck

ECLECTIC CARS has expanded, with new staff and a photo studio plus workshops at Weston-on-the-Green, Oxfordshire. Sid Smith joins, and Richard Percival shares buying with Stuart Kilvington, while the fully commissioned studio keeps up its reputation for clear photography (it's for hire too). Oh, and they still sell cars. Visit www.eclecticcars.co.uk for more information.



HENDON'S JEWEL

Top money asked for Dino

ANTHONY POSNER is rightly proud of the latest offering at his north London dealership. This Dino 246GT is exceptionally rare, being both white and right-hand-drive. He says: 'It's one of the best, in unmolested factory condition.' With a single owner on the logbook, its £149,000 asking price indicates how top Dino values have moved on. More at www.hendonwaymotors.com.



DEALER TALK

STU CARPENTER

Ferraris, Mercs... and Defenders. Stu Carpenter of Copley Motorcars, Boston, USA, on selling European cars into the US market

You've been in this business for 15 years and you're still here. What's the secret?

I work by the credo 'I don't have anything people *need*', so I think folks appreciate that I am really not working to sell to them. I offer a top example, service it before sale, price it correctly and be a good guy. Customers can spend their hobby funds on a hundred different things, but they decided to come to me.

How many cars are you selling?

About 100 Land Rover Defenders and another 100 or so of various classics.

What's popular right now?

Much as I'd like to have three or four PF spiders, a dozen or so 275GTBs and 15 W111/112 Mercedes cabriolets, my piggybank wouldn't stand it and availability worldwide is thin for top examples. For any one of the iconic marques there simply isn't enough availability to satisfy demand.

Any big prices recently?

Steadily upwards, but no world records. What surprises me a bit is the 25% jump 300SL prices have taken in just 12 months. And you wouldn't believe \$200,000 for

a Defender, but that's what it takes for us to restore one properly.

And where did the Land Rovers come in?

The very first car I bought as Copley Motorcars was a bright yellow 1994 Defender 90 with 1800 miles on it. I sold it immediately, bought another and then bought two and so on and so on, and accidentally fell into a niche. I have the last Defender imported into the States in 1997 coming back to me – for the sixth time!

www.copleymotorcars.com

FORECOURT STAR

£65,000



THIS RECENTLY BUILT Jaguar C-type copy isn't a Proteus replica, but it's all-aluminium, looks spot-on and comes at about the same money. It's got a 4.2-litre engine on correct-looking sandcast SU carburetors, and an independent rear suspension set-up that, while not period-correct, gives a better ride. For details, see www.runnymedemotorcompany.com.

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1956 Bentley S1 Continental Fastback
Automatic, Brewster Green, matching leather



1955 Bentley R Type Continental Fastback (manual)
Manual with rally upgrades, midnight blue with tan

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CLASSIC CHOICES

Off-roaders

The WW2 Willys Jeep may have been the original, but its imitators are now classics too

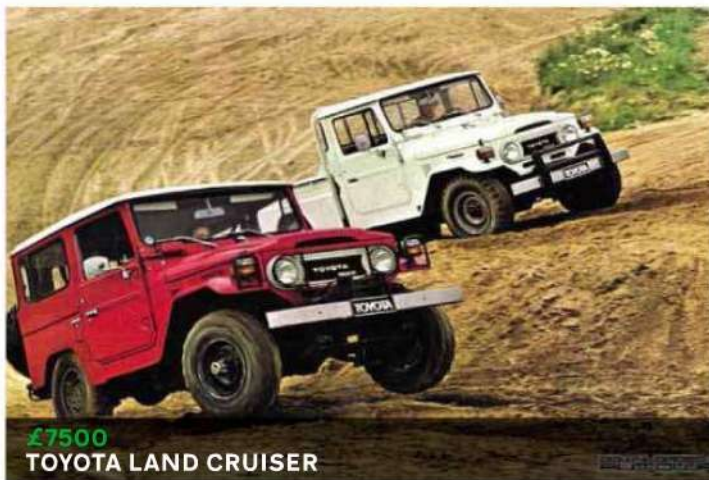
WHILE THE ORIGINAL Land-Rover of 1948 might not have been the first go-anywhere vehicle, it certainly captured the imagination of farmers, explorers and pioneering types. Subsequent off-roaders have gone on to become successes in their own right – most notably Toyota's Land Cruiser, which built on the Solihull car's off-road ability but added Japanese reliability. Then came the luxury SUVs, combining off-road performance with on-road comfort and handling. But it's the singularity of purpose of the earlier cars that makes them great classics today.



£10,000

LAND-ROVER SERIES 1

The earliest Land-Rovers have a simplicity that transcends fashion, and there's an entire industry of specialist support. Our guide price of £10,000 would buy you the very best 1950s Series 1, but maybe not a top-end 1948-49 example, the so-called 'lights behind grille' model (above). Later S1s – 1953-58 – have longer wheelbases, and so make better all-round load-luggers.



£7500

TOYOTA LAND CRUISER

Although the Land Cruiser failed to find sales success in the UK and Europe until the 1980s and beyond, it's the 40-Series (1960-84) cars that are the most desirable, attracting a cult following – probably on the coat tails of the J-Tin (Japanese classic car) movement. Many have been imported into the UK from dry climates, but rust is still a major killer. Very cool, reliable, and not yet expensive.



£15,000

JEEP WAGONEER

Many Brits assume that the Range Rover was the first upmarket SUV, but the Jeep Wagoneer beat Solihull's finest by seven years. Although imported into the UK in tiny volumes, a good number have subsequently found their way in. The Wagoneer is easy to drive, stylish in a Wurlitzer way, and has excellent parts back-up – but make sure a fit body isn't hiding an abused chassis.



£50,000

LAMBORGHINI LM002

Conceived with the military market in mind, the LM002 takes off-roading to new heights. And depths: on soft ground its three-tonne kerbweight is a hindrance. But it's unstoppable on the road, thanks to V12 power, and prodigiously expensive to fill-up, thanks to a 290-litre fuel tank. Considering its V12 engine, and that only 301 were built, it's a bit of a bargain.



VIEW FROM... FRANCE

I'M ALWAYS astonished when I see people asking €5000 for a humble Simca 1000 Rallye. But this reflects two things: first, that the market is buoyant; and second, that there's a strong trend towards 1970s and '80s 'youngtimers'. Cars such as the Peugeot 205GTI and Renault 5GT Turbo are seeing their values rise. And with a perfect Citroën DS now breaking the €30,000 barrier, people are becoming interested in the GS and CX.

At the top end, classic cars are considered as pieces of art and safe investments which, in these troubled times, help them reach new highs. And supercars from the '70s and '80s are actively being sought by those who can now afford them.

In a few years, some of these cars will be eligible for such races as Le Mans Classic, so you can expect to see the Ferrari F40 LM's values dash up. On the other hand, saloons and coupés from the late '30s and '40s, even a Delahaye 135, have lost appeal (and value), because they're too demanding to drive.

Stéphane Schlesinger is editor of the French edition of *evo* magazine, and is a keen classic car enthusiast.

HOT LITTLE NUMBER

Datsun 240Z

The game-changing sports car is very much on the up

THE DATSUN 240Z exists so we can beat ourselves up. It's a metaphor for the complacency of Western industry. Yet in our masochistic fervour the case for the 240Z is often overstated. Let's put matters straight: it was not the world's best-selling sports car. From 1969 to 1973 the Corvette more or less matched its numbers and the Mustang massively trounced it.

The 240Z was the sports car the West *should* have made. With 125mph, 151bhp, independent suspension, front discs, five-speed 'box and keen pricing, what was

there not to like? Result: 90% went to the US. Plus a more telling stat: 156,000 240Zs were sold – twice as many as the E-type in half the time.

Where are they now? Fewer than 2000 came to the UK; they rusted; and motor sport honchos have murdered more. That's history, and the recent rise in values has made 240Zs worth more than 'cooking' 911s. And anyone who's driven a good one reckons that's as it should be.

While there are E-type Jags at every classic car auction, 240Zs are few and far between, but well worth looking out for.

Dave Selby



'156,000 were sold – twice as many as the E-type in half the time'

Above
It wasn't just the ladies that loved the Datsun 240Z.

PRICE POINTS

It's time to reappraise your prejudices

• **1990s** Throughout the decade, while commentators quibble over the 240Z's 'borderline/future' classic status, few good cars turn up at auction; yet the good ones defy price-guide prejudice. In 1996 a fine 240Z which made £7000 at auction was quite exceptional; ordinary examples were making half that, or less.

• **2000-2005** 240Z remains a 'best-kept secret' and great value buy with little price movement; £5000 still buys plenty Datsun.

• **Today** The secret's out. In 2007 an original 240Z made £9775. In 2010 a restored example made £13,225. That's E-type 2+2 money, and the highest UK auction price yet for a 240Z road car.

SYMBOLIC

MOTOR CAR COMPANY



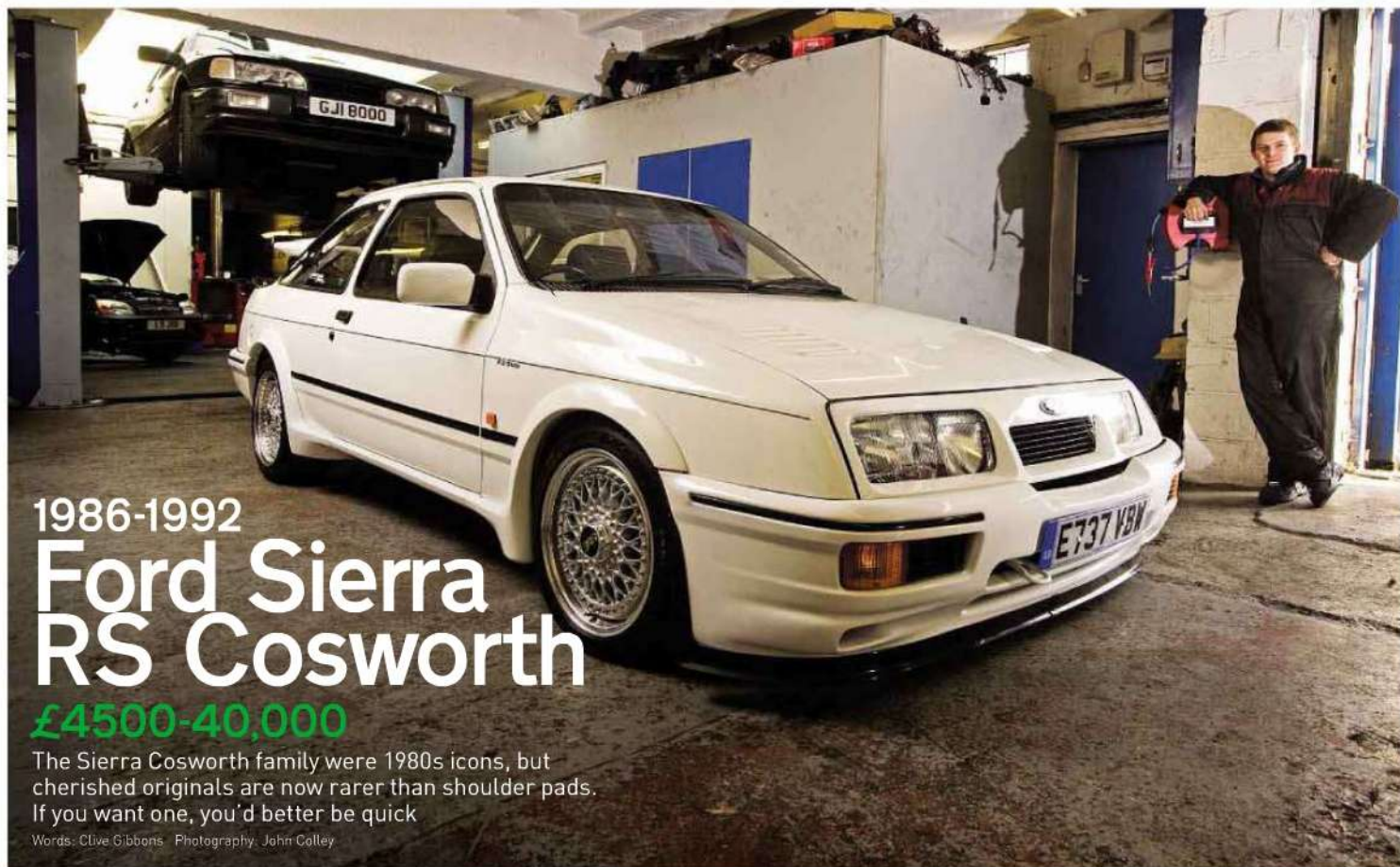
- 1954 Aston Martin DB MK III Convertible
Nice older restoration. Great for rallyes (s/n: LML740)
- 1966 Batmobile
One of only four original George Barris Batmobiles built. (s/n: 3)
- 1952 Ferrari 212 Inter Vignale Cabriolet
Matching numbers. Classiche certified and flawless. (s/n:0255/EU)
- 1960 Ferrari 250GT PF Coupe
Matching numbers, clean history from new. (s/n: 1989/GT)
- 1967 Ferrari 330 GTC
Recent engine rebuild with excellent mechanics. (s/n: 9399)
- 1967 Ferrari 275 GTB/4
Completely restored, matching numbers example. (s/n: 10045)
- 1984 Ferrari 512BBi
California legal with major service recently completed. (s/n: 49729)
- 1954 H.R.G. Twin Cam Sports Racer
Highly original. Fully sorted and ready to race.(s/n: 15APB)
- 1971 Mercedes-Benz 280SE 3.5 Cabriolet
Nice older restoration. White/blue, A/C, Floor shift. b(s/n: 03728)
- 1987 Nissan 300ZX IMSA Racecar
Ex Paul Newman. Very successful racing history.
- 1969 Porsche 911L FIA Race car
Amazing racing history. Fully restored. (s/n: 0429)
- 1963 Shelby Cobra 289
Highly original, rare black/black 289. (s/n: CSX 2101)



1956 H.R.G. Twin-Cam Sports Racer

(Chassis No. IN 502 TL)

This was H.R.G.'s last serious racing effort and an incredibly advanced design unlike anything seen before. Originally planned for a multi-teamed effort at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Four were envisioned but after one prototype just two additional examples were completed. This is the only proper and completely original survivor left. Please call for price.



1986-1992 Ford Sierra RS Cosworth

£4500-40,000

The Sierra Cosworth family were 1980s icons, but cherished originals are now rarer than shoulder pads. If you want one, you'd better be quick

Words: Clive Gibbons Photography: John Colley

Introduction

Never mind the Audi quattro; for anyone born east of Bow Bells it's the Sierra 'Cossie' that defined the 1980s, often finished in a white as brilliant as the socks of the youths who lusted after them. Now those youths have grown up, prices have matured alongside them and the best ones are worth as much as – or more than – contemporary Ferraris.

The Sierra RS Cosworth resulted from a chance conversation about Ford's poor results in touring car racing. In 1983, motor sport boss Stuart Turner suggested mating an experimental Cosworth 16-valve engine with a turbocharger and inserting it in a three-door Sierra shell. The roadgoing Sierra RS Cosworth debuted in 1985.

Wind tunnel tests resulted in the car's signature whale-tail spoiler, which made the car stable at racing speeds, although laggy power delivery and a simple chassis gave tail-happy cornering.

The 'Cossie' evolved further into the RS500, built to homologate a bigger turbo and keep the racing version ahead of rivals; and the subsequent, more subtle-looking four-door Sapphire that, in its final iteration, gained four-wheel drive.

Finding an unmolested car is a serious challenge and, because of some dubious rustproofing, finding one in sound condition is harder still. But it's worth it, especially for the three-door models, which seem set to follow the RS500's sharp climb in values.

Market view

Primitive security measures and a rampant market in secondhand spares meant a great many were stolen and broken up, which still occasionally happens. This thinning of the flock, combined with the rear-wheel-drive Sapphire's drop in value through the 1990s that left many thrashed or crashed, has meant the three-doors and RWD Sapphires are now scarce.

'I think the DVLA records show about 400-500 three-doors on the road in the UK,' says Karl Norris (above) of Cosworth specialist Norris Motorsport, 'and of those only a few dozen will be in nice condition. It's dangerously easy to buy a pig.'



Prices range from £7000 to £15,000 (more for the very best), with RWD Sapphires seen as a cheaper substitute at £5000-£12,000. The four-wheel-drive version rarely gets above £7000, starting at £4500 for one you'd consider. RS500s have shot up and will energise the market for the other three-doors: most are between £20,000 and £40,000.

Model history

The great divide is between three-door Cosworths and the later Sapphire variants, which are much more numerous. Despite short production runs, these cars were developed constantly, and later models are less trouble to look after and resist rust better.

1986 Sierra RS Cosworth three-door production begins. Ultimately 5542 cars are built, of which 2616 are right-hand drive.

1987 RS500 is built from completed RS Cosworths by Aston Martin Tickford. Its Garrett T04 turbo is homologated to allow 575bhp in racing form but detuned to 224bhp for road use. 500 are produced.

1988 Sapphire RS Cosworth offers a direct challenge to BMW's successful M3.

1989 Sapphire RS Cosworth production ends after 13,140 are made.

1990 Sapphire RS Cosworth 4x4 is launched with more power and a similar transmission layout to the Sierra XR4x4's.

1992 Sapphire RS Cosworth 4x4 production ends after 12,250 built.

1987 FORD SIERRA RS500 COSWORTH

ENGINE

1993cc four-cylinder, DOHC, 16-valve, Weber-Marelli electronic fuel injection, Garrett T04 turbocharger

POWER

224bhp @ 6000rpm

TORQUE

206lb ft @ 4500rpm

TRANSMISSION

Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive

STEERING

Rack and pinion, power-assisted

SUSPENSION

Front: MacPherson struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar.

Rear: semi-trailing arms, coil springs, telescopic dampers

BRAKES

Discs, vented at front, solid at rear

WEIGHT

1217kg

PERFORMANCE

Top speed 145mph
0-60mph 6.2sec

In a nutshell

The greatest rust concerns are reserved for the three-doors. 'They rot badly around the front suspension turrets,' says Karl. 'The top of the strut can eventually fall inwards, and they'll also rust where the inner wing meets the bulkhead. That's even more serious, as the front of the car collapses.' How to spot it? 'Look for a narrowing of the gap between the door and the front wing.'

Sills and floors need inspection on both models, as do the rear chassis legs near the spring seats. The Sapphire avoids the front-end rot, but the rear wheelarch area is notoriously rust-prone.

As with everything that bolts on, be sure the running gear is to original specification. Many cars have been lowered, which together with wheels larger than the standard 7.0J 15in alloys can harm an already firm ride. In 4x4 models, lowering accelerates CV joint wear – listen for a clicking as you turn on full lock. Gearboxes with worn synchromesh on second and third can be a bargaining point. All rear-drive versions used a viscous coupling LSD, which can be repacked if you're getting lots of wheelspin on your test drive.

A later engine in an early car is a good thing if you're not after an investment-grade original because all rear-wheel-drive cars used a head design that led to

water leaks from failed head gaskets (£650 + VAT to correct with a skim and pressure test); look on the exhaust side of the block for drips.

Engines got steadily better: find the number on the head next to the exhaust cam pulley. They started near zero, rising beyond 13,000 in the rear-drive Sapphires. Any three-door showing a number in the hundreds needs extra caution. Many rear-drive cars suffer piston slap: a growling sound from the engine on cold start-up. It shouldn't be there if revved when warm.

'Check the turbo by removing the front hose and prodding the impeller,' says Karl. 'Any front-to-rear movement means it hasn't got long left.'

Modifications are a minefield; avoid anything without printed history from a specialist. But as long as the T03 turbo and factory intercooler remain, other 'upgrades' won't overstress the engine and the car can almost be considered standard.

Two electrical issues need attention: fuel pump wiring was marginal and the voltage drop between battery and fuel tank can leave the mixture dangerously lean at full boost. See if it's been rewired. 'Older alarms and immobilisers are often a nightmare,' says Karl. Be doubly sure everything works as it should, consistently.



Conclusion

Above
Rust is a bigger issue on three-door RS Cosworths than on the subsequent Sapphires, but they're more collectable.

RS500s are firmly in collector territory, and well-preserved three-doors look set to follow them into the climate-controlled garage. This is a shame, as they're all an outrageous adrenaline kick to drive, while providing a belt of 1980s nostalgia from the lairy looks and sporty, low-rent Ford interior. That makes the Sapphires (especially the

4x4) excellent value, offering every chance of appreciation with subtler looks. All get by on family-hatch service costs: Karl Norris suggests £180 for a minor service and only £600 for that plus the major belt-change they need every 30,000 miles or five years. Get in now before the last decent, affordable examples vanish.

For sale

Below are examples of cars for sale at www.octane-magazine.com and around the world.



PRICE
£14,995

1986 RS Cosworth

The Classic Connection, Bournemouth, UK. Totally original, well cared for, FSH, with 62,000 miles.



PRICE
£39,950

1987 RS500

Oakfields, Hampshire, UK. Two-owner car with 38,000 miles in rarest colour, now with Group A spec engine and 17in wheels.



PRICE
£7000

1992 Sapphire Cosworth 4x4

Private sale, Lanark, UK. Smokestone blue, four owners, 64,000 miles, stage 1 chip, Koni suspension.



PRICE
£5995

1988 Sapphire Cosworth

Private sale, Witney, UK. 104,000 miles, full service history, two owners, original condition.

Clubs

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www.rsownersclub.co.uk

Ford Sierra Owners' Club

www.fordsierraclub.co.uk

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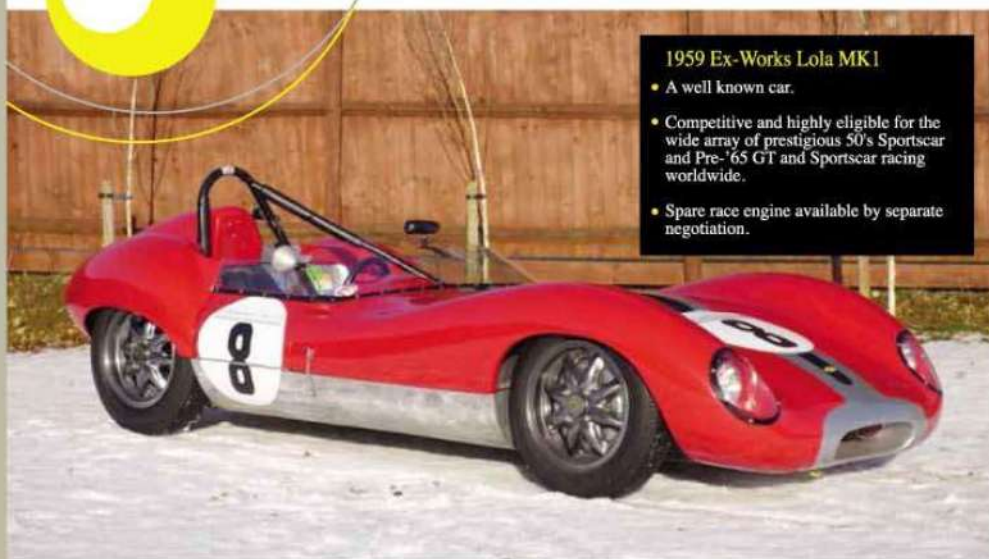
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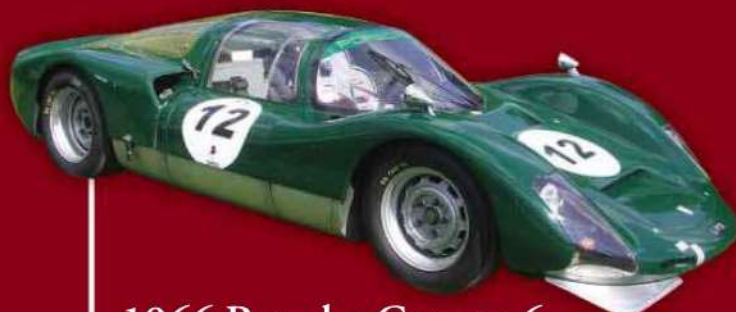
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Right hand drive
Pentland Green / Cream
£49,950



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1967
Manual LHD
Silver Birch / Blue Hide
£POA



DB 6
1968
Auto
Silver / Burgundy
£POA



V8 "Oscar India"
1979
Auto RHD
Sage Green / Magnolia
£47,950



DB 6
1966
Auto RHD
Silver Birch / Black Hide
£POA





1972 BMW 3.0 CSL „Luigi Racing“

This is probably the most prestigious BMW 3.0 CSL raced in period. This car (Chassis #2264107) is the 24H of Spa winner in 1974 and 1975, winner of the series in 74 + 75, Leader of the 24H of Spa (DNF), winner of the Belgium TC Championship and GP Francorchamps in 1976 all for the „Luigi Racing“ Team. The car is in perfect running and race ready condition with new FIA HTP and ready to race on the button. All invoice records of the last 6 years available. A unique opportunity to acquire a beautiful car which has written History in the 70's.

EUR 375'000



1980 BMW M1 Procar

Completely frame up restored - ready to race - FIA HTP

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LCSC75C - 1966 Silver Cloud III MPW DHC - #46 of 49 left drives built. Masons Black, Red genuine (no longer available) Connolly hides. ex-Saudi Arabian Royal Family, efficient A/C fitted by ourselves 1980. Very straight well restored delightful performer, warranty available.



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SCX50110- 1995 Corniche V 2nd Series Park Ward Edition. Peacock Blue, White top & hides piped Royal Blue. Blond Maple Burl veneers w/ Silver inlay & R-R inserts, rear picnic trays, veneered door panels, fog lamps, Morocco hide vanity items to front door cubby. 19,905 miles, excellent throughout. Warranty available.



B152LBA - 1956 S-1 Bentley H.J. Mulliner Style 7409
Alloy bodied DHC. Cashmere Beige, Beige hides piped Tan to match the roof. Factory power steering, top & window lifts. 1986-88 restoration by ourselves, a/c fitted. Still in fine order, good collector history. Warranty available.



1CX07607 - 2001 Bentley Arnage RL Long Wheelbase - 400 Hp Turbo. Black, Autumn hides. Nicely optioned one owner 14,242 mile example in fine order throughout. Warranty available.



SLVF125- 1967 Phantom V James Young PV23 Touring Limo. Garnet over Black, Beige hides. 41,702 miles, Concours quality restoration. The finest available of 13 left drives built. Warranty available.



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JAGUAR XK 120 FIXED HEAD COUPE, LHD - British Racing Green / Beige hide and carpets, 16" wide rim colour coded wire wheels, Dunlop Racing tyres, Total restoration completed 4 years ago, originally supplied to California. Surberb example.

JAGUAR XK 140 DROPHEAD, RHD - Imperial Maroon / Beige hide and carpets, 16" chromed wire wheels, subject of a total restoration 15 years ago, maintained by ourselves since. Excellent example.

JAGUAR XK 140 DROPHEAD - RHD - Black / Red hide and carpets, Black hood, 16" chromed wire wheels. An original U.K. supplied car that was the subject of a total chassis off restoration. Full matching number example in superb condition.

JAGUAR XK 140 DROPHEAD, LHD - Imperial Maroon / Parchment hide and carpets, Parchment hood. 16" chromed wire wheels. A genuine MC car with full options from new. Chassis off restoration just completed. Superb example.

JAGUAR XK 140 ROADSTER, RHD - Dark Blue/Dark Blue hide and carpets, Dark Blue hood, 16" chromed wire wheels. Subject of a total J.D. Classics chassis off restoration to J.D. Sport specification. Touring specification C-Type engine, sandcast carbs, 5 speed gearbox, limited slip differential, servo disc brakes, uprated cooling system, Power steering, uprated electrics, burr walnut dashboard, J.D. Sport extended cockpit for tall drivers etc etc. Superb example built to the highest standards.

JAGUAR XK 140, ROADSTER MC, LHD - Imperial Maroon / Beige hide and carpets, Black hood. 16" chromed wire wheels. Subject of a total chassis off restoration, 5 speed gearbox, C Type cylinder head. Superb matching number example.

JAGUAR XK 150 'S' 3.8 LITRE DROPHEAD, RHD - Dark Blue / Red hide and carpets, Black hood. 16" chromed wire wheels. Subject of a total chassis off restoration, original UK supplied car. J.D. Sport 5 speed gearbox and power steering. One of 69 cars built by Jaguar. Stunning example.

JAGUAR XK 150 3.8 LITRE JD SPORT DROPHEAD, RHD - Dark Blue/Grey hide and carpets, Dark Blue hood, wide rimmed chromed wire wheels, total chassis off restoration to latest JD Sport specification, tuned and fully balanced engine, fuel injection, 5 speed gearbox, JD rear axle, full JD Sport brake system with AP brake callipers, full JD Sport suspension, burr walnut dashboard and door cappings, JD Sport electric power adjustable steering, etc. etc. etc. Highest specification JD Sport XK150 built to date. Please call for further details.

JAGUAR XK 150 3.8 LITRE DROPHEAD, AUTOMATIC, RHD - Indigo Blue, Grey hide and carpets, Dark Blue hood. 16" chromed wire wheels, subject of a total chassis off restoration to original specification. One of 5 factory 3.8 litre automatic cars. Excellent example.

JAGUAR XK 150 3.8 LITRE DROPHEAD RHD - Aston Martin Racing Green / Green hide and carpets, Dark Green hood. 16" chromed wire wheels, subject of a total chassis off restoration 7 years ago. Fitted with J.D. Sport 5 speed gearbox, power steering and uprated brakes. Superb Example.

JAGUAR XK 150'S 3.4 LITRE DROPHEAD, RHD - Pearl Grey/Red hide and carpets, Black hood. Original UK matching number car, original factory specification throughout. The rarest XK Drophead, one of 37 cars produced in right hand drive, original service history and full ownership history from new. Excellent example.

JAGUAR XK 150 3.4 LITRE DROPHEAD, RHD - Cotswold Blue / Beige hide and carpets, Black hood, 16" chromed wire wheels, 2 owners from new, full history including documented service history. Subject of a total chassis off restoration, 5 speed gearbox, power steering, J.D. Classic full detailing just completed. Excellent example.

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JAGUAR MKII 3.8 LITRE JD SPORT SALOON, RHD - British Racing Green/Parchment hide with Green piping, Parchment carpets. Competition chromed wire wheels. Total JD Sport restoration to customer specification 8 years ago, maintained by ourselves since. Upgrades include touring specification engine, 5 speed gearbox, power steering, alloy radiator with electric cooling fan, adjustable suspension, digital climate control, green tinted glass, JD Sport front seats, inertia reel seat belts, full leather interior etc. Featured in JD brochure. Fantastic example. Please contact us for full specification.

JAGUAR MKII 3.8 LITRE SALOON, RHD - Opalescent Silver Grey / Red hide and carpets. Competition stainless steel wire wheels, many J.D. Sport upgrades including touring specification engine, 5 speed gearbox, power steering, uprated suspension and brakes. J.D. Sport seats, parking sensors, heated front and rear screens etc. Stunning example.

JAGUAR MKII 4.2 LITRE SALOON, LHD - British Racing Green / Black hide and carpets, Racing Green wide rim wire wheels. Total restoration recently completed, fuel injection, uprated cooling system, 5 speed gearbox, power steering, modified suspension, uprated seating. Superb example.

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JAGUAR E-TYPE SERIES 1 4.2 LITRE ROADSTER, RHD - Primrose Yellow/Black hide and carpets, Black hood, competition chromed wire wheels, matching numbers. Original UK supplied car maintained and restored by ourselves. Excellent example.

JAGUAR E-TYPE SERIES 1 4.2 LITRE - FIXED HEAD COUPE, LHD - Opalescent Silver Grey/Red hide and carpets. Total restoration to original specification recently completed. Stunning matching number example.

JAGUAR E-TYPE SERIES 1 4.2 LITRE FIXED HEAD COUPE, RHD - Beige / Red hide and carpets, chromed competition wire wheels. An original U.K. supplied special order car in superb original condition. One owner from new, 46,000 miles. Unique.

JAGUAR XK 150 3.4 LITRE DROPHEAD, RHD - British Racing Green / Green hide and carpets, Dark Green hood, 16" wide rim chromed wire wheels, total chassis off restoration to JD Sport touring specification, updates include touring engine, 5 speed gearbox, alloy radiator, uprated brakes, uprated suspension, handmade stainless steel exhaust system and exhaust manifold, power steering, alternator, burr walnut dashboard and door cappings etc. 1000 miles since completion. Stunning car.

JAGUAR XK 150 'S' 3.4 LITRE FIXED HEAD COUPE, RHD - Red/Red hide and carpets, 16" chromed wire wheels, original UK matching number car subject of a total chassis off restoration 3 years ago. Final detailing just completed by ourselves. Excellent example.

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- '70 Mercedes 280SE cabriolet, Tobacco Brown, low-grille.
- '67 Mercedes Benz 300SE cabriolet, 1 of 4 factory 5 speed.
- '63 Mercedes Benz 300SL roadster, disc brakes, alloy engine.
- '53 Mercedes 220 OTP cabriolet, Ivory with brown, 4 door cabrio.
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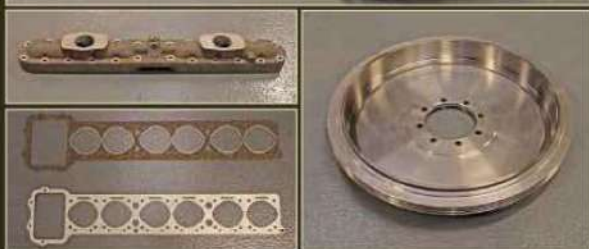
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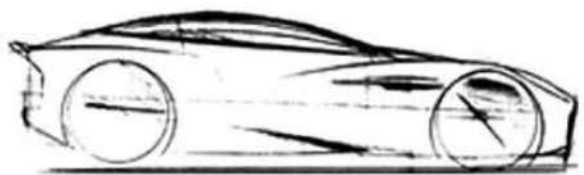


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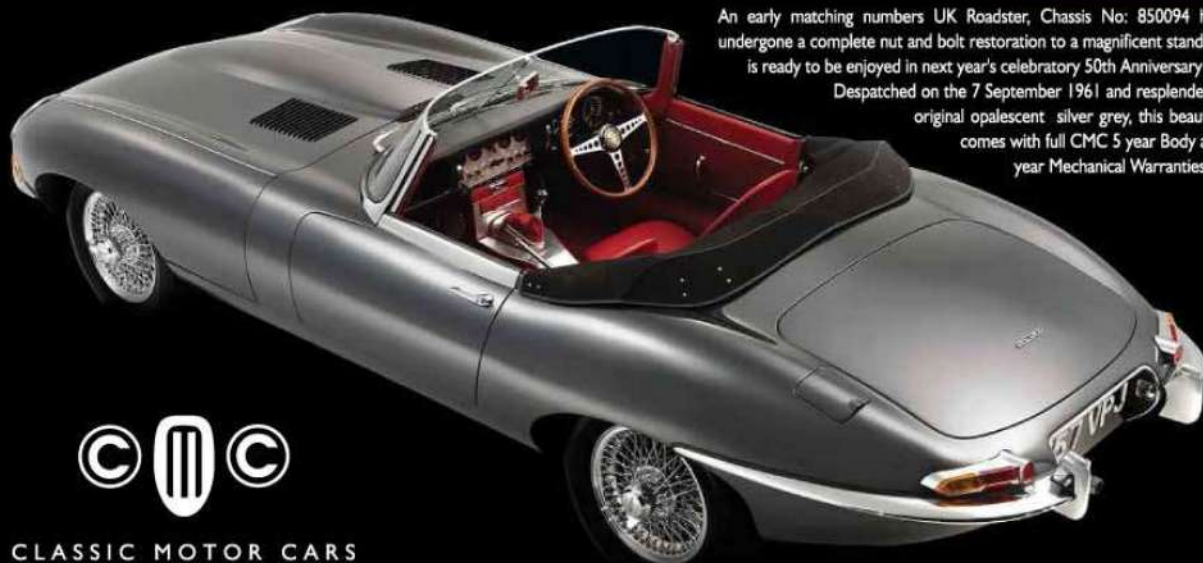


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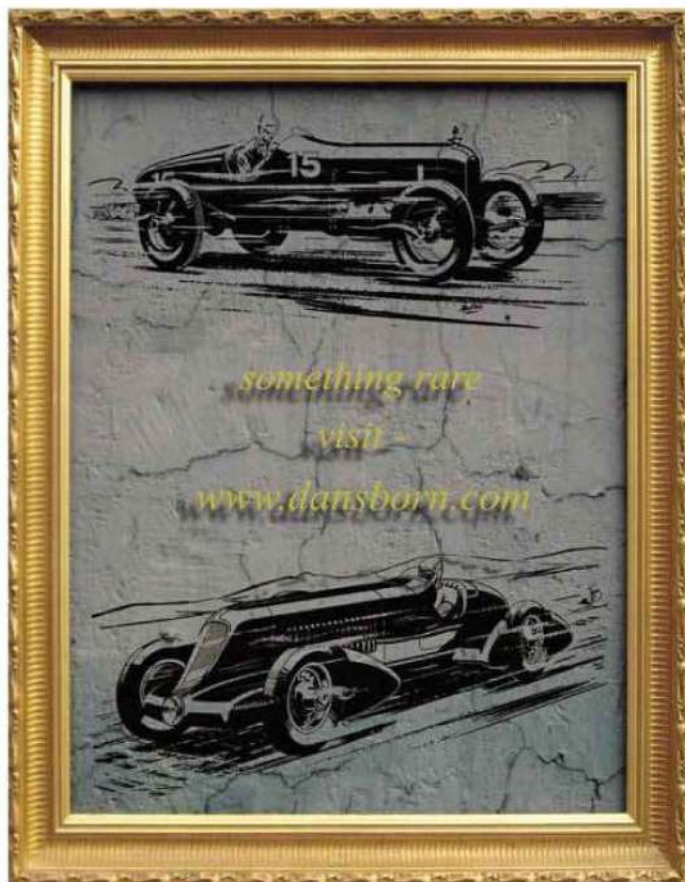
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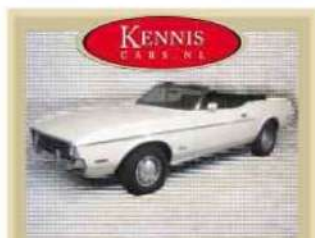
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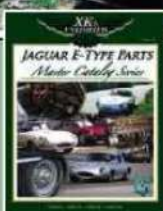
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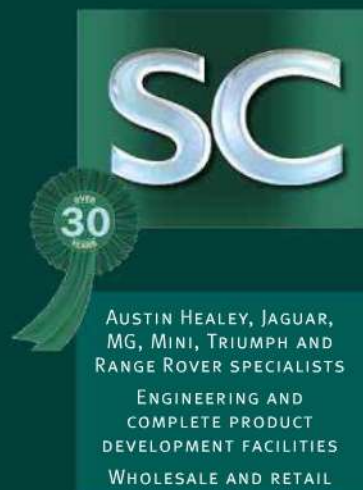
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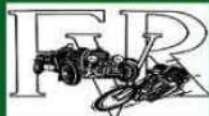


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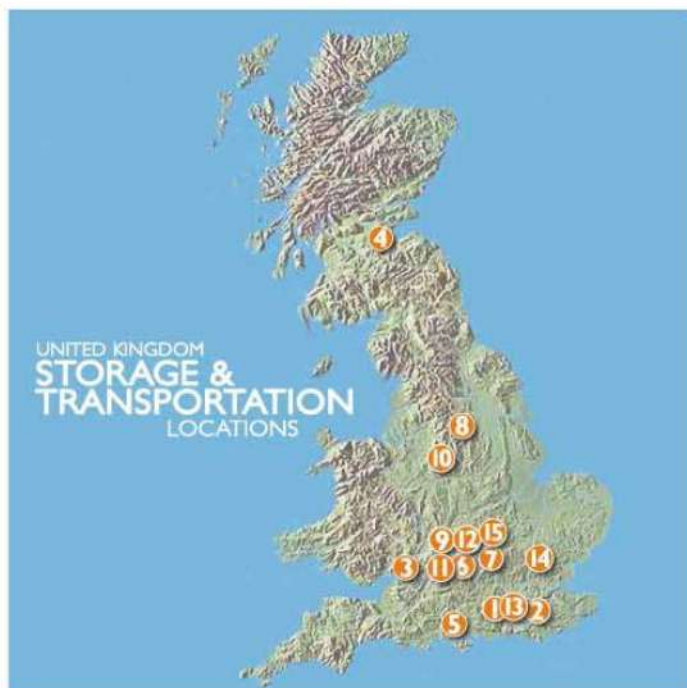
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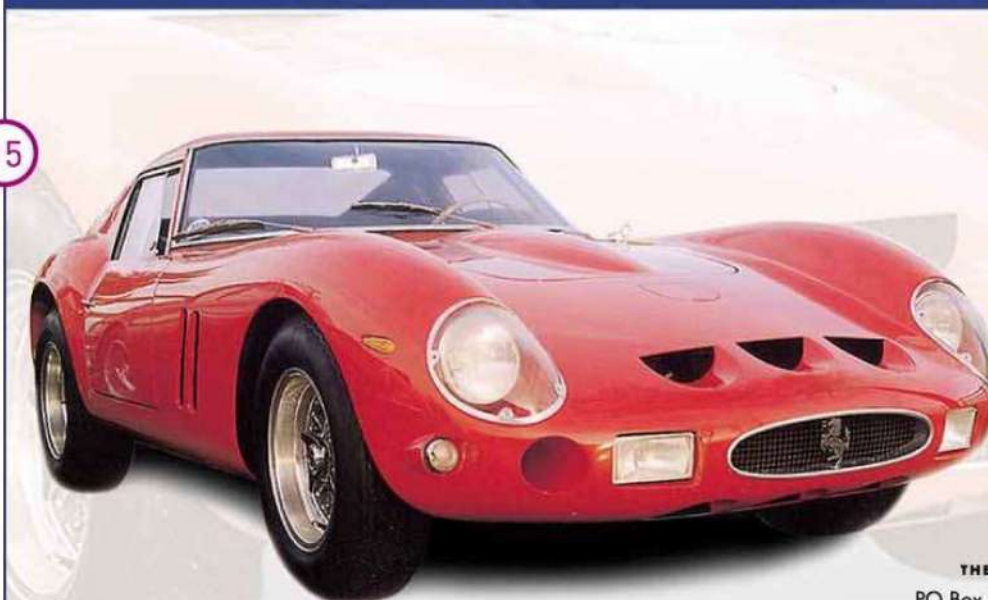


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Day in the life of...

Frank Mauro

The proprietor of California's Stockton Wheel Service is so busy making wheels, he keeps his 1953 Chevy in the workshop just for company

Words and photography: Martyn Goddard



“ We have made just about every type of wheel, so we can fulfil most requests, no matter how strange ”

It's 8am and I have been perched on my stool, checking my email inbox, for an hour and a half by the time one of the back-of-building staff raises the shutters on our Stockton Wheel Service riverfront workshop in Stockton, California. The Holt Family, originators of the Caterpillar Tractor Company, owned Stockton Wheel Service, which had been founded in 1883 to make and repair pioneer wagon wheels. I purchased the company in 1977 after a career change from potential high school biology teacher and American football coach. I am only the fourth owner in 127 years.

Before the walk-in trade and stream of phone enquiries begin to distract me, I am able to reply to email orders from around the world. I constantly have requests for advice and information from people before they purchase wheels. This morning it's a guy in Germany wanting a relatively simple set of wheels for a 1974 Ford Galaxie.

Most of my time on the net and phone is explaining to owners that our wheelwrights, such as Harley, who has been with me for 34 years, are vastly experienced and have made just about every type of

wheel for hot rods, classic cars and low-riders, so we can fulfil most requests, no matter how strange. An example was a customer in the UK requesting dual rear wheels for a 1960s Mini Traveller.

Myself and two other salesmen field the phone and front desk as, by late morning, locals will arrive with small jobs such as a damaged rim and tyre, or it'll be the local motorcycle custom shop needing wheels chromed. These services are either carried out by the three backroom staff or, in the case of chroming, sent to one of the diminishing number of companies that practise the art. There is always a juggling of workflow between wheel production and the service side of the business.

At lunchtime there is no freedom for me so one of the staff heads to the local deli for sandwiches, which are eaten while dealing with phone enquiries and counter clients. Sometimes customers seem to think we are a 'drive through' so I have grown to be very patient. Stockton Wheel has a long relationship with hot rodders and racers and you can see around the walls the photographs of people and their cars, which our wheels have been associated with.

As the afternoon progresses, wheel shipments have to be made. This is an important part of the business, which is growing, and customers are prepared to pay sometimes the price of the wheels in courier charges. On the plus side, we have many freight options nowadays.

I don't have a lot of time for my own car but I have my 1953 Chevy on display in the shop; it's a focal point that I can see over my computer. I am too busy to work on the car until the weekends.

Today, before we close for trade at 5pm, I have to book in a Lexus sedan for a wheel exchange. The owner wants chrome alloys and this we can arrange in a week or so with our chrome platers, who have stock of just about every make of factory wheel available. By 6.30, after tying up loose ends, I drive home to unwind from the day's business in my yard before dinner and perhaps watching a San Francisco Giants baseball match or 49ers football game on TV. If it's Friday, I enjoy commentating for the local high school game. These sporting activities hark back to my coaching, in a time before my life at Stockton Wheel Service.

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