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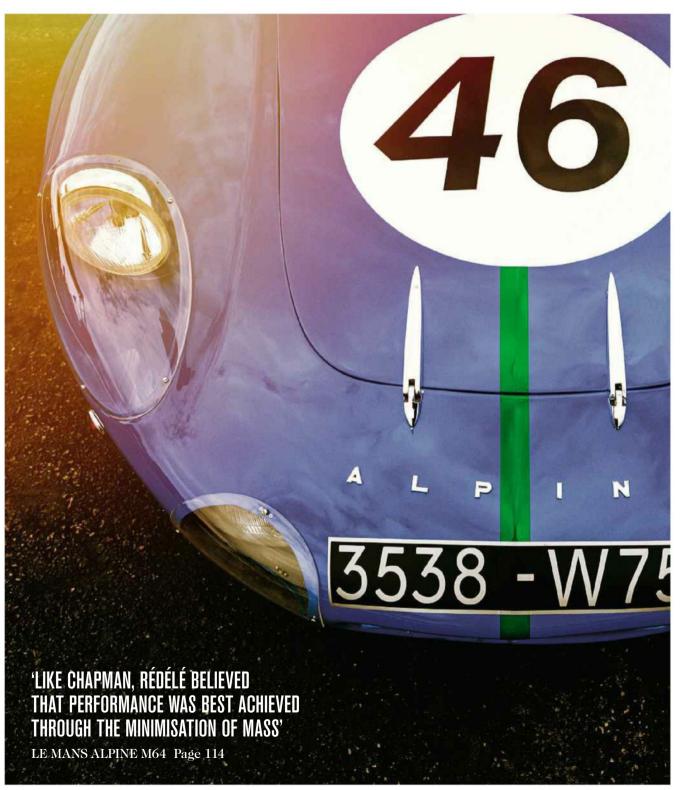
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# EDITOR'S WELCOME Bentleys for the boys: rich or poor

**THE INAUGURAL** Salon Privé sale in partnership with Silverstone Auctions was a real 'I was there' event. It took place during the concours' swansong at Syon Park in 2014, and frenzied bidding by a pair of celebrities garnered acres of press coverage.

Radio and TV personality Chris Evans snapped up the headlining Daytona Spyder for £2.27 million, while Jay Kay led the charge for a gorgeous 1954 Bentley R Type Continental Fastback (sorry, Sports Saloon). Once the sums were done, the Bentley had set Jamiroquai's frontman back £1,012,000. Yet rather than jaws hitting the floor, there was a mood of quiet appreciation that such a wonderful car was commanding the financial respect it deserved. After all, it wasn't so many years earlier that the cognoscenti marvelled that something of such rarity, such pedigree and such presence - has any machine ever better pulled off being simultaneously stately and rakish? - could be bought for around £100,000. That was nothing short of an insult.

Prices have fallen back since – the ex-Elton John and Lord Sugar example made  $\pounds$ 366,666 at a recent Bonhams sale, still more than double what it sold for a decade earlier – but what that Brentford auction in 2014 did was to move the Fastback out of the shadows and into the mainstream, where it remains a fixture in just about every dream garage to this day. And rightly so.

It's difficult to imagine that the massproduced next-generation Continental GT will ever climb to such dizzying financial heights but, having spent the past 15 years blighted by a less than flattering image based solely on its perceived customer base, the 2003-on model is equally unlikely ever to be much cheaper than it is right now. Even *Octane*'s biggest critic of the GT's driving dynamics conceded: 'If you want to go insanely fast in a straight line, you can't spend £25k better.' That's me sold.



James Elliott, editor-in-chief

### FEATURING



MASSIMO DELBÒ 'Phoning Mr Dallara to ask for a meeting scared me. How do you call the most successful man in racing car history? I felt privileged, yet also burdened by a great responsibility, for the opportunity I had to write, for the very first time, about him and his emotions when collecting his own Miura from Lamborghini.' More on pages 90-98.



#### PAUL RICHARDSON

<sup>1</sup>I began writing on motoring subjects, mainly Standard Triumph, in the late 1990s' says Paul. Here, we let him loose on the subject of his father, Ken Richardson, the former ERA and BRM engineer who made his name as the engineer behind the Triumph TR2 – and the driver who scored a speed record in it at Jabbeke. See **pages 110-112**.



#### DALE DRINNON 'Aircraft have fascinated me since boyhood, but I was in short trousers when my uncle owned his Piper Cub, and mom wasn't about to let me fly with anyone who collected tree branches in his landing gear. So the opportunity to finally experience a Cub – and on water – was pure heaven.' Join Dale over Lake Como: pages 146-150.

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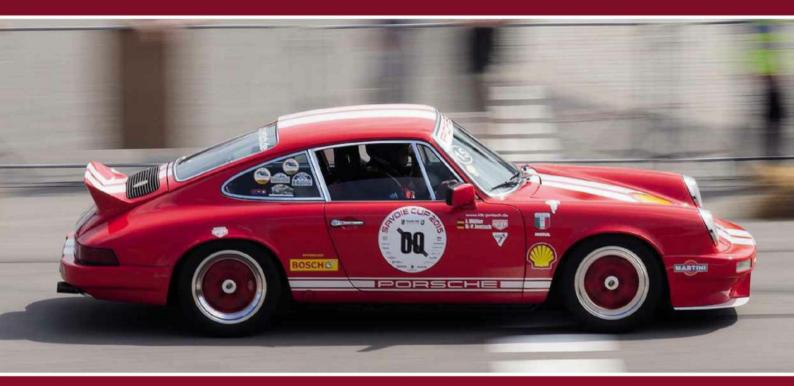
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### VANTAGE

Vantage is the quarterly magazine devoted exclusively to Aston Martin: the road cars, the race cars, the drivers, the engineers and stylists, and the craftsmen who have helped shape the company's heritage. It's brought to you by the same people behind Octane, and the latest issue features Aston Martin's newest road car - called, appropriately, the Vantage,

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# **Collectors go crazy for Citroëns**

As the historic collection is downsized and moved, enthusiasts snap-up rarities Words James Elliott

**THE SALE OF 65** vehicles and almost 100 lots of automobilia from Citroën's Paris Conservatoire resulted in a massive estimatebusting auction, when handled by online auctioneer Leclere on 10 December. The sale was prompted by the scheduled closure of the company's 400-car collection housed in the old factory site at Aulnay-sous-Bois. After the downsizing, some of the remaining vehicles will be rehomed to the refreshed L'Aventure Peugeot Citroën DS at Sochaux, while others will go into temporary storage.

There were no especially big-ticket items – the best price achieved was  $\in$  36,960 – but the majority of the cars exceeded their upper estimates. Top seller was the astonishing nine-seater Tubik utility concept, which caused a sensation at Frankfurt in 2011. The

only other car to get past  $\notin$  30,000 was the late-model 2000 XM V6 Exclusive Phase 2 which, despite an estimate of  $\notin$  4000-6000, topped out at  $\notin$  33,600.

In fact, only four other lots even breached €20,000 and, remarkably, they were three Meharis and a FAF, and not even in especially good condition. Priciest of the quartet was a 1979 Mehari 4x4 that smashed its €6000-



10,000 estimate to make  $\notin 28,000$ . Despite many lots exceeding their estimates, there were still good buys to be made, such as the 15,000km 1980 CX Pallas for  $\notin 13,440$ .

The prices were all the more eyebrowraising because most of the vehicles sold require full restoration or, in many cases, road registration before they can be used. Oldest car sold was a 1924 Type C 5hp ( $\notin$ 14,560) and the youngest a pair of 2014 Cactuses, a VTI 82 with just 7km on the clock ( $\notin$ 14,560) and a 1.6 HDI ( $\notin$ 11,760).

The wackier lots on offer included variants on the Berlingo theme, some of which came from the prolific bizarrist Franco Sbarro. His 1999 Flanerie six-seater show car made €10,640, while the V6-powered Grand Angle designed for photographers and film crews sold for €8960, and his 2000 take on a London taxi made €7840. The 2004 Geneva show Escapade Phase 2 concept raised €10,080, and a full-size cutaway Berlingo from the 1996 Paris show sold for €2800.

There were also more concepts, prototypes and one-offs, such as the Jumpy-based ski resort special, the Atlante des Neiges, which sold for  $\in$  17,920.

On the automobilia front a special 1992 Citroën edition of Hergé's Tintin adventure *The Blue Lotus* was estimated at  $\in$  30-60. That grossly underestimated its rarity, though. Limited to 1000 copies to celebrate the 60th anniversary of a Citroën expedition to Peking, this one sold for a whopping  $\in$  784.

### Five Octane faves



Three trolleys were sold, offering a rare opportunity to own original equipment from the old Javel and Asnières factory. Cheapest of the trio was €1120.



This 1930 C4 flat-bed with stiffened chassis was an accomplished load-lugger pre-war. It sold for €7840 against an estimate of €3000-6000.



An upper estimate of €4000 was more than tripled by the 1977 GSpecial Series 2. One of the best-presented cars on sale, it has covered only 2078km.



In need of recommissioning was a 1990 BX GTI 16S that took part in the 2.0-litre production championship in Spain. Estimated at €15,000; sold for €17,920.



Citroën's effort to sell a Jeep-type vehicle to the French army resulted in a joint-assault with VW: this Itis still has the German engine. It made €10,080.

# **NEWS FEED**

New name for City Concours; biennial move for Chantilly; Nicholas Mee leaves London; Bugs in Paris and Rods in Florida



#### New name for City Concours The spectacular

Octane-backed concours held in the heart of the

City of London will be back in 2018 with a new name. The London Concours – formerly The City Concours – will take place again at the Honourable Artillery Company's magnificent estate on 7-8 June. The venue is one of London's best-kept secrets, a five-acre oasis in the midst of the built-up capital.

Last year the Concours – masterminded by Thorough Events, the people behind the Concours of Elegance – attracted nearly 150 cars and 3500 people, and *Octane*'s Best of Show was won by a Frazer Nash BMW 328. This year promises cars for sale – a show in themselves – plus vendors of high-end goods and first-rate catering. There will be a number of ticket packages available.

#### New dates for Chantilly

Peter Auto has announced major changes to the Chantilly Arts & Elegance Richard Mille event. Traditionally run annually in September, the concours moves to July and will take place biennially, alternating with another major Peter Auto event, the Le Mans Classic.

### New HQ for Aston experts

Aston Martin Heritage specialist Nicholas Mee & Co has unveiled plans for a major expansion and relocation in 2018. In its 25th year, the company will be quitting its Goldhawk Road, London, base and moving to new two-acre premises in Hertfordshire, with the business housed in newly reconstructed historic buildings. There are also plans to double the current workforce.

#### Pure blood in Paris

Bugatti has opened Le Salon Pur Sang in Paris. The Molsheim carmaker's exclusive boutique is on the Avenue des Champs-Élysées in the heart of the French capital.

#### Hot rods in Florida

The Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance is to celebrate the wild creations of Ed 'Big Daddy' Roth in March. The customs on display will include the fabulous *Beatnik Bandit* and the domed *Orbitron*. Concours founder Bill Warner said: 'Roth pushed things well beyond the envelope. Then he tore up the envelope.'

### Dragon logo rises from the flames

The famous Agip logo could become a common sight in the UK. Moto World UK, part of Superformance Ferrari Parts Group, will be stocking and promoting the entire range of performance lubricants from ENI, symbolised by the six-legged firebreathing dragon that has graced Formula 1 Ferraris for many years.

#### **New roots for Rootes**

The Rootes Archive Centre Trust has moved into its own building after raising more than  $\pounds 100,000$  in only two years. The fund was launched by Sir Stirling Moss at the NEC Classic Motor Show in November 2015 and the Trust moved into new premises in Wroxton, Oxfordshire, at the end of October.

#### Archive acquired

The 80-car Saulius Karosas Oldtimer Collection, which boasts the world's largest selection of cars with bodies by Berlin coachbuilder Erdmann & Rossi, has now acquired the company's huge archive. It features original documents and archive photographs. The collection has also acquired an Erdmann & Rossi-bodied 1934 Mercedes-Benz 500N.

#### Paris Crossing celebrates classic cars

If you can be in France's capital with your classic car on 7 January, you can join 700 like-minded others for the Paris Crossing. The 28km tour leaves the Château de Vincennes at 8am and returns at noon; it is open to cars aged 30 years and more. For regs and reservations: www.vincennesenanciennes.com.



### 'It's designed to be playful at legal speeds. This is not a "f\*ck you" car'

Alpine boss Michael van der Sande on the new A110

### 'I don't want my hobby to be efficient: I want it to be slightly ridiculous, occasionally dangerous, and always fun'

Richard Hammond on the delights of vintage motoring after buying a 1936 Morgan Super Sport three-wheeler

### 'We're height-allergic at Jaguar'

Design director Ian Callum on styling the new E-Pace

### 'I have an enduring memory of being chased by a mob wielding baseball bats and Samurai swords'

John Collins, founder of Ferrari specialist Talacrest, recalling life as a 1960s Glasgow club DJ in his new autobiography

### 'At the Klausen hillclimb I was accosted by a number of attractive German and Swiss girls'

Duncan Pittaway on recognition of the Pony Club tie, as featured in this month's Gearbox

### 'It's the best car I've worked on in my 38 years in the industry'

Aston Martin CEO (and ex-Nissan boss) Andy Palmer on the new Vantage

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# A new Panther on the prowl...

Pantera-inspired supercar announced by Dany Bahar's ARES Design

**MODENA-BASED** ARES Design has announced plans to produce its Project Panther supercar in 2018. As the name suggests, it draws inspiration from the classic 1971-92 De Tomaso Pantera; but whereas that car was powered by a Ford V8, Project Panther will be based on a Lamborghini Huracán platform.

ARES Design will build the car in its brand new design and production headquarters, conveniently situated between the homes of Ferrari and Lamborghini, which officially opens on 30 January. It will boast two production lines, plus prototyping and composite facilities, a photographic studio, and design and visitor areas.

Founded three years ago by ex-Lotus CEO Dany Bahar, previously responsible for the formation of Red Bull's Formula 1 team, ARES specialises in producing one-off coachbuilt designs for wealthy clients, typically based on Bentley Mulsanne, Mercedes G-class and Land Rover Defender donor vehicles. Project Panther will be the first all-new vehicle to be built at its Modena facility, and made in very limited numbers. 'We're not restricted by corporate processes or fixed views on how "our" cars should be seen, nor are we limited by technology and facilities that restrict what we can do for customers,' claims Bahar. 'Project Panther feels right now like our "halo car" but I can guarantee there is much more to come in 2018!'

Octane understands that another project in the works is a re-interpretation of the Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona, based on the platform of today's GTC4Lusso, the latest version of the FF four-wheel-drive estate.

## ... and Shelby GT350 reborn

Venice crew to replicate the original run

**MEMBERS OF** Carroll Shelby's original 'Venice crew' have resumed production of the 'R-Model' Mustang GT350, with official approval from Carroll Shelby Licensing and the Ford Motor Company. Jim Marietta, Peter Brock and Ted Sutton plan to make 36 Shelbys to match the original production run, each revised to have independent rear suspension – which was tested in 1965 but not adopted – plus a new front valance and a redesigned Plexiglas rear window.



#### **GOODING & COMPANY PRESENTS**



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# Maranello under the skin

Design Museum relaunches with a Ferrari spectacular

Words and photography James Elliott

**THE RELOCATED** Design Museum has opened with a stunning exhibition to mark the 70th anniversary of Ferrari. Though it comes late in a year in which there has hardly been a shortage of Maranello-related activity, it features some  $\pounds 140$  million of cars and is a compelling show for marque fans and all devotees of motoring form.

Taking place in the former Commonwealth Institute just off Kensington High Street, London, it runs until April 2018 and is pretty much the same exhibition as one that has been running in Italy for the past six months.

The event is officially titled Ferrari: Under The Skin and showcases 14 mouthwatering and priceless cars, kicking off with an Ecurie Francorchamps Daytona in the foyer. Once inside, the timeline starts with a recreation of the first Ferrari, a 125S, and concludes with the current LaFerrari Aperta belonging to TV personality Gordon Ramsay.

Highlights include a 250 LM bodyshell

suspended from the ceiling, the ex-Peter Collins 250 GT Pininfarina Cabrio, plus the ex-Gianni Agnelli Testarossa that was turned into a convertible by Pininfarina. One of the real stand-outs is the '61 250GT passo corto Sperimentale that ran at Le Mans in 1961 and chalked up a class win with Stirling Moss in the 1962 Daytona Continental 3 Hours.

Almost more interesting than the cars is the selection of personal letters and effects, celebrity photos, styling models and drawings, engines and even a wire frame of a GTO and full-size wooden bucks for the 365P and the 156. There is a great display of helmets from a host of drivers including champions Ascari, Fangio, Hawthorn, Hill, Surtees, Scheckter and Schumacher.

Design Museum founder Terence Conran said: 'The Ferrari story is truly one of the great adventure stories of the industrial age and I am proud that we are able to tell it at The Design Museum.'







Clockwise from top left Suspended LM shell dominates main hall; one-off convertible ex-Gianni Agnelli Testarossa; Gordon Ramsay's LaFerrari Aperta; 125S rep.

Visitors be warned: no flash photography is permitted and neither are pictures of Lord Bamford's 1963 250 GTO, slightly odd considering it is surely one of the best-known examples in existence.

The exhibition is open daily from 10am until 15 April and tickets cost £18 for adults, £13.50 for students/concessions, and £9 for 6-15-year-olds, while under-6s go free.



# The NACA duct

A pair sits in perfect symmetry on a Ferrari F40's bonnet. A rather large one adds a muscular flash to a Countach's flanks. Better still, some say, a single bonnet inlet, not centrally located but functionally offset to one side. The NACA duct. Pure visual speed.

Looks apart, NACA ducts do a great job of getting air to the right place because they don't create the drag you get with a protruberant airscoop. It's all to do with getting the air's boundary layer to create a vortex, which directs the bulk of the air where it's needed, and it arose from the brains of the US National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (which became NASA), who intended it for jet engines.

Britain's aerodynamics guru Frank Costin was the first to use one on a car, though – the 1957 Vanwall Grand Prix racer. And the first road-car use, thanks to Costin again, was on the bonnet of the Lotus Elite Super 95 in 1961. It's a form-and-function dead heat. John Simister

26



1965 Ferrari 275 GTB Alloy

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# **Beast and the beauties**

The London Classic Car Show is back, bigger and better

**THE 2018 EDITION** of the London Classic Car Show will bring 800 cars to ExCeL London on 15-18 February, increasing in size to fill the venue's entire North Hall.

Highlights of the *Octane*-backed event are set to include the Fiat S76 'Beast of Turin', which will join the cars running down the Grand Avenue central display. Imagine the sound of this 28.5-litre monster, indoors!

One special display will be Getaway Cars, exhibiting cars used by infamous criminals, as well as those made famous in the movies.

More space also means more clubs, and 30 one-make organisations are expected. Similarly, Historic Motorsport International – which took place for the first time in 2017 – will again run parallel to the main event. This year's LCCS won't make resisting your next classic purchase any easier, either, with many dealers already confirmed for 2018. These include Alfaholics, Classic Mini Finder, Graeme Hunt, Joe Macari, JME Healeys and Samuel Laurence.

Advance tickets are on sale from £25, although there are more expensive options for those wishing to gain entry to the exclusive evening events and previews, via thelondonclassiccarshow.co.uk.

The London Classic Car Show's organiser Brand Events has also launched a new motor show for the capital. Taking place at Olympia on 5-8 July, Grand Auto will be 'dedicated to luxury, prestige, performance and style'.

See grandautoshow.com for more.

## **Peter Schutz** 1930-2017

There might be no 911 today without Porsche's former boss

**THE EXECUTIVE WHO 'SAVED'** the Porsche 911 in the 1980s has died in Florida, aged 87. Born in Berlin, Peter Schutz fled Nazi Germany with his family for a new life in Illinois. He graduated in engineering, then worked for Caterpillar tractors and Cummins before moving back to Germany to join Kloeckner-Humboldt-Deutz.

He became Porsche's CEO in 1981 at Ferry Porsche's invitation and ran the company for six years. The slump the company was in had prompted it to phase out the 911, but Schutz reversed the decision and invested in the model, production near-doubling during his tenure.

Schutz also initiated an extensive competition programme and kicked off the development of the 959.





### How TO... Get a bespoke classic exhaust

When your car was old enough to need only its first replacement exhaust, it was a matter of driving noisily into your local Merritt's Speedy Silencer Centre or whatever your local fast-fit was called. Or, at greater cost and less speedily, getting the main dealer to do it.

This was a depressingly regular chore and, even though lifespans improved after lead was banished from petrol, exhausts still wear out. If your classic is not catered for by a specialist with new exhausts on the shelf, you'll need to have one made. Even young-timers can be blighted by poor-quality silencers that have dire gasflow and unpleasant resonances, or sometimes the components simply don't fit. The bends or brackets or hangers might be in the wrong place, the flanges might not meet, the pipe diameters might be wrong. That said, you might strike lucky.

So you need to get an exhaust made. How? The easy route is to approach a firm such as PD Gough of Nottingham, which has exhaust systems going back to 1920 and uses them as patterns for making new ones from corrosion-proof stainless steel... unless you actually want mild steel. The heaviness of the gauge and the density of the stuffing, if applicable, takes away any 'tinniness' that can afflict stainless systems.

Some firms – Gough is one, Maniflow in Salisbury is another – can also make a one-off system to your own design; this writer had Maniflow make a silencer from a freehand perspective drawing annotated with dimensions and a bracket location, and it fitted perfectly. It was a semi-straight-through type with the pipe taking an S-bend inside the silencer box, to maximise noise attenuation in a compact space.

Another approach is to arrive at a bespoke exhaust-making company in the car requiring a new system. That way they can bend the pipes, do the welding and trial-fit as they go. Longlife Exhausts is one such company, with branches around the country. There are others; this is not an exhaustive list...



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#### **MAN AND MACHINE**

# Down to a T

### Brett Pillinger's rod: Britain's fastest unblown flathead

Words and photography Paul Hardiman

**THIS T-BUCKET** doesn't just go in a straight line, like some salt flats-inspired flatheads – it goes, it steers and it even stops. To prove the point, you might have spotted Brett Pillinger in *Octane* two issues ago, exiting Pardon hairpin at Prescott's American Autumn Classic.

The story might not have had such a happy ending without a bunch of talented friends: 'I imported a part-finished car which looked something like this, but it would never have worked. I was out of my depth so I gave it to fabricator Pete Ayres. "It's a pile of crap," he said. "We'll have to start again."

'Pete got the car built to a rolling chassis, including the beautiful exhausts. My plan was to copy Jack Calori's 1929 Roadster, which ran twin parallel exhausts and was very successful at Bonneville during the late '40s, but Pete wasn't happy with them and I'm really pleased we ended with singles. They get the noise past my ears, too.'

Unusually for a T-based rod, it retains the entire turtleback steel body complete with the paint as found on the scuttle identifying it as a '22. It's not repainted, so Brett uses his home-brewed preservation gunge: 'It's boiled linseed oil, raw linseed oil, white spirit and Ankor Wax – and something else, I think.'

The motor is a '48 flathead. As well as the Edelbrock heads and Isky cam, it's bored and stroked with Ross pistons, SCAT rods and a Mercury 4in crank to give a shade over 286ci, or 4692cc. Unlike some triple Stromberg setups these all work, the outer two coming in after the middle one cracks open.

A repro Hildebrandt fuel filter casing contains a full-flow oil filter, while the leftright switch on the dash isn't for the ejector seat, as the label says, but so Brett can check the temperature of the heads individually, each with its own temperature sender. Flatheads have a water pump for each bank, and they don't always put in equal effort.

Rear lights are made from cocktail shakers and '59 Cadillac lenses, and the underfloor fuel tank is sculpted to clear the whirly bits. 'Inside, I wanted an aircraft feel and Bob Boswell did the ally sheeting,' says Pillinger. 'We kept clipping the windscreen frame and ordering new glass until we got it right.'

He has experimented with twin wheels for the sand and equal-sized Blockleys for Prescott, though normally it runs on Kelsey-Hayes wires with Firestones. It's geared for 2500rpm at 60mph but it's uncomfortable on long runs – though that retreats into insignificance in his new 'Miles for Smiles' initiative, which brightens up the lives of the terminally ill with rides in amazing motors.

'The first time we ran it, at Pendine in 2013, I was second fastest.' Since then Brett has held the title for fastest naturally aspirated flathead, beating his own record every year – a task ever harder to achieve: 'The aim is to go faster each year. I've got a complete vintage Hilborn injection set-up plus Joe Hunt magneto for next time...'



### AUTOMOBILIA Nike Air Force 1 trainer

Famous car brands from Mini to Ferrari have endorsed various designs of trainers, some for a more stimulating connection with the accelerator (allegedly), others for their ability to pull admiring glances in chi-chi spots where 'designer labels' apparently matter.

But I'd like to draw your attention to one trainer that has classic car DNA and proper street cred secretly interwoven within it. Chances are that you already know the Nike Air Force 1. Hundreds of millions of pairs have been sold, in almost 2000 different colours and styles. By one estimate, it alone has pulled \$28bn into Nike's coffers.

Launched in 1982, it was designed by a young Bruce Kilgore. His chunky basketball shoe, inspired by hiking boots, featured the first use of a sealed air pocket in its sole for supreme cushioning when shooting hoops. It really was named after the US presidential airliner, with stars and stripes on the edges of its grippy tread.

This was some time before the AF-1 crossed over into NYC street culture at the axis of basketball and hip-hop. Kilgore assumed it would be replaced by new styles, and was amazed to find it still made five years later thanks to demand from sneaker cultists.

Kilgore still works for Nike, but back in 1982 he was simply an industrial designer for hire. And part of what brought him to Nike's attention was his work in the car industry. He was a consultant to Chrysler when it needed to get its front-wheel-drive K-Car into production in double-quick time in 1981, and was part of the 'skunk works' team that helped GM rev up its Pontiac brand with the mid-engined Fiero of 1983.

AF-1s are very comfortable, don't wear out and are so much more 'classic' than some overpriced semi-racing boots that say Porsche on the side...

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#### **CLIENT PORTFOLIO**

1953 ex-Works Aston Martin DB3S, ex-Peter Collins, ex-Parnell/Klemantaski 1954 Mille Miglia entry
1957 AC Ace Bristol 

1961 Ferrari 250 GT SWB Berlinetta (Ferrari Classiche certified, unique spec)
1962 Ferrari 250 GT SWB California Spyder (Ferrari Classiche certified, factory hard top)
1966 ex-Works Ford Mkll, ex-Bucknum/Hutcherson third overall 1966 Le Mans 24 Hours

1970 Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona Berlinetta (Ferrari Classiche certified) 

1971 Lamborghini Miura SV (European spec)
1973 Porsche 911 2.7 Carrera RS 

2010 Bugatti Veyron Grand Sport
Please note that to respect client confidentiality not all motor cars available may be shown





SSIC MOTOR SHOW 9-11 NOVEMBER

A swarm of bright orange Bugs descended on the NEC.



BENJAFIELD'S 500, 14-15 OCTOBER Members of the Benjafield's Racing Club cool off following its 500-mile race at Ascari.

# THE MONTH In Pictures

BOND

In sunnier parts racing continued into November, while at home trials enthusiasts made the most of mud, mud, glorious mud







# **Classic Cars Challenge China**

Beijing to Shanghai, China 12-19 October Words and photography Peter Baker

Clockwise from top left Oldest entry was a 1931 Rolls; the winning BMW 2002 Turbo; garlanded MG crew; stuck in traffic behind a Nissan Pao.

**RALLYING IN CHINA** is different. Though the Classic Cars Challenge China was supported by FIVA and loosely run to European rules, on this event friends switch cars, as do navigators, while at least two drivers elected to complete the course solo. Timing bordered on the supernatural, while the organisers took delight in running regularities with finish controls tucked away in hard-to-find city locations. Running red lights to save a couple of precious minutes did little to endear competitors to the police.

The 42 crews on this seventh running of the Challenge left downtown Beijing for stage one of a 1400km regularity rally that would end in Shanghai seven days later. Cars ranged from a 1931 Rolls-Royce Phantom and 1931 Packard to a pair of Jaguar E-types and such rarities as a BMW 2002 Turbo, Subaru Leane RX Turbo, a works replica Lancia Delta Integrale, and a Volkswagen Camper van with expanding roof and bed. The VW not only lasted the course, but even arrived home in third place!

Each relaxed stop-over (Tiajan, Weifang, Qingzhou, Nanjing and Wuxi) was followed by a formal departure ceremony attended not only by local dignitaries and sponsors but also enormous crowds, most of whom had never seen a 'classic' car before. The official route mixed endless miles of super-smooth highway with short sections of traditional A-road, most of which are in very poor condition, and passed through overcrowded villages, often sharing thin strips of rutted tarmac with insane scooter riders, dogs, overloaded trucks and fearless pensioners. Police checks are also a way of life across China: every foreign competitor has to pass a driving test; not difficult, but because classic cars are only importable as static display items, all need temporary Chinese licence plates. Competitors are monitored via GPS, so getting lost can very easily lead to temporary arrest.

After three days heading more or less east, the rally eventually turned south to follow the East China Sea coastline, taking a 24-



hour breather in Wuxi before the final 100km mad dash to Shanghai. Of the 35 finishers, leading across the line was the beautiful 1976 BMW 2002 Turbo owned by the Shanghai Auto Museum and driven by the event's chief director, Li Si Jian, followed by the Sanhe Classic Car Museum's Lancia Delta Integrale 16V.

In many ways Classic Cars Challenge China 2017 was disappointing. The customary ceremonial start from under the shadow of The Great Wall in Beijing was replaced by a rather dreary departure from a trading estate off the 4th Ring Road, the promised visit to a racetrack never materialised, and competitors who had booked friends into the finish hotel in Shanghai were none-too-pleased to find the hotel switched at the last minute to a location across town. Others complained about monotonous highways and badly planned regularities. Okay, strict government doesn't make things easy for organisers, and that low cloud, mist and general pollution blotted out much of the scenery is also not their fault, but after seven years the event is feeling stale.

Having said that, the possibilities are enormous and Chinese hospitality is unrivalled, so if promises are to be believed, next year's could be the best so far.



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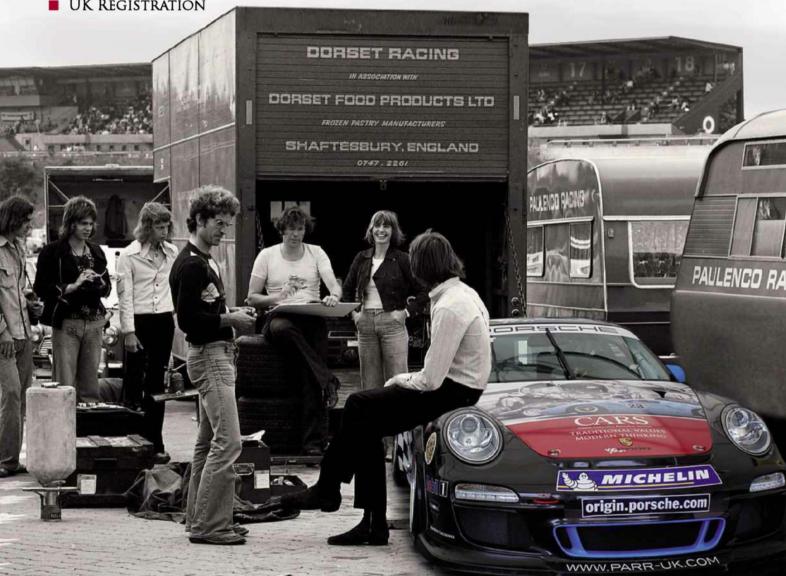


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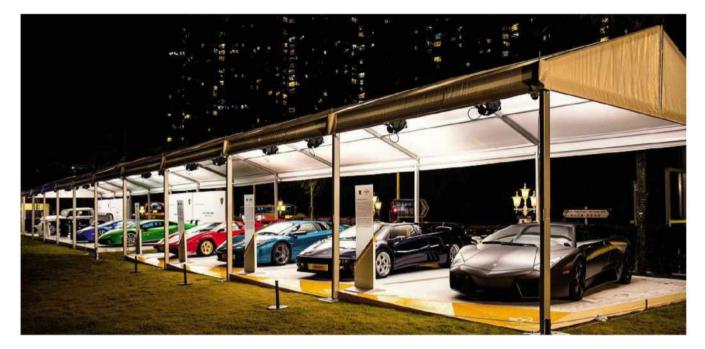
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# **Hong Kong Gold Coast Motor Festival**

Hong Kong 10-12 November

Words James Nicholls Photography Aaron Chung, James Nicholls and Richard Nico

THE MACAU GRAND PRIX was first run in November 1954 as a club motoring event for the locals. Exactly 63 years on from that inaugural event, the Best in Show winner of the 2nd Gold Coast Motor Festival Concours d'Elegance in Hong Kong, just 60km away from Macau by fast ferry, was a car with Macau GP history. The winning Chevrolet Corvette Stingray was driven by M Corazza in the Macau Grand Prix that was won by Dieter Quester 47 years ago.

The event was held at the picturesque waterfront precinct in Hong Kong's New Territories, half an hour from the busy City district. The Concours d'Elegance was the highlight of the festival, which showcased some 90 cars, from prized classics to the latest hypercars, including the Pagani Huayra Dinastia and Zonda, the electric newcomer Nio EP9 from China, and the new Bugatti Chiron, which made its Hong Kong debut.

In stark contrast to the Chiron was a diminutive Type 13 Brescia. And, naturally, it was to the classics that many were drawn, a stand-out element of which was a special Ferrari class, to celebrate the marque's 70th anniversary. It was won by an exceptional



Dino GTS. To my mind, though, it was hard to walk past the *Miami Vice*-style brilliant white Ferrari Testarossa.

Visiting judges included Adolfo Orsi from Italy, and class winners included a Bentley 3 Litre Red Label, which has been in Hong Kong for many years, plus a superb Mercedes-Benz 280SL and a Toyota 2000 GT. A Jaguar E-type Series 1 and Aston Martin DB5 were also on display, and heartstrings were plucked by a sweet little Austin-Healey 'frogeye' Sprite – appropriate, considering that an Austin-Healey won at Macau in 1955, when drivers from Hong Kong took all three podium places.

Clockwise from left

Ex-Macau GP Corvette won the concours; hypercars on display; Ferrari class celebrated 70 years; judges included Adolfo Orsi (on right); Bugatti Brescia.



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## **Auto Retro Barcelona**

Fira de Barcelona, Montjuïc, Spain 16-19 November

**MORE THAN 48,000** visitors flooded a Barcelona fairground, enticed by 500 historic vehicles, for an event that honoured drivers from the 24 hours of Montjuïc, coachbuilder Pedro Serra, and marque Siata. A further 1000 classic cars could be viewed in a dedicated parking area, on rotation throughout the four days of the event.

AutoRetro Barcelona opened with a preview day for collectors and professionals, and the new trade area layout was welcomed by visitors and vendors alike. Cars by Porsche, Rolls-Royce, Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar, Alfa Romeo, Hispano-Suiza, Seat, Citroën and more were on sale, plus motorcycles from Montesa, Vespa, Lambretta, BMW, Lube, Harley-Davidson, Norton, Ossa, Henderson, Bultaco, Derbi, Yamaha and Suzuki.

The display that paid homage to Catalonian Pedro Serra, considered the best Spanish coachbuilder of all time, featured 12 vehicles, including the Dodge Boulevard, recently rescued following 30 years of neglect; one of the seven Pegaso Z-102 cabriolets commissioned by the engineer Wifredo Ricart; three SEAT 1400s; plus a Renault 4CV cabriolet, a Citroën Dyane coupé, an MG Crazy and an Autonacional 200 F.

Also celebrated was the 60th anniversary of the SEAT 600, with models from 1957 to 1973, plus 150 more brought by Club 600 Barcelona 2017.

Guests included Rally Costa Brava drivers Salvador Servia and Luis Moya, and motorcycle racer Ramon Torras. The firefighters of Barcelona displayed an 1896 steam pump, and local specialist Valentín Motors completely rebuilt a 300bhp 1988 Porsche 911 930/66 turbo engine live, in front of an audience.

A parade – known as the Montjuïc Legend Series – featured classic cars on the historic route of the Montjuïc urban circuit, and the Start your Engines exhibition was as loud as its name suggests.





Clockwise from top right Autojumble and trade stands aplenty; Barcelona firefighters fire up their 1896 steam pump; Porsches and Jaguars feature among the 500 cars on display.



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# **COMING UP**

Even in the bleak midwinter there's plenty to get you out of the house...

### **1** January

### Brooklands New Year's Day Gathering

Classic car owners and enthusiasts wrap up warm and head to Brooklands to kick off 2018. Pre-'88 cars will assemble on the circuit's famous banking, and the museum will be open all day, too – so it's worth going along even if the weather is less than friendly. **brooklandsmuseum.com** 

### 7 January

### Bicester Heritage Sunday Scramble

The first Scramble of the new year is sure to attract a good crowd as enthusiasts blow away the cobwebs of the Christmas period. Hagerty will provide advice in the Valuation Arena, and visitors can take to the sky in a Tiger Moth for a short flying lesson. **bicesterheritage.co.uk** 

### 11-14 January Autosport International

Nigel Mansell is set to appear at this year's show, and the NEC in Birmingham should as usual offer something to please fans of just about every motor sport discipline. There will be tyre-smoking action on the UK's largest indoor track, too. **autosportinternational.com** 

### 11-14 January

InterClassics Maastricht The popular Dutch show will be celebrating its 25th anniversary with a display of 18 'prized specimens' characterising the event over the years. ic-tm.nl

### 24-28 January Cavallino Classic

This Palm Beach, Florida, event is chiefly known as a top-drawer gathering of mouthwatering Ferraris, but it does also feature a concours open to other marques, plus excellent Historic racing action at Palm Beach International Raceway. cavallinoclassic.com

### 31 January – 7 February

### Rallye Monte-Carlo Historique

Crews set out from Oslo, Glasgow, Bad Homburg, Barcelona, Monte Carlo and Reims to gather in Isère, where the real fun begins. Over five days competitors will tackle regularity sections and 1000mplus peaks as they slither towards Monaco's Port Hercule. **acm.mc** 

### 2-4 February

**Bremen Classic Motor Show** Drawing 45,000 visitors and some 650 exhibitors, the



WinteRace, 1-3 March Image: WinteRace

Bremen show is an inclusive affair, with all eras and most marques represented. Special displays this time will include a collection of Isle of Man TT-winning motorcycles. classicmotorshow.de

### 4-8 February The Winter Trial

As ever, the exact route for the Winter Trial is being kept secret until shortly before the off, but we know that crews will visit Germany, Austria and Slovenia. Snow is expected from the start, and in the Trial class drivers and navigators will be challenged by a pair of night drives. thewintertrial.nl

### 7-11 February Rétromobile

The halls of the Paris Expo in Porte de Versailles are filled with some of the finest classic cars in the world, but there's room for quirky fare, too – the Berliet Foundation is showing a Centaure truck, for example. The 2018 show will celebrate the 120th anniversary of Renault and, for the first time, an area will be given over to sellers of affordable classics. **retromobile.com** 

### 15-18 February

### London Classic Car Show and Historic Motorsport International

Plans for 2018 include a fun gathering of noted getaway cars, and specials will be in action on the Grand Avenue runway inside London's ExCeL. Tickets cover entry to both the Classic Car Show and Historic Motorsport International. thelondonclassiccarshow.co.uk

### 17-18 February 21 Gun Salute

Both a vintage car gathering and a cultural tour of New Delhi, 21 Gun Salute sees entrants – including some spectacular Maharaja-mobiles – gather at the Red Fort in the city for a concours before heading for Buddh International Circuit. **21gunsaluterally.com** 

### 18-22 February

### Winter Challenge

HERO will ask crews to drive high into the Alps en route from Le Touquet to Monte Carlo, but having battled through the elements on each stage the entrants will be rewarded with magnificent lunch locations. heroevents.eu

### 23-25 February

### ClassicAuto Madrid

First held in 2010, ClassicAuto has grown from an industry event into a bustling show as popular with enthusiasts as it is with the trade. classicautomadrid.com

### 23-25 February **Race Retro**

The winter's traditional Historic motor sport show at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire will feature a bigger live rally stage than ever before, while inside the venue visitors will enjoy displays including a gathering of ground-effect F1 cars. raceretro.com

### 1-3 March

### **WinteRace**

A field of 80 pre-1977 cars, a 400km route through the Dolomites and some of Europe's most beautiful mountain scenery, and snow, snow and more snow. winterace.it



London Classic Car Show and Historic Motorsport International, 15-18 February

### 3-5 March

### Antwerp Classic Salon Over 350 exhibitors from 14

countries are set to attend the 41st Classic Salon, which will boast a 'goldmine' of parts and collectables as well as displays from clubs, dealers and museums. siha.de

### 9-11 March

### Amelia Island **Concours d'Elegance**

World-class classics will gather in Florida and, as always, there will be some superbly strange machinery on display, too: among the classes this year is one dedicated to custom king Ed 'Big Daddy' Roth. ameliaconcours.org

### 9-11 March

### Phillip Island Classic

The largest Historic meeting in the Southern Hemisphere, held off Melbourne's Western Port Bay, attracts cars from across the Antipodes and beyond. vhrr.com



Race Retro, 23-25 February Image: Laura Manning & Steve Cross



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# Looks like an Alpine, goes like an Alpine...

...so it must be the new A110. And there couldn't be a better way to relaunch the marque



Words Glen Waddington

**IF YOU'RE A REGULAR** *Octane* reader, you'll probably know all about Alpine. Founded by Jean Rédélé in 1955; rallied to a 1-2-3 finish on the 1971 Monte; took the first ever World Rally Championship, in 1973; bought out by Renault that same year; foundered with the glorious (if slightly odd) A610 in 1995. And yep, the A110 (1962 to 1977) was The One.

But consider this. The A110 was never sold in the UK. And the Alpines that made it here (fabulously sleek GTA and the A610 that was developed from it) were badged as *Renaults* because PSA still owned the name. Blame those rattly Talbots.

So Alpine – newly revived and still part of Groupe Renault – might have a task persuading Porsche Cayman types to part with similar money for the new A110. Built by a company they've never heard of.

But should you be in the market for a  $\pounds$ 50,000 sports car, you should certainly step this way. Groupe Renault or not, there is much that's bespoke about this little car. And we don't say 'little' in a derogatory way. The A110 weighs only a bit more than a tonne, it will sell in exclusive numbers (the Dieppe factory has a 10,000 annual capacity and also

builds the Clio RS), offers 249bhp from its 1.8-litre turbo four, and promises 0-62mph in 4.5 seconds, plus a top speed *electronically limited* to 156mph (250km/h). Limited why? Because a higher top speed would have necessitated hefty active aero. And that's a clue to the whole ethos of this car.

Rather as McLaren did with the F1, Alpine has chased down every single kilogramme. It has a bespoke bonded and riveted aluminium structure, and lightweight aluminium panels too. The Brembo brakes are specially developed and incorporate the parking function in the rear calipers. Seats are lightweight fixed buckets by Sabelt. Forged wheels are by Fuchs. Even the Focal loudspeakers employ molybdenum magnets and feature linen-fibre cones, so they weigh half as much as conventional ones.

The A110 also looks like an A110. And that's important for a marque relaunching after 22 years in the grave. 'It's my mission to establish Alpine as a permanent fixture in the sports car segment,' says MD Michael van der Sande. 'This car is the bridge between the past and the future. If it fails, there's no reason for Alpine to exist.' Yet he talks of BMW's Mini as a brand model. So expect

### Left

New A110 is a modern reinterpretation of the original – in every respect. And it drives unlike anything else on today's market.

more. And this from a car boss who's a car guy: he owns an Alfa ES30 SZ and built his own Caterham 7.

Judging by the number of people who flashed, beeped, waved and even got out at traffic lights to video *Octane*'s test car, Provence alone could keep the disinterred Alpine afloat. Those people will be ecstatic to learn that this car is an absolute belter.

Right from the off it feels a little different. Sure, it's light, but it's also supple and rather refined. The steering, despite an electric rack, feels organic, alert and hyper-accurate. Its balance is exquisite. There's oodles of torque. The gurgle from the exhaust is purest Alpine in an aural bottle. And all this in the first few hundred yards.

It feels as though Alpine's engineers have deliberated over and tweaked every single dynamic aspect, then gone back and thought a bit more. They talk like geeks (in a good way). Roll is not the enemy. And who needs adjustable damping when you get the geometry and weight distribution *exactly* right? There's no manual trans either, Alpine preferring to configure a dual-clutch Getrag that most buyers would plump for, and not to offer a compromised manual option.

On these twisting Provence roads, you soon become addicted to the way in which the nose sniffs out the apex while the rear adjusts perfectly. Quit the traction control and you can play bawdier tunes with that attitude, but if you like to drive with precision rather than heroics, this is equally the perfect tool. And it never feels as though it's nailing you to the road surface in the way of German rivals; nor does it patter, chatter and rattle like the Norwich alternative. Instead it glides.

And the A110 is quick, naturally for a power-to-weight ratio so close to 250bhp per tonne: three figures spool-up all too easily. Yes, it could handle more power, and doubtless will in months to come.

Perfection, then? Almost. If we're picking nits, some of the plastic trim inside is too Clio. Disregard the tuned exhaust histrionics and the engine (from the next Megane RS) is a bit 2D in its nasal whine. And it costs nearly twice Subaru BRZ money...

Yet it's *so* much more special. Cayman special? For those who want something rather more unexpected, definitely. You could spend serious time learning to get the most from the Alpine A110. And you'd love every single second.



## **Meanwhile in Stuttgart**

Again, GTS trim makes for a supreme Cayman Words Kyle Fortune

**SUB-911 SPORTS CAR?** That'll be a Cayman, or Boxster, now correctly preceded by the numbers 718. Porsche's talented mid-engined understudy has always been good enough to take on all-comers. It's pretty much had its own way in the sports car marketplace since it was launched, and, like its 911 relation, offers plenty of choice. That's been added to, with the GTS now slotting into the space above the S and below the GT4 that'll inevitably sit above it in time.

The GTS has always been something of a sweet spot, too. A cherry-picking exercise in specification excellence, it takes all the bits you might want to add to an S anyway, and adds a little bit more besides. Sitting in the middle of the body, never to be seen – though heard, more of which later – is a 2.5-litre four-cylinder turbocharged boxer engine. It's been worked on, with a biggerdiameter turbo, revised intake system and a standard sports exhaust.

The result is an additional 15bhp to deliver a 360bhp maximum, just 5bhp shy of a bog-standard 911 – remember those? It's enough to allow it 911 pace, too, with 62mph arriving in the same 4.6 seconds as in a manual 911, while if you opt for the optional PDK seven-speed dual-clutch automatic version you'll see not just the manual 718 GTS receding in your mirrors, but a PDK-equipped Carrera, too. Strong stuff, underlining the GTS's position as the current top choice in the Cayman/Boxster range. To justify that there's a standard Sport Chrono pack that brings dynamic transmission mounts, 10mm lower Porsche Active Suspension Management, 20-inch alloy wheels and torque vectoring with a mechanical locking rear differential.

Visually the 718 gains the now-familiar GTS signature look, those bigger wheels being black, the dark theme running through the lights, badging and lower bodywork too.

And it's effective. The 718 is a goodlooking car in standard guise, and the GTS builds on that. Open Boxster or coupé Cayman, they're both a demonstration in dynamic brilliance and fine control, though, given the choice, we'd have the Cayman because it's a little bit sharper. The steering is quick and beautifully weighted: this is a car that's an absolute joy to drive. If there is a 'but', it remains centred around its middle, and specifically that engine.

Yes it's quick, and torque and response are bountiful, but there's no escaping that it sounds like a cross between a Subaru and a Beetle. Unlike everything else – where the changes enhance – the GTS's intake and exhaust exacerbate, which is a shame, as otherwise it's about as perfect a sports car as money can buy.



# The nearly great, all-new M5

Massive power, speed, traction and capability. If only it steered better

Words John Barker Photography Aston Parrot

**THE SIXTH-GENERATION** M5 is here and, at a glance, it looks a lot like the fifthgeneration model (codenamed F10). Take a walk around the new car (the F90) though and you'll see that it's got a bit more about it: it's a little more rounded and more M3-like, with its rear wheels and tyres better filling their arches for a more purposeful stance. Its rear suspension is now bespoke, with aluminium links where the last car used regular 5-series bits, which should give better wheel control and improve handling precision. However, there's a much bigger dynamic difference: the sixth-generation car is the first four-wheel-drive M5.

Power has gone up by 40bhp to 592bhp (a metric 600PS) and torque even more, from 501 to 553lb ft, partly because with AWD the car can take it but also because it brings it up to the mark set by its arch-rival, the all-wheeldrive Mercedes-AMG E63 S. And like the Merc, the new M5 can be switched from all-wheel drive to just rear-drive at the press of a few buttons, to spectacular effect and great entertainment, if drifting is your thing.

Yet, in regular driving, the new M5 is a subtle thing, able to amble along like a regular 5-series, refined and supple. The twin-turbo V8 has a flat-plane crank so lacks the woofle and bellow of a conventional V8, even with the optional, bass-enhancing M Sport exhaust. It has a changed personality from the unit in the F10 and standing-start acceleration is stunning: BMW claims it gets from zero to 62mph in just 3.4 seconds! It *feels* that quick and doesn't ever seem to stop accelerating, with snappy, slick shifts from the eight-speed auto.

As you'd expect, it feels grippy and secure on twisting roads. Happily, it's reassuringly agile for a big car, too, so you can press on. Less good, though, is the steering, which is quick but lacks a connected feel so you can't place the car with total confidence. In normal circumstances, drive is sent mainly to the rear, though the MS can pre-emptively direct drive to the front if it calculates this will help. Turn off stability control and the tail will slide easily under power, and that's before you've made it just rear-drive. Honestly, that's something you'd only ever need to do if you were on a track and wanted to discover for yourself just how incredibly easy the new M5 is to drift.

Where does the new car fit in the firmament, then? The first three M5s are icons: the E28, the original super-saloon, powered by the legendary M Power straightsix; the E34, more potent and better-handling; and the oh-so-driveable E39 with its 400bhp V8 and manual shifter.

The new M5 betters the E60 with its V10 and woeful SMG 'box, and improves on the F10 too, but isn't quite in the same league as the best M5s, and not directly because it's four-wheel drive. It needs properly connected steering and more engine character to join the M5 greats and see off its nemesis, the Mercedes-AMG E63 S...

# Scouting for cubs

Mark Dixon drives the E-Pace, a Jaguar aimed at younger buyers

IN THE MEDIA PACK'S introduction to the E-Pace, Jaguar uses the word 'connect' and variations of it four times within as many paragraphs. That's a good clue to the market at which its new compact SUV is targeted: the smartphone generation. Think 30something professionals, with a baby in tow or one on the way. There's even a humorous 'Jaguar with cub' silhouette in the windscreen surround and the door puddle lighting.

Despite this hip demographic, the 'E' in E-Pace has nothing to do with today's faddy method of propulsion, electricity. There isn't even a hybrid version of the E-Pace; instead, there are two petrol and three diesel models, all based on JLR's Ingenium 2.0-litre. In theory, there's a two-wheel-drive option available on the entry-level diesel, but the majority of E-Paces will be four-wheel drive.

We tried the most powerful, HSE-level petrol model (296bhp) and the mid-range diesel (176bhp) in First Edition spec. Surprisingly, there's less to choose between them than you might think: the torque figures are broadly comparable – 295lb ft at 1500-4000rpm for the petrol, 317lb ft at 1750rpm for the diesel – and those are the important statistics here, because the

### Right and below

Jaguar's new compact SUV is aimed at a younger demographic than most of its products; interior is relentlessly black (red stitching on First Edition only). E-Pace's nine-speed automatic can keep things on the boil in a very narrow band low-down the rev range.

Moreover, the Ingenium petrol engine emits a gruff kind of sound befitting a big four, and the diesel isn't significantly noisier. Occasionally you get a bit of diesel 'tingle' but, to be honest, it's not something to lose sleep over. Either version benefits from being driven in the Dynamic suspension setting and Sport gearbox mode, which together make the E-Pace enjoyable to hustle; the transmission's ability to send up to 100% of torque to the outside rear wheel in a corner really helps the vehicle tighten its line. And, while the E-Pace doesn't pretend to be a serious off-roader, the 'Rain, Ice and Snow' setting will cope just fine with a muddy field.

With its target audience in mind, Jaguar has gone to great lengths to make the E-Pace a pleasure to live with. There's loads of storage space, more USB sockets than you can shake a memory-stick at, and a capacious load area. Grumbles? Mainly that the interior is unremittingly black or, at best, black and beige. But the dash is pleasantly uncluttered and has proper old-fashioned metal knobs to control temperature; inspired, so they say, by a Leica camera.

However... We found the ride quality, even in supposed 'Comfort' mode, poor – at least on the 20in alloys fitted to *Octane*'s test vehicles – and this reviewer will admit that his dad-bod flabby bits were wobbling like jelly on a plate while negotiating a typical B-road. Paradoxically, selecting the more sporty Dynamic setting seemed to improve things marginally, perhaps because the suspension's reactions to the road surface are more tightly and rapidly controlled.

Fortunately, 17in rims are standard on the  $\pounds 28,500$  entry-level model and, since it has most of the important bells and whistles of the  $\pounds 47,800$  First Edition, we suspect a base-spec E-Pace will be the most comfortable purchase in more than one respect.







# **Range Rover's added range**

Electric range, that is. Octane tests pre-production plug-in hybrid versions of the Range Rover and Sport Words James Elliott

THEY MIGHT BE prototypes at the moment, but full PHEV Range Rovers and Range Rover Sports are imminent. The team behind the P400e powertrain, JLR's first full plug-in hybrid, is at pains to point out that the vehicles we tested aren't quite the finished articles, but on the other hand they are confident enough to let us have a go in them. And a proper go at that, not just on freeways, but on the challenging canyon roads of California and the (probably more model-appropriate) Pacific Coast Highway. To be honest, barring the prominent kill switch on the centre console, both these Euro-spec cars in pricey Autobiography trim look and feel pretty finished.

Weighing in at 2509kg against the Sport's 2471kg, the P400e Range Rover is marginally the bigger and heavier car, but performance is the same for both, with an output of a fraction under 400bhp, 60mph coming up in 6.3 seconds and a 137mph top speed. What is interesting about both is the tech. Each is powered by the 296bhp 2.0-litre Ingenium petrol engine driving through a six- (Sport)

or eight-speed (Range Rover) 'box, but that is not really the point.

The petrol engine is combined with plugin tech that comprises an 85kW AC motor tucked away on the transmission and itself fuelled by a 13.1kWh Samsung lithium-ion battery stashed under the boot floor. That leads to impressive  $CO_2$  emissions of 64g/ km, but remember that figure incorporates the recycled braking energy. Similarly, at a potential 101mpg, they can claim to be the most fuel-efficient Range Rovers ever.

You can achieve zero emissions in either but only for a theoretical 31 miles, more likely high 20s according to JLR, though the rapid charge time of 2hr 45min via a 32A box (10A charging will take three times as long) is pretty competitive. In EV mode – the alternatives being Parallel Hybrid, which uses both power sources but obviously favours the greener, and Save, which stores battery power – it can reach 85mph.

They feel bi-polar to drive. When fully electric, both are eerily quiet and hovercraft smooth, but when the petrol power kicks in,



### Top and above Performance is not an issue, though JLR's four-pot sounds rather insistent; silence reigns in EV mode, and you can plug it in to expect 31 miles of that.

that noisy four-pot rather imposes itself, the sense of intrusion exacerbated by the contrast with the serene all-electric progress.

Handling-wise, when you start with such bulk, the extra weight of the electric system (the battery alone is 150kg) doesn't make much difference in normal driving. Even pressing on, they maintain the basic Range Rover principle of driving with a competence and verve that defies logic for vehicles of such size and weight. All while you wallow in abject luxury of the Autobiography that we tested, enhanced by the new Touch Pro Duo infotainment system.

Neither of these is perfect, but they are prototypes – the Sport rather further along the road than the Range Rover – and, given the trick JLR has tried to pull off here, it's a highly impressive effort.

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# JAY LENO The Collector

lon Musk unveiled his new Tesla truck in November, of mild interest because it involves transport. Far more exciting was the second surprise – a new Tesla roadster with a top speed of over 200mph, 0-100mph in 4.2 seconds, a quarter-mile time of 8.9 seconds and a range of 600 miles on a charge. This could be the greatest gamechanger in the history of supercars.

Supercar manufacturers are in the same boat as the Swiss were 30-odd years ago, when more-accurate digital quartz watches from Japan became popular. Why spend thousands on some intricate handmade device with springs and complications when a tiny circuit board and a beautiful dial does the same thing?

The mainstream press cringed at the \$200,000-plus price of the Tesla roadster, but considering it's faster than everything from a McLaren P1 to a Bugatti

**'OPENING A TESLA'S** 

HOOD IS THE MOST

DISAPPOINTING

THING, BECAUSE

THERE IS NOTHING

TO LOOK AT'

Chiron, and a tenth of the price, it's an amazing accomplishment.

How many people who buy supercars really know what's under the bonnet anyway? Let's face it, once Mercedes-Benz and Porsche get involved in building electric supercars the internal combustion engine could go the way of the manual gearbox. There'll always be a few people who want them, but not enough to justify the cost.

Imagine a supercar with no

maintenance of any kind, no \$10,000 first service, no outrageous fuel mileage or fuel prices to contend with. The last time we had a similar problem was at the beginning of the last century. Steam, electricity and internal combustion each had a third of the market.

Steam had an edge at one point because it had been around for 100 years, powering everything from ocean liners to trains and automobiles. There were plenty of steam men around who understood it, often stressing how quiet and reliable steam cars were compared with those shrieking, banging, explosion-engine cars.

Electric cars had the battery-recharging and range problems they've always had until recently. They were seen as safe, slow and reliable, perfect for the wife because she could only go a few miles from home and there wasn't much chance of her running off with the handyman in your new Detroit electric. Consequently, most electrics were marketed to wealthy upper-class women as a personal shopping car. And, as automakers have learned, you can't sell a man a woman's car.

Steam cars like the Stanley and the White were actually quite dependable. The Stanley was simple, with only about 13 moving parts in its non-condensing two-cylinder engine, but it took about 20 minutes to heat up 15 gallons of water before you could depart.

The White, however, was truly an Edwardian scientific instrument. Instead of a boiler it used a steam generator that worked much like a tankless water heater, making steam on demand rather than storing it the way a Stanley did. An ingenious device called the flow motor mechanically balanced temperature and water, and you could pull away in under 10 minutes. The White also used super-heated steam, which made it more efficient. In America the White was the first military vehicle, as well as the first White House car.

Sadly for those two, internal combustion technology was moving at breakneck speed. The final nail in the coffin for steam and electric was the self-starter, invented by Charles Kettering in 1911. Five years earlier he'd replaced the hand crank on the products of the National Cash Register Company with an electric motor. He geared one up to start a car, so ending steam and electricity's only advantage.

How do traditional supercar makers fight the electric onslaught? Pagani's got the right idea. You make a car so beautiful, with details so intricate, that it becomes a rolling piece of sculpture. Vacheron Constantin built a watch called the Tivoli, the most complicated watch ever made. Do you need a watch like this? No. Do you want a watch like this for its beauty and mechanical intricacy? Of course.

So wouldn't it be fun if supercar makers allowed us to see their intricate work in action? My 1983 Ducati Desmo motorcycle has a glass window at the top of the bevel drive that opens and closes the valves, but opening the hood of a Tesla is the most disappointing thing in the world because there's nothing to look at.

Imagine opening the rear hatch of your Porsche to find a clear valve cover that allowed you to see the cams and valves in action. Better yet, a window in the side of the crankcase, which allowed you to see the rods going from side to side. Even better than Netflix!



JAY LENO

Comedian and talk show legend 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 (www. jaylenosgarage.com).



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# DEREK BELL

The Legend

o, Lewis Hamilton is now the most successful British Formula 1 driver of all time. By that, I of course mean he has the most world championship driver titles. He had already accrued the most wins before he sealed his latest gong in Mexico.

As a proud Briton I must admit to rooting for the home team, but I have not always been a Lewis fan. For all his brilliance, there have been occasions when I felt he let himself down out of the car. In 2017, however, I think he displayed great maturity, as befits his status as a legend in his own lifetime.

It's easy to forget just what an impact Hamilton made when he first appeared as a McLaren driver back in 2007. He had been on electrifying form in GP2 a year earlier, and I expected him to win the occasional Grand Prix in his first season in Formula 1. I never for

a moment thought he would be champion, yet he missed out only narrowly. The funny thing is, he won the title in his second year when, to my eyes at least, he didn't drive anywhere near as well. Then there were seasons where he was simply inconsistent, in a race of his own one weekend, strangely off-key the next.

I think much of this was due to the way he believed his own hype. When a driver, or indeed any sportsperson, has success straight

away, they get built up and the plaudits gush forth. Then they have a bad year, or at least a less good one, and the press aren't so kind.

I don't think Lewis handled the media at all well during his final few seasons at McLaren, or last year when he lost out to Mercedes team-mate Nico Rosberg following an often rancorous campaign. In 2017, however, he deported himself as a champion should, despite the occasional spat with arch-rival Sebastian Vettel. I was impressed as much by his off-track demeanour as his on-track excellence. He seemed a lot happier in his own skin, more relaxed. He had developed a harder shell.

Not that I can claim to know Lewis. I doubt that anyone does outside his personal circle. He still gets it in the neck for hanging out with gangsta rappers and the like, but so what? More power to him. It isn't as though racing drivers and famous folk didn't get together when I was racing at a high level. As for where he goes from here, who knows? He is under contract with Mercedes for the time being, but I wouldn't bet against him ending his career at Ferrari. I have Lewis down as a romantic. I'm sure he would love to win a title in a red car. Who wouldn't?

I certainly did when I signed for the Scuderia in 1968. I find it hard to believe that this was half a century ago. I have written about my year-and-a-half as a works Ferrari driver in this column before, so I won't go over old ground except to say this: I wouldn't have missed driving for Enzo Ferrari – who personally picked me – for anything. It meant a lot then and it still does.

Speaking of Ferrari, I was recently reunited with an old flame at Goodwood during a rather special track day. Nick Mason invited me to drive his ex-Ecurie Francorchamps 365 GTB/4 Competizione, which I

raced at Le Mans back in 1972. To be honest, it wasn't the best car I ever steered in the great race but I still hold the 'Daytona' in some regard, not least because I once had one as a road car and had a lot of fun with it.

Unfortunately for me, the Competizione wasn't a happy bunny at Goodwood. There were one or two problems that couldn't be sorted on site, which rather curtailed my plan to venture out for some hot laps. Then something

happened which blew my mind. Nick, being the thoroughly good sort that he is, asked if I would like to have a go in his LaFerrari instead.

Now, I have driven a few hypercars, but mastering one at Goodwood – in the wet – was freighted with anxiety, not least because I was giving passenger rides. Indeed, a chap jumped into the right-hand seat before I had even figured out which button did what, and he commented later that he was surprised at how hard I had been concentrating. I did maybe 12 laps and couldn't stop babbling afterwards. What a machine!

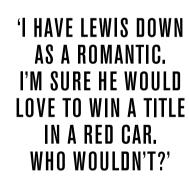
The Daytona was a former Le Mans weapon, the LaFerrari a road car, albeit a hardcore one. It was like stepping out of a biplane and into a stealth bomber. I have never lost my love for – nor my appreciation of – Ferrari, and this outing served only to boost it further.

Now, the Scuderia just needs to figure out how to win titles in Formula 1 again.



### DEREK BELL

Derek took up racing in 1964 in a Lotus 7, won two World Sportscar Championships (1985 and 1986), the 24 Hours of Daytona three times (in 1986, '87 and '89), and Le Mans five times (in 1975, '81, '82, '86 and '87).



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# **STEPHEN BAYLEY**

The Aesthete

he new SVAutobiography will be admired long after the original 1970 Range Rover has been forgotten, but not before. It seems appropriate that this strange car was launched in Los Angeles, a city where gross consumption vies with terminal congestion in the Department of Distressing Adjectives and Metaphors. Godless? Greedy? Gehenna? Hell?

Immediately I saw the car, I thought of Coco Chanel's apothegm: 'Luxury is not the opposite of poverty, it is the opposite of vulgarity.' I trust the ghost of Chanel on absolutely everything, I consult her often, and would pit her against JLR's marketeers any day. If the SVAutobiography is luxury, give me rubber mats.

In case you were not in LA, the new Range Rover is inflated in all dimensions: size, price, aspirations. This is not social climbing, it's social mountaineering. I dare

say it is fitted with mountain ascent control which has been permanently disabled. It has 1.2 metres of rear leg-room and 40 degrees of recline, hot stone massage (honestly), a wine fridge, 4G comms and a powered luggage deck so the liveried flunky at the Chateau Marmont does not have to sweat over your Globetrotters.

Strikes me that Range Rover's Gerry McGovern in his severely waisted Anderson & Sheppard suit has the role of Faust in this

consumerist playlet. Sulphur-breathed Mephistopheles has led him up Mount Lukens, highest point within LA city limits, and waved his Satanic claw at the vista south towards Pasadena, Glendale and Hollywood, saying, 'Gerry, all of this can be yours. High-end shopping! Big watches! Destination restaurants! A-listers! Only first you have to do something really, seriously daft.'

Rationale for the SVAutobiography must have been that if Bentley can make an off-brand four-wheel-drive, then Range Rover can make a fantabulosa obscenely powerful gentleman's express with engine-turned knobs on. This, I think, may be eloquent of the conceptual chaos in these very last days of the motor car. As The Age of Combustion approaches its midnight, designers are not considering practicalities, they are considering extremities. I fear the SVAutobiography has many extremities. It is a harbinger of things-to-come. Land Rover's transition from Anglesey and mud to La Cienega Boulevard and Bottega Veneta has been handled with skill and tact, an adroit bargain between the essential brand proposition and intelligent ambition. The same process occurred when Philip Payne's 1994 Dodge Ram was repositioned as aspirational rather than functional and sales went up 300%. It's always important to avoid Marketing Myopia: that's why the old American railroads went bust, insisting they were in the train business when really they were in the transport business. Santa Fe and Burlington Northern should have become airlines, then all would have been well.

To be sure, the Land Rover customer no longer comprises inbred zoophiliac Welsh farmers (who prefer the Toyota HiLux) but status-hungry Angelenos who practise anti-gravity aerial yoga. But at some point

> in this transition, a line was crossed and sophistication became decadence. The Range Rover SVAutobiography is way too far on the wrong side of that line. It may now be in artistic terrain so treacherous that no amount of long-travel suspension or trick differentials or heavybreathing press releases can guarantee escape.

> Intimidating Paris intellos recognised the 1970 Range Rover as art and put it on display in the

Louvre's Musée des Arts Decoratifs. Design-wise, this is where you want to be, not demonstrating your PDVLF (Power Deployable Veneered Loadspace Floor) to the doorman at the Hotel California.

I know exactly what the great moments in car design were: Harley Earl realising that wider rolls of strip steel allowed imaginative sculpture; Pininfarina creating the 'GT'. Patrick Le Quement's category-busting Renault Scénic is on my shortlist, so is the '64 Mustang, which gloriously democratised fantasy. I also enjoy Dante Giacosa's asymmetric driveshafts on the Fiat 128 and, of course, his *nuova cinquecento* of 1957 remains incomparable. Malcom Sayer had his moment too.

But the PDVLF? This compares in the history of design to the moment Alejandro de Tomaso rode into the Modenese courtyard of Maserati on his Benelli Sei and, waving a Beretta, fired everyone. Someone at Range Rover deserves to be shot.



STEPHEN BAYLEY

Author, critic, consultant, broadcaster, debater and curator, Stephen cocreated the Boilerhouse Project at London's V&A, was chief executive of The Design Museum, and fell out with Peter Mandelson when he told him the Millennium Dome 'could turn out to be crap'.

### 'THIS RANGE ROVER MAY BE ELOQUENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL CHAOS IN THESE VERY LAST DAYS OF THE MOTOR CAR'

# **ROBERT COUCHER**

**'THE CLASSIC CAR** 

TRADE IS STILL

LARGELY RUN BY

UNRECONSTRUCTED

**SLOANES, WHICH** 

I REALLY LIKE'

The Driver

ouveau riche. The dictionary definition is 'one who has recently acquired wealth and is typically perceived as ostentatious or lacking in good taste'. In the good old, bad old days of the '80s, to be described as 'nouveau riche' was the ultimate put-down. Social ostracism would surely follow; to be a flash show-off was absolutely non-U.

How the world's social tribes have changed. 'Nouveau riche' has gone; everyone now aspires to being newly minted. What is the handle that everyone wants today? 'Entrepreneur', meaning 'a person who sets up a business, taking on the financial risk in the hope of profit'. Today, bright young things don't want to go into law or banking. They'd rather set up a craft vodka company, a minicab outfit or a home-delivery grocery operation.

The classic car world could be said to have gained

traction in the '80s. Things moved on from old cars as a hobby to classic cars entering the broader consciousness. In those heady days Punk had largely shot its bolt, New Romantics were flouncing off stage and the Sloane Ranger ruled. In 1982 writer Peter York and Ann Barr, features editor of *Harpers & Queen*, launched the *The Official Sloane Ranger Handbook*, which became an international best-seller. The French had their BCBG (*bon chic*,

bon genre) and in the US the preppy scene took off.

These upper-middle-class types and their wannabes embraced classic cars as part of their lifestyle, along with country pursuits and attachment to careworn 'old stuff' which included Barbour and tweed coats and corduroy trousers. Proper Sloanes would never venture into a smart emporium on Bond Street, instead grabbing their kit from Jeremy Hackett's shop down at the wrong end of the King's Road. Shirts had to be from Thomas Pink – the louder the butcher-boy stripe the better – and shoes were proper welted Church brogues from Northampton.

The enthusiast's motor was the ubiquitous Golf GTI, red if you were in the City but better in dark green to match the Range Rover. Many of these '80s public schoolboys entered the classic car trade via smart auction houses (except Clarkson, who went on television). The trade is still largely run by these

unreconstructed Sloanes, which I really like. Some have slipped into Old Fogeyism in South Kensington and the Home Counties, and I know of one still living out a bit of New Romanticism in Geneva, even while the world changes around them. Hackett London is now owned by a Lebanese company, Thomas Pink sold out to a French conglomerate, Church shoes went to the Italians, and no-one willingly buys their clothes from a second-hand shop any more.

So it is with motor cars. Remember 'badge engineering'? British Leyland practised this dark art and met with much derision. Now it's 'shared platforms', all sorts of disparate vehicles the same under a different skin. To a Sloane, where oldfashioned, horny-handed craft lineage is all, this is anathema because it lacks authenticity. But today, 'discerning' motorists don't give a fig as long as the

badge on the bonnet carries enough social cachet in Cap Ferrat, Connecticut or Cadogan Square. Mechanicals? Naah...

Volkswagen made a serious mistake here with its excellent Phaeton. Who wants a luxury limo with two of the biggest VW badges in history stuck onto the front and rear? Toyota learnt this with its Lexus offshoot but Wolfsburg missed the point. VW boss Ferdinand Piech liked to pit his engineers against each other,

leading to a luxury VW to take on Audi. Apart from some sales in China, the Phaeton failed and is no more. Had it been sold as a 'Phaeton' (good word) and not a 'VW' writ large, it could have worked. Hubris, anyone?

But the Phaeton's well-engineered underpinnings formed the basis for the most successful Bentley motor car ever – the Continental GT. With its svelte coupé body and aspirational badging the Conti went on to great success, and the fact that a lot of it is VW under the skin doesn't matter any more.

A recent AA report reveals that a million UK drivers don't know how to open their car's bonnet. They regard the oily bits as no more interesting than the guts of their mobile device. The latest Continental GT has a better Porsche-based chassis, while the PR bumf harks back to the original Bentley Continental of 1952 which was really a Rolls-Royce. Every Sloane knows that. And the new entrepreneurs? They don't care.



ROBERT COUCHER Robert grew up with classic cars, and has owned a Lancia Aurelia B20GT, Alfa Romeo Giulietta and Porsche 356C. He currently uses his properly sorted 1955 Jaguar XK140 as his daily driver, and is a founding editor of Octane.













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# DUNCAN PITTAWAY

Noted VSCC Specials builder, racer, and restorer of the Fiat S76 'Beast of Turin' record-breaker Interview and photography Mark Dixon



1. I bought my Type 35 Bugatti in 2002. Tim Dutton was a tremendous help with the rebuild and persuaded me to enter the 2006 Monaco Historic Grand Prix. I MoT'd the car and fitted its body the weekend before the race, drove to Monaco through the snowy Alps, won my class, then drove it back home on the following Monday.

2. The Fiat S76 is Bruce Wheeler's favourite of his many caricature car sculptures. He limits them to editions of ten but very kindly stretched the rules for me, as his own S76 sculpture was painted black and half the size of the next nine, so he could legitimately make me a tenth.

3. When I was a schoolboy, my collection of naughty seaside postcards grew to over 3000. Sending them in later life as compliment slips to unsuspecting friends and colleagues is tremendous fun.

4. I'm currently restoring the first-ever Chevrolet Cheetah built by Bill Thomas in 1963. It retains its original alloy body and super-rare Corvette Grand Sport bits, including this dual fuel-injection system developed by Bill with Rochester.

5. The V8 aero-engined Monarch built by best mate Mark Walker is still my favourite car on the planet. After much pestering, Mark reluctantly agreed to sell me the car 20 years ago, and I've since driven around 30,000 miles in this fabulous machine.

6. I've used these racing colours ever since I raced motorcycles as a youngster. This helmet bears the scars of a spectacular crash at Oulton Park in 2007, which has had over six million views on YouTube. My kids thought it was very cool.

7. Knowing my passion for GN cars, Mike Worthington-Williams gave me this box of GN-branded matches found at Beaulieu. I'm sure it has no connection with the cars, but it's a treasured gift nonetheless.

8. Regularly to be found inhabiting my workshop, the sublimely talented Stefan Marjoram produces amazing artwork with a touch of juvenile humour, undoubtedly benefiting from my expert tutelage! I especially love his sketch of my V8 GN.

9. My obsession with ties stems from my Grandfather's insistence for always being correctly dressed. This genuine 1960s Pony Club tie is a particular favourite, rekindling the horror of being trapped by hundreds of girls at Pony Club camp.

**10.** I rebuilt this 1935 Harley-Davidson VL into my perfect 'bobber' road bike. With a suicide clutch, hand-shifter and electric lights, it starts first kick and is perfect for trips to the pub or running errands.

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 Letter onnth

 Image: Construction of the second se

## Better to have loved...

**IT WAS WITH** mixed emotions that I found *Octane* 175 on my doormat, with its stunning cover image of one of the most stunning cars, in the stunning colour of Viola! I was born in 1972, and *the* supercar of that year was the Ferrari 365 GTB/4. I had a copy of Doug Nye's book about the car, and studied the fascinating pictures of all its gorgeous details.

In 2005 I was in the process of re-mortgaging the house with my first wife and I looked at prices, but I couldn't justify spending more than my annual wages on one at £80k. Two years later prices were rising and I said to myself it's now or never.

My financial advisor came round one night and told me to go and make some coffee while he sat my wife down in the dining room and asked: 'Do you know what the hell he's doing?' Fortunately she was relaxed about it and in 2007 the Triumph Stag was pushed onto the drive and 'my' Daytona was edged into the garage.

What was wonderful about your article were the stories of using the cars. I have memories of strapping my five-year-old daughter into the passenger seat and blasting off to Goodwood, and of my road trip to the Nürburgring and Le Mans that ended with a brake issue this side of the Channel... but I did love driving that car! It nearly upstaged my little sister, taking her to church for her wedding.

Three years later, I was forced to part with it for an impending divorce. I've never seen it since until last month's *Octane*: the Bonhams advert on page 6 had a picture of a decidedly familiar car. A Daytona article and my old car being advertised – how could you?

Unfortunately, wife number two has already ruled out re-mortgaging again to buy a car worth a lot more than I am. *Gareth Richardson, Surrey* 

### Letter of the Month wins a beautiful Toccata watch by Raymond Weil, worth £595

This elegant, classically styled men's timepiece features a quartz movement inside a stainless steel 42mm case, and a stunning blue galvanic dial with appliqué indexes and date window, protected by a sapphire crystal. It is water resistant to 5atm and supplied on a black call feather strap with an alligator grain finish.

Raymond Weil is one of a handful of Swiss watchmakers that remain in family hands. The Toccata name reflects the Weil family's interest in music, which has led to many of the watch collections bearing musically themed names. raymond-weil.com



### **Rapping on**

As a long-time follower of Stephen Bayley's musings in your fine magazine I feel I must amend some of his remarks in *Octane* 173.

I was both concerned and pleasantly surprised that the subject of rap was discussed in such a classy publication. As a child of the 1980s and an 'old school' rap fanatic, I can report that yes indeed, Maserati, Jaguar and Ferrari (to name but a few) were repeatedly name-dropped on many tracks. Some personal favourites are:

1) *Road to the Riches* by Kool G Rap, who speaks of being 'like John Gotti and drive a Maserati' as well as being 'not too far from a Jaguar car'

2) Pete Rock warns of having a 'mag in the trunk of my Jag'

3) EPMD repeatedly spoke of 'black Maseratis' ... of course, with chrome kits

4) Ice-T bought his whole crew 'new Jags', and himself and DJ Evil E black and blue Ferraris

5) In *Soul on Ice*, Donald-D bought a black Testarossa convertible with cash

I won't go further but suffice to say they really did entice me to dream as large as my chequebook would allow. I'm no 'gangster, player' but I do drive a 2001 Jaguar XJR, a 1987 Volvo 740 Turbo (gold BBS RS wheels, anyone?) and I'm in the market for a 2012 Maserati Quattroporte GTS.

I suppose classic hip-hop and current rap are different entities and, much as with automobiles, I prefer the former. Jeff Himmelman, Nova Scotia, Canada

### More than just a badge

News in *Octane* that Aston Martin is to a) use Mercedes engines in its DB sports cars and b) move into American real estate and bicycles leaves me, frankly, very uncomfortable. It's a final nail in the proverbial burial box for what I hold dear in all things automotive and, well, British. I'm not hugely patriotic but there's something in my DNA that squirms when I read such news.

An Aston is an Aston because of its engine, not in spite of it. Does anyone believe that Mercedes or Ferrari would adopt an Aston engine in their finest sports cars, whatever the economic or technical benefits?

My interest in Aston Martin has been in decline for a while and so I treasure my old DBS V8 even more for what lies beneath the badge. Don't get me wrong: I like Mercedes, too, and have just acquired a W123 Coupé with a fine Mercedes twin-cam straight-six under the bonnet – just as it should be. *Steven Prevett, South Glamorgan* 



### **Fuelish mistake**

I have just had a lovely pair of original period Carter carburettors – intended for a competition 1956 Healey-Chevrolet – deliberately destroyed by eBay's Global Shipping Partner, Pitney Bowes. I raise this so your readers might learn from my misfortune.

The vendor sent my package to Pitney's facility in the USA for shipment to the UK. Pitney has destroyed these carbs on the basis they were 'dangerous goods', despite the fact that they were fully restored and had never had fuel in them since. The sale listing made this clear.

In terms of danger, the carbs presented the same risk as new carbs – that is, none – which are shipped happily. In its small print, Pitney Bowes reserves the right to destroy your goods without reference to you the purchaser. Sadly, eBay hides this wording behind a title where any purchaser is unlikely ever to look for it or find it. *Tim Llewellyn, East Sussex* 



### Lucky shot

Two recent articles in *Octane* prompted me to dig out a handful of photos from the 1963 1000km sports car race at the Nürburgring: the restoration of the Lola Mk6 GT by Allen Grant (issue 165), and the book review in issue 172 about the Lightweight Jaguar E-type, 49 FXN.

In 1963 we were touring Europe and camped next to the Südkurve for the weekend of the race. I took photos of the E-type and also one of the MG Midgets entering the Südkurve, early on Saturday morning during Practice. I then walked some kilometres through Nürburg village and on to what I thought was the Karussell, but which turned out to be the Schwalbenschwanz (a similar corner). There, with spectators six deep, I was lucky enough to take a great photo of the Lola.

Expecting a lunch break and more practice after lunch, I was amazed to see that the circuit was then thrown open to the general public for the rest of the day! This went on into the early evening, with tow trucks doing a booming business.

Looking recently at photos of the race itself, I notice that the Lola started the race on the Sunday with added front wing mirrors and extra air intakes cut into the rear wings overnight. *Philip Skelton, Victoria, Australia* 

### **Small world**

Opening Octane 174, I was immediately drawn to the article on the Moonstone Sierra RS Cosworth, because I owned one some years ago. Then I noticed the registration. No, it can't be! Those plates are on my garage wall here in Australia. Yes, this was 'my' car.

I bought it from Dave Brodie, having previously bought his BBR Mitsubishi Starion. By this time, the car had been modified by BBR and was officially tested at over 150mph with a 0-60mph time of 5.2 seconds. Even more impressive was its mid-range in-gear acceleration in fifth, which was faster than a 911 Turbo's. Moving to Australia in the late-'80s I took the car with me but soon fell foul of the constabulary. 'Do you know the speed limit, sir?' 'Yes,' I replied, 'It's 110.' 'Correct,' the officer replied, 'But that's kph not mph!'





Clockwise from left Philip Skelton's 1963 pictures of Lola GT, Lightweight E-type and camping field at the Nürburgring.

With a return to the UK on the cards, I decided to sell the car before leaving, because it was worth a great deal more there than in Blighty. This was confirmed when I sold it to a guy in Melbourne and took his car as part payment - a 1974 Porsche 911S, would you believe? In 2001 I returned to Aus for good and discovered the joys of open-top motoring, provided now by my Honda S2000 Roadster, with 345+ bhp courtesy of a superb KraftWerks supercharger installation by Revzone of Melbourne. Graham Willeard, Victoria, Australia

We forwarded Graham's email to the Cosworth's current owner Jesse Crosse (see Octane Cars, page 164) and have since heard that Graham has generously offered to send him the original registration plates for the car. Mark Dixon



### **Twin Cam troubles**

There was mention some time ago in *Octane* of a 'car to buy in 2017' being the 'potentially vexatious' MGA Twin Cam. In 1957 my late brother Tony and I had, with help from father Eric, a brand new MGA Twin Cam FHC [pictured below, left].

At first we had a lot of trouble with misfires, culminating in foul-smelling smoke emanating from the engine while my brother was driving from Staffordshire to Cornwall. Tony rang Sydney Enever at MG (a golfing friend of my father), who sent a lorry to collect the broken Twin Cam.

After two weeks father had a call from Sydney, saying that a new type of piston and a new design of head had been fitted. Apart from needing a pint of oil every 150 miles, the Twin Cam was OK for the next two years, when Tony sold it to a friend, Peter Glover, who wanted to strip the car for racing. He would put the engine in a used MG TF that he had in stock.

The MGA Twin Cam Group tells me that it is aware of only one MG TF, registered YHA 22, with an MGA Twin Cam engine [below]. Could this be the TF that Peter Glover fitted the Twin Cam into? Peter Morrey, Aberdeenshire



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# CREWE'S MUSE

949

In 1952 the R Type Continental Fastback defined all that's best about Bentley. Under the spotlight, it's still the inspiration for today's cars

Words Glen Waddington Photography Charlie Magee

ore than six decades have passed since the Bentley R Type Continental Fastback – or Bentley Continental Sports Saloon, took on the mantle of

as it was officially known – took on the mantle of World's Fastest Four-Seater. It was also the world's most expensive, and quite possibly the most beautiful, too. Something special happened when Bentley's chief engineer Ivan Evernden and stylist John Blatchley came up with a windcheating shape, HJ Mulliner beat it from aluminium, and with it clad the surprisingly sporting chassis of Bentley's mainstay R Type saloon.

It's no wonder then, that when Bentley was relaunched under new ownership following the Volkswagen Group's takeover in 1998, Crewe was tasked with producing a new car inspired by the old one. It was such an iconic shape that it would define the 'design DNA' of Bentley's new products. And when the Continental GT (see page **??**) was launched, there was no doubt where its shape, and especially its swagelines and haunches, had come from. Only now, 15 years later, is that car about to be replaced by an all-new one, still recognisably the offspring of Blatchley's classic.

Yet while Bentley's first mass-production saloon went on to sell in significant numbers – initial production capacity of 9500 cars per year led to a 12-month waiting list – the Fastback sold only 208 between 1952 and 1955. It's rare and coveted, and deservedly so. But this was no mere production car. It was assembled by hand and offered for the sum of £6928, when launched. A Ford Consul, for comparison, then cost £707; the average UK annual salary was £468, and the average sale price of a house was £1891.

This was a big car, fully 206in (5.245m) long, so it's really a limo yet carries only four in a two-door fastback body that weighs a relatively sylph-like 1724kg. It was made for the type of buyer who might otherwise have employed a chauffeur (and probably did) but chose this car when he wanted to drive himself. Across a continent, for example. That sleek body, a longer final drive ratio, and up to 172bhp from the straight-six (up to 4.9 litres from the 153bhp 4.5, itself a highly tuned version of the saloon's 140bhp version) made the Fastback a near-120mph prospect. Only shortly before, performance of that magnitude had been the preserve of skimpier sports cars such as Jaguar's XK120.

Aluminium construction kept the kerbweight down, but there were other concessions too. Standard specification meant only one sun-visor, ahead of the driver (if you could bear the additional weight, the passenger could have one too), the radio was optional, and the front seats were simple alloy-framed buckets rather than the heavier armchairs you'd associate with the R Type saloon or more luxurious coachbuilt versions. This was a Bentley with purpose, and its  $\rightarrow$ 





My favourite bit? The gracious flow of the front and rear fenders, like a bride walking into the church' – Stefan Sielaff performance potential was borne out when the prototype was tested to a 118.75mph five-lap average at Montlhéry. Only then, with encouragement from Bentley's overseas dealers, was the board of Rolls-Royce (owner of Bentley since 1931) convinced that there was a market for such a special project.

'MY FAVOURITE BIT? The gracious flow of the front and rear fenders, like a bride walking into the church. A special moment. It's a romantic car.' These are the words of Stefan Sielaff, Bentley's 55-year-old design director, with the company since 2015. He's the man charged with bringing the new Continental GT (see page 76) to fruition stylistically, and also the man in

charge of Bentley's 'design DNA'. Who better, then, to critique his great inspiration?

'You look at it; it is a sculpture,' he continues. 'The Bentley designers in their day – their ability to achieve technical and production solutions was more restricted, but they were involved with much more handcrafting. The R Type Continental defines the essence of Bentley's design DNA, and we try to reinterpret it every time.'

Is there a lesson, then, in how to design the perfect Bentley? We might not be surprised to hear his assertion that 'proportion always comes first', and if his belief that 'every human has the instinctive ability to judge elegance' sounds like it might flatter many, there can be few who wouldn't judge the Fastback to be the archetype of elegance.

He continues, conjuring an image of himself at a sketchpad: 'There's the short front overhang, a good proportion of dash-to-axle, the longer rear overhang and large wheels. Then we move away from proportion to the language of shape and line. The R Type Continental has distinctive character lines. In the side elevation we have the "power line" [up and over the front wheelarch then back, dropping, through the wing and door] and the haunch. Today we use the same recipe, only we do them crisp, always sharp. The rest of the surfacing is sexy, inspired by Bentleys and also by aircraft fuselages.'

### 'Sielaff is right about the proportions: dignified, indicative of speed, and breathtakingly special'

It is here that inspiration goes beyond the beautiful ivory car in our pictures, as Sielaff references the riveted alloy hulls of classics such as the Douglas DC3, and their combination of flowing forms and sharper edges. 'They break the wind and guide the air around the body,' he says. 'You should feel that. It's romantic.' That's a word he uses several times, and it's an epithet that certainly befits the sort of feelings evoked by the presence of a Fastback.

Details are worked differently today, however. For instance, the headlamps and tail-lamps. On the R Type, they're proprietary parts. Yes, there's no doubt that the Fastback's headlamps have inspired all the current Bentleys', but it's to do with positioning rather than the units themselves. Today, inspiration comes from crystal-cut glass.

'It's all about atmosphere, a sense of occasion,' says Sielaff. 'Imagine how candle-light comes from a chandelier. It's a move away from the more robotic treatments of lighting evident in many modern luxury cars. Think of British heritage, Scotch whisky in crystal tumblers, the fireside atmosphere of a traditional country hotel. Those are the feelings we're trying to evoke.'

Think of that and you're as likely to picture a Fastback parked outside as you are the latest Bentley. Here in the studio the R Type exudes an assertive calm. Sielaff is right about those proportions: strong, dignified, indicative of speed, yet also breathtakingly special, particularly in the sweep of the tail, from the trailing edge of the roof almost to the floor in a single, elongated line. This car was designed in the age of streamlining, rather than honed in a wind tunnel. If it looked fast, it probably would be. And that turned out to be true.

It also has the kind of looks that stand the test of time. Of course, nobody would look at the Fastback and imagine it could come from any other era, but a combination of its rarity, its abilities on the road, its breeding and its style mean that some have changed hands at prices upwards of £1 million. That would likely not be the case if Blatchley's creation hadn't transcended its era in such a way. And it's something that Sielaff intends to remain true of the Bentleys designed under his leadership.

'As a designer you try to be as extreme as possible but, with a luxury brand, you need to make a timeless statement,' he says. 'Today, car design is running after a quick statement, with complex shapes and lines. It overstretches the attention of the customer; they lose interest very quickly. Good design *is* complex in detail, but simple overall. If you can define a car in two lines plus its surfaces, then in future you'll look back on a masterpiece. It's like the Porsche 911. There's always a satisfaction, looking back even after a decade. It's never embarrassing. A car like that can become part of the family, passed to the next generation.'

Although the R Type Fastback was designed during Rolls-Royce's tenure of Bentley, Sielaff believes that what differentiated it then from the mother marque is what will define Bentleys in the future. 'It will continue to be a source of inspiration. Look at the spectrum of expensive cars. Super-sports cars on one side, luxury cars on the other. Bentley's fusion of performance and luxury is very different from what defines Rolls-Royce. The R Type Continental contains this imagery, this elegance, this combination of sculpture, luxury and performance. It's a different pace of luxury – not soulless and futuristic, but heartwarming. That's the vision we have for Bentley's future. Elegance is very, very important.'

And it will continue to be for the foreseeable. 'I don't believe in breaking away from such heritage. You have to redefine and reinterpret, for sure, but don't lose the golden flow of heritage.'

IT'S TIME TO take a look around, first examining the seven-bearing straight-six under that bonnet. It's a split hood, so you can gain access down each side, admiring the polished trumpets of the twin SU carburettors and the black silk finish of the rocker covers. It's understated, but it looks capable.

Move along the sides and you notice the sharp peaks of the flowing wings, the faired-in rear wheels, the gentle glow of chrome-on-brass brightwork. This 1953 example has belonged to Bentley since 2001 and it's immaculate, a well-used yet perfectly maintained example that earns its keep by taking part in events and rallies around the world.

Swing open that long yet surprisingly unhefty door and take in the gorgeously patinated blood-red trim. It feels original in here, mature rather than simply old.  $\rightarrow$ 

### Facing page, from top

It's possible there has never been a more characteristic profile than this, and it's one that continues to inform Bentley's latest cars; straight-six is strong and quiet.





The ambience is high in quality - hide on seats and doors, cloth headliner, wooden dash - but it isn't inyour-face opulent. That dash looks like a Mid-Century sideboard, and it contains matching Bentley-badged speedo and revcounter, both of which read clockwise from the upper-right quadrant. You squeeze your knees and thighs under the slim, broad-diameter rim of the three-spoke Bakelite wheel, having already negotiated your legs and feet past the gearlever, its knob set at knee-height, the assembly getting in your way in the footwell. The window winds down with barely two spins of the winder, the high ratio of the mechanism a happy hand-over from the R Type saloon.

That straight-six swishes into life and breathes deeper with a gentle caress of the throttle. You can hear it, but there's little in the way of mechanical noise, just aspiration. Select first and pull away, aware of the solidity of the gearlever, the weight of the steering and the Fastback's lengthy dimensions. The 'Continental' nomenclature suits it; this is no town car.

On the open road it comes together beautifully. You sit high, well above the road in a command position, vet with legs out in front, sports-car style. The bucketseat holds you in place, so much better than sliding about on a leather bench, clinging to the wheel. Instead you get to place the car, and you can do that with surprising accuracy. There are coils and wishbones upfront, a live axle on coils and double-acting lever-arms at the back, nothing sophisticated but well-proven and certainly not archaic for the era. The ride is buoyant, occasionally a little busy, but you hear it patter and feel it bounce rather than having your teeth rattled, and the steering livens and lightens into a surprisingly consistent ally once you're powering along.

There's decent pace to be had, though acceleration is strong rather than thrilling: speed in this case is all about maintaining what you've achieved and bowling along in relative calm thanks to the long legs of that back axle. In fact, if one adjective defines your motion in this car, it is elegant. That word again. A car that drives like it looks.

And when a car satisfies with every aesthetic element as fully as the Bentley R Type Continental Fastback, there can be no higher praise. End

### 1953 Bentley R Type Continental Fastback

Engine 4566cc straight-six, IOE, twin 2in SU carburettors Power 153bhp @ 4000rpm Transmission Four-speed manual, rear-wheel drive Steering Worm and roller Suspension Front: double wishbones, coil springs, lever-arm dampers. Rear: live axle, coil springs, dual-acting lever-arm dampers Brakes drums Weight 1700kg Top speed 118mph 0-60mph 13.6sec





### **2017 Competition Results**

Goodwood 75th Members Meeting Gerry Marshall Trophy Race 1 - 1st Race 2 - 1st

**Donington Historic Festival** Stirling Moss Trophy - 1st Historic Touring Car Challenge - 1st

Mille Miglia All competing crews finished - 10 cars in total

Brands Hatch Masters Historic Festival

Stirling Moss Trophy - 1st

Snetterton Aston Martin Owners Club Meeting Historic Touring Car Challenge – 1st

> Silverstone Classic Stirling Moss Trophy - Ist Woodcote Trophy - 2nd

Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance

The FIVA postwar award for the best preserved and regularly driven car - Bentley R-Type Continental

**Goodwood Revival** 

Whitsun Trophy - 1st Freddie March Trophy - 2nd RAC TT Celebration - 2nd

Spa Six Hours Combined Stirling Moss/Woodcote Trophy - 1st Spa Six Hours Endurance - 1st

The Warren Concourse d'Elegance 2017

2nd in Class N Racing category - 1964 AC Cobra Best is Class F European Classics - 1972 Lamborghini Miura Best in Class H Ferrari Racing & 2nd Best in Show - Ferrari 250 MM Vignale Spyder

> Bernina Gran Turismo Overall Winners

Algarve Classic Festival Combined Historic Touring Car Challenge and Tony Dron Trophy -2nd Motor Racing Legends 1950's Sports-Car Race - 1st

Motor Racing Legend's overall series title for the 2017 season



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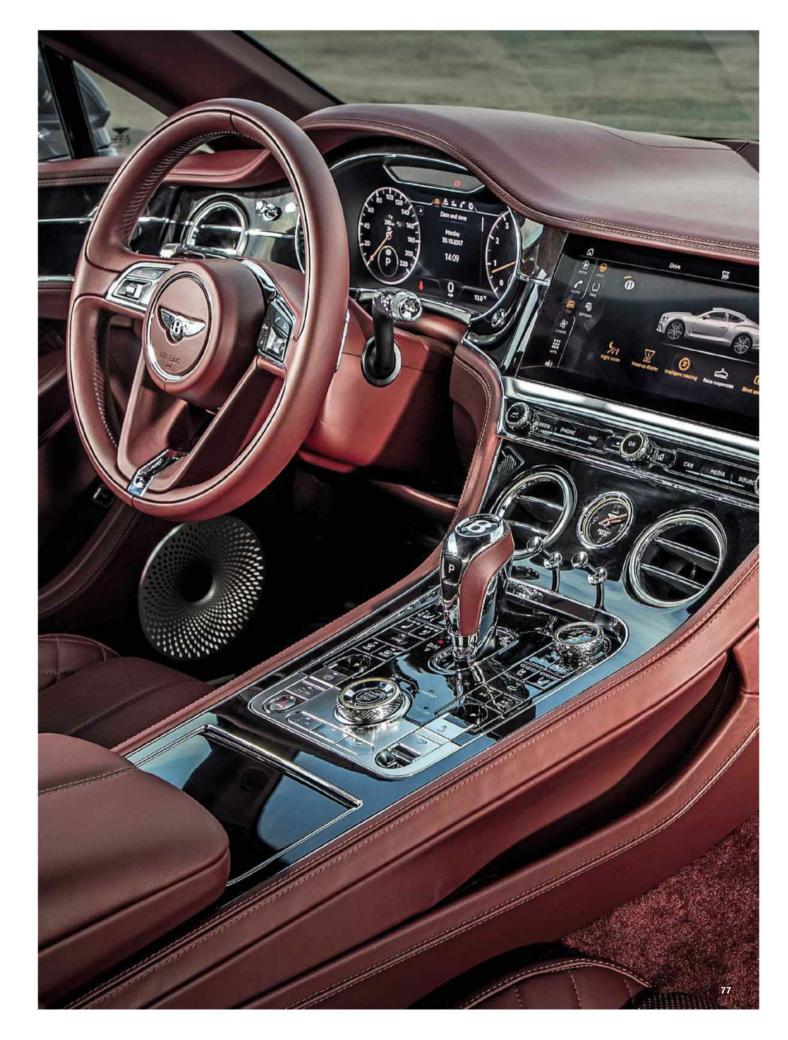
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## HEIR TO THE THRONE

Octane takes an early drive in the brand new Bentley Continental GT. Could it be the king of the crop?

Words Steve Sutcliffe





ven just the name is exciting. In the 1950s, 'Continental' was associated with some of the most beautiful-looking GT cars known to man. And then in 2003 the legendary moniker was reborn and attached to the very first car Bentley produced after it was taken over by Volkswagen. So it's

a big deal for Bentley, the new Continental GT. For 2018, it has been completely re-engineered, to a degree that Bentley claims it is now 100% brand new. And the major news this time is that it shares its underpinnings not with a humble VW but, instead, with those of the Porsche Panamera. Bentley's engineers were involved at ground level with their equivalents at Porsche throughout development, so they could dictate *exactly* which parts they were going to end up with. And that has made a huge difference to the quality of the end product.

At its heart the Conti GT is still powered by a thundering 6.0-litre twin-turbo W12 engine, but although it features the same capacity as the previous W12 this particular version is brand spanking new, even to the point that it has a different firing order. And it's mated to a similarly fresh (for Bentley) eight-speed dual-clutch gearbox, the exact same one that's used in the Panamera.

As before, the GT is four-wheel-drive and its outputs are predictably ground-shaking. Maximum power is 626bhp at 6000rpm while maximum torque is a whopping 664lb ft, developed between 1350 and 4500rpm. More plateau than peak, then, and a figure that's almost 40% bigger than before. Combined with a launch control system, this is sufficient zeal to fire the 2244kg GT to 60mph in 3.6 seconds and to a top speed of 207mph, with 0-100mph taking well under nine seconds. For such a vast machine the new GT is seriously rapid, far more so than before, despite weighing only 76kg less than the previous model.

But if anything it's the GT's chassis and suspension that represent the biggest steps forward, because Bentley claims the car is not only more comfortable than before but, crucially, also a lot more sporting in its intent. And once again, the sharing of parts with Porsche has aided it in this respect.

For a start, the W12 engine is set around 150mm further back in the chassis than previously, which makes a huge difference to the GT's balance, say the engineers. There are double wishbones at the front and a multi-link arrangement at the rear, but at both ends there is a three-chamber air suspension system with a 48V electronically 'active' anti-roll bar. Together, these elements provide the new GT with vastly more control. The brakes are also the biggest of any production road







car's yet seen (an echo of the old car's claim), with 420mm steel vented discs at the front and 380mm rotors at the back.

This time, the way in which the four-wheel-drive system deploys its power and torque has been radically altered, and you get to choose how it works by scrolling between Comfort, Bentley and Sport. Plus you can then tailor everything individually by venturing deeper into the drive menu and selecting Custom.

'It almost doesn't matter how heavy the car is because we can control everything so much better this time,' says the GT's chief chassis engineer Keith Sharp.

WE'RE IN ANGLESEY, testing some pre-production protoypes, well ahead of customer cars arriving next summer. In Comfort mode up to 38% of torque goes to the front axle, which makes the GT feel like a regular four-wheel-drive car. But if you then select Bentley **→** 

#### Left and above

Sutcliffe is ensconced in luxury yet in command of 207mph capability; new bodywork is lower and sleeker than before.



### SCULPTING THE NEW CONTINENTAL GT

## Glen Waddington speaks to Bentley design director Stefan Sielaff

'The Continental GT is at the heart of our portfolio. Elegance is very, very important,' says Sielaff about his latest work. New technology is responsible for the taut sculpting of the new Continental GT's flanks: this is the first car to have an entire bodyside made using the 'Super Formed' process, in which aluminium is heated to 500°C and then coaxed into shape under high-pressure air. The method allows designers to pen more sharply defined body lines, such as in the new car's haunches. And this technology is largely responsible for a near-80kg weight-saving over the previous generation – though the car still weighs well over two tonnes...

Sielaff speaks of 'a different pace of luxury, not soulless and futuristic but heartwarming'. He also talks about a traditional method of achieving the correct look: 'It is important that we work with our hands. We still use clay models. Yes, we have all the most modern computer-modelling techniques, but sooner or later we always work in clay. With our hands. The human touch is important. We could move away from that, deliberately, but that leads to a lack of sensation. We need to feel the way the design works.'

Perhaps less surprisingly, the human eye is important too – though the lengths the design department goes to in order to achieve the perfect light for viewing is remarkable. 'We paint the clay in silver,' says Sielaff, 'and we put it in daylight, the warmest light, not under electric light. In fact, we take the clay to our colleagues at Seat, in Barcelona, where the light is so much nicer than in Crewe! You see the reflections in the sculpture? We control the light and shadow. It's almost like the human body, yet also abstract. With a sculpture you just see the beauty. Like a great photograph.'

Sielaff isn't only Bentley's director of design, he's also responsible for overseeing interior design across the entire VW group. And a car as luxurious as the latest Bentley needs to differentiate itself from, say, a top-of-therange Audi. So, yes, there's tech inside the Continental GT, such as the TFT-screen instrument panel, and the nav-screen that rotates through 120° at a time to present alternative faces of wood veneer or a panel of three gauges – yet there are over 10m<sup>2</sup> of wood veneer in each car. And the hides that cover the seats are finished with a new embroidered diamond quilting that employs 712 stitches in every single diamond-shaped panel.

Laminated acoustic glass excludes unwanted noise, while a bespoke Naim audio system keeps audiophiles happy. And while 626bhp and 2244kg aren't exactly an environmentally friendly combination, Bentley's Crewe factory roof was fitted with 20,815 solar panels – making for a reduction in  $CO_2$  output of 2,500,000kg per year.



### 2018 Bentley Continental GT

Engine 5998cc twin-turbo 48-valve V12, DOHC per bank Power 626bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 664lb ft @ 1350-4500rpm Transmission Eight-speed dual-clutch automatic, four-wheel drive Steering Rack and pinion, power-assisted Suspension Front: double wishbones, air springs/dampers. Rear: multi-link, air springs/dampers Brakes Vented discs Weight 2244kg Top speed 207mph 0-62mph 3.6sec

mode, a little bit less torque goes to the front axle and the car starts to feel a touch more sporting, with a corresponding step up in control from the dampers plus a more thrusting map for the throttle and gearbox.

In Bentley mode there is a delicious sense of serenity about the way the GT glides across the landscape. It feels sporting but also supremely refined, with light yet hyper-accurate steering and a lovely sense of balance to the ride and body control.

On these twisting roads the new GT feels properly rapid, partly because it manages to disguise its vast weight so effectively, just as Sharp claims, but also because the responses from the engine and gearbox are so keen. And the way it summons its energy with such effortless efficiency really does need to be experienced to be believed. It feels ever-so-slightly Veyron-like in the way it sucks in the horizon and deposits you so instantly upon it.

The sense of acceleration it produces is total, yet the suspension and ride control it displays are also extraordinary. As is the way the new dual-clutch gearbox operates. Which is to say, brilliantly. Turbo-lag from the W12 engine also doesn't seem to exist, as far as I can tell. Basically the GT goes, and goes hard, from the moment you squeeze the throttle.

But it's not until you select Sport mode and drive it on a track that you can fully appreciate how far Above Styling themes are knowingly inspired by the 1952 R Type Continental yet the new car is genuinely up to the

moment in technology.

Bentley has gone with the GT this time. Because in Sport mode only 17% of drive goes to the front axle, and everything else – dampers, throttle, gearbox, exhaust – is set to deliver maximum sporting thrills. And in Sport mode the new GT feels quite a lot like a full-blown sports car, displaying an agility that is extremely difficult to associate with its vast kerbweight. You can't quite throw it around like a BMW M3, but it's not far off delivering that kind of agility.

And if you turn off the ESP, as Bentley insists I do, it will do things that you will find even harder to believe. You want great big 100-yard powerslides from a Continental GT? No problem, sir, just press the right buttons in the right order and you can shred the new 22in rear tyres to your heart's content.

And yet at the other end of the scale the new GT is more comfortable and more refined than ever before to drive on the road. And it has one of the most highquality feeling and best-equipped cabins of any car available, at any price. Oh yes, and in the flesh it also looks around ten times better than the old model.

For a shade less than 160 grand, it could well be the best GT in the world right now. Or pretty much ever, come to think of it. But if you can't wait for yours to arrive, or you don't quite have that much to spend, there's a lot to be said for the outgoing car: 200mph for £25,000? Turn the page...

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## THE NUMBERS GAME

200mph for £25,000! Yes, the last Bentley Continental GT is something of a bargain. Just make sure you buy the right one...

Words Glen Waddington Photography Alex Tapley



et's kick off with some stats. By necessity they're some big ones because the Bentley Continental GT was always a big deal: a superfast heavyweight with a huge twinturbo 12-cylinder engine that was never cheap to buy new. And it was big news when it was launched in 2003. In fact, 2003 was quite a big year for Great Britain in general, as it also saw the appearance of Aston Martin's DB9 and Jaguar's high-tech if conservative-looking X350-generation XJ saloon.

But the Continental GT was perhaps the biggest news of all because it marked a step-change in philosophy at Bentley, which had been under the auspices of the Volkswagen Group since 1998. So here it was, a new sporting luxury coupé, weighing just under 2.4 tonnes, costing £110,000, and capable of a top speed of 198mph. And it was a big hit, easily surpassing the projected production figures of 6000 per year. All this from a company that had been handbuilding leviathans by the hundred.

The secret? Crewe's missile was (whisper it) really a German creation. A Volkswagen Phaeton platform, air suspension from Audi, and a twin-turbocharged version of the group's 6.0-litre W12 engine, which made for 553bhp at 6100rpm and acceleration from rest to 60mph in only 4.7 seconds. All in total comfort and with the kind of backing track that sounded serious when you wanted it to, and only when you wanted it to.

Fancy some more numbers? How about 479lb ft of torque from just 1600rpm pretty much all the way to 6000rpm. Or that if you twitch your toe at 50mph, you'll be doing 75mph only 3.3 seconds later. That the 405mm-diameter brake discs were the biggest ever fitted to a production car, engineered to generate the equivalent of 3500bhp in order to haul down nearly three tonnes of laden GT from 200mph. That it took six people a total of 18 hours to leather-stitch the

steering wheel by hand. Or that you'll be lucky to see more than 12mpg if you drive it like you want to.

'Luxury has never been this stimulating,' said *Car* magazine when it first drove one back in the late summer of 2003. 'Never has such stimulating luxury been so affordable,' said a bloke from *Octane*, just now. Really? Well, just refer back to our headline. This is the 200mph supercar (give or take) for just £25,000. Maybe even less, if you're brave.

Of course, you can still (just about) buy one new. I doubt Bentley offers discounting but there are probably some good leasing deals available on the last few as the new Continental GT comes on stream. That's why we're here, after all. The arrival of Bentley's latest is making us reappraise just what great value for money the outgoing car could be.

Walk into a Bentley dealer and the pricing starts at around £140,000 for a newly minted, old-gen V8 coupé and tops out at £233,000 for the fastest Supersports Convertible. You know, the one you need if you fancy a little more than 700bhp to shove you along with the roof down. Or, at the other end, you can pay less than £20,000 for a V12 coupé going back towards the '03 launch, perhaps with a leggy-ish 100,000 miles on the clock. There's better hunting above £25,000, from which you can demand proper service history and expect a mileage of 50,000 or so. The original go-faster GT Speed model kicks in around £40,000-45,000, the Supersports £55,000-60,000.

Then you've got the half-time revised version, not really a brand new car but heavily upgraded, and  $\rightarrow$ 

'Here it was, a new luxury coupé, costing £110,000, capable of 198mph. And it was a big hit'





Right, below and below right At home equally in refined urban surroundings or out on the open road; luxurious interior brought Bentley into the 21st Century.







#### Above

Styling takes cues from the 1952 R Type Continental Fastback yet manages not to look archly retro. recognisable by its smaller outer front lamps, the rear numberplate housed in a wedgier-looking slot in the bumper, and a modernised interior that nonetheless carried on with a dashboard that makes the passenger feel as important as the driver. And with leather still wrapping literally everything. The Mk2 arrived in 2011 and is priced from around £60,000, the subsequent, slightly more efficient (and gorgeous-sounding) V8 version from £70,000, the Speed from £75,000, the Supersports from £85,000 or so.

There was a convertible too, called GTC naturally enough, which bowed in 2006, and all the original series received upgrades from 2007, to become known as 2008-model-year cars.

So, what are they like to live with? Let me introduce you to the 2003 British Motor Show car, the early Continental GT owned by Jimmy Medcalf, chairman of the Bentley Drivers Club – it shares garage space with a trio of vintage Bentleys, and a 1920s fourcylinder engine, mounted on a rig so it can be started at any opportunity (satisfyingly, it fires instantly).

'I rang Bentley shortly after the launch,' he says. 'There was quite a waiting list. Then I was suddenly offered the show car, and got in quick. It was the first to be painted this colour.'

You can imagine how this metallic blue hue would stand out at a motor show, and it's teamed with

a soothingly creamy interior. Lots of wood and those bullseye vents and organ-stops are evidence of trad Bentley (really Rolls-Royce) style being brought into the 21st Century alongside a large touchscreen, Tiptronic transmission and full climate control. The highback seats (electrically adjusted, with heating and a massage function) feel cosseting yet supportive, and you sit high up in comparison to mere ordinary cars, yet lower and more laidback than you might in any older Bentley.

The V12 announces itself with an assertive yet discreet *woofle* and we move off along the road, noticing that any lumps or bumps are largely smothered by the Bentley's mass. Any problems while you've owned it, Jimmy?

'None whatsoever. It's done just over 60,000 miles and we've driven it everywhere: Monte-Carlo a few times, and to the top of Scotland. We've just come back from a trip around North Yorkshire in it. It's fast and relaxing. Very easy to drive quickly and it doesn't tire you out on a long trip. And it's had only routine maintenance. Just keeping it regularly serviced means it always runs perfectly. True, it can be thirsty, yet it will do more than 20mpg on a long cruise. Go on, put it in Sport and put your foot down.'

I'm happy to oblige, dropping the Tiptronic shifter and adjusting the four-phase dampers one notch up  $\rightarrow$ 



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## 'The V12 is sonorous rather than loud, yet clear-voiced, more Ferrarikeen than Mercedes-muffled'

#### Above

Two turbochargers, four camshafts, 48 valves and 12 cylinders add up to 553bhp and 198mph. from Comfort. Then I let loose a tidal wave of torque. The Bentley seems to gather itself and make one massive move along the road. The V12 can be heard, sonorous rather than loud, yet surprisingly clearvoiced, more Ferrari-keen than Mercedes-muffled. There isn't much feedback from the steering but what does surprise is how the Bentley maintains its poise through corners. Sure, it rolls a bit, but the four-wheel drive apportions torque where it helps most, allowing the car to bluster through at unlikely pace.

Any quirks to report? 'Not really,' says Medcalf. 'The only funny thing was that I heard you need to remove a wing to change a front headlamp bulb. But I was also told that the bulbs last forever...'

Of course, it pays to know what you're letting yourself in for, buying a car as fast and complex as a Continental GT – even when the asking price is a relatively modest one. 'They're bulletproof if they're

### 2003 Bentley Continental GT

Engine 5998cc twin-turbo 48-valve W12, DOHC per bank Power 553bhp @ 6100rpm Torque 479lb ft from 1600rpm Transmission Six-speed automatic, four-wheel drive Steering Rack and pinion, power-assisted Suspension Front and rear: double wishbones, air springs/dampers Brakes Vented discs Weight 2380kg Top speed 198mph 0-60mph 4.7sec

looked after,' says specialist Nigel Sandell. 'Even better if you can go for one of the cars built after 2007. Bentley made a few changes and those cars seem better-built and less prone to glitches. Of course, many of the more affordable cars have been around for a while now. With any car, you need to work out its past. And that means looking beyond stamps in the service book. You need a trail of bills to prove what's been done.'

What you're looking out for is a car that has been maintained regardless of what it's actually worth; you might buy a Bentley Continental GT for £25,000, but it has the running costs of a car that cost at least £110,000 new – and items such as starter motors and alternators are an engine-out job to replace. Similarly, this is a quad-cam W12 whose timing chain runs at the back of the block ...

'There are many out there with the wrong tyres,' adds Sandell. 'Pirelli developed tyres to cope with a 2½-tonne car that can do 200mph. If they're missing, it's a sign that the car hasn't been cared for properly. And make sure any car you see has been properly garaged, especially early ones. Water ingress can be a problem and these cars have around 40 processors. Water and processors don't mix. You can't run one on a shoestring. Even new tail-lights are £900 each.'

Not surprisingly, they're heavy on bushes and brakes, so beware any judders or wobbles on a test drive, and check that the car sits right. Air springs can collapse and cost £1600 per corner to replace, for parts alone. 'And they eat batteries,' says Sandell. 'If it goes flat they cost a lot to get going again as you have to reset so much. Cars that aren't used regularly aren't good.'

Importantly, major engine and transmission work is still kept within the official dealer network, as Bentley hasn't released the specifications to independents. 'It's not a DIY prospect! Possibly the best investment you could make is to take any potential purchase along to a specialist for a thorough check.'

Or you could even go the 'approved used' route. Bentley's Pre-Owned Programme is open to cars of all ages, and a new-car-style warranty is available on those up to 11 years old. Just try saying that of any other 200mph supercar.

THANKS TO the Bentley Drivers Club, www.bdcl.org, and Nigel Sandell, www.nsandell.com. Also see preowned.bentleymotors.com.



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# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, GIAN PAOLO

Gian Paolo Dallara was one of the fathers of the Lamborghini Miura. Finally, he's treated himself to one – for his 80th birthday

Words Massimo Delbò Photography Max Serra





o y pres

o you remember your last birthday present? If not, maybe it wasn't such a special one. But the present that race-car

engineer and former Lamborghini chief engineer Gian Paolo Dallara bought himself for his 80th birthday would be extremely difficult to forget: a 1967 Lamborghini Miura P400.

We'd say he's earned it. Dallara is probably responsible for more motor sport success than any other human on the planet. There isn't a weekend goes by in which something with a technical contribution made by his company is not racing – and winning.

Originally from a small village in the Italian district of Parma, in the northern part of Emilia Romagna, young Gian Paolo always loved cars. His mind was imprinted by them passing by on the Mille Miglia, yet he had dreams of becoming an aeronautical engineer. And that's why, in the mid-1950s, he moved to Milan to attend the Politecnico, where a certain Enzo Ferrari was testing the engines of his racing cars.

When Ferrari asked for a talented young engineer, the recently graduated Dallara was the first name on his list. It was obviously the opportunity of a lifetime.

'I entered Ufficio Tecnico at Ferrari in 1959,' he recalls. 'Carlo Chiti was my boss, one of the few who was very good at both engine and chassis design, and colleagues included Franco Rocchi, still one of the best engine specialists, and Walter Salvarani, who was in charge of the chassis. They were both from the Officine Reggiane, back then the technical heaven for every engineer. From them it was possible to learn every day. The company was still small enough that Enzo Ferrari himself welcomed me on my first day at work, and there was time for me to look around at the whole process of imagining, designing and building a car.'

He seldom left his office. During a period spent calculating structures, or drafting gears and suspension, the highlight of his working day was to see drivers coming to test the seats for their new racing cars. So Dallara left Ferrari for Maserati in 1962. 'I simply wanted to go out on the track, to become more active,' he recalls. 'Maserati did not have a racing department, but maybe because of that I was allowed on the racetrack. I remember the first time: I was 25, at the 1962 12 Hours of Sebring. We finished fifth with Roger Penske and Bruce McLaren. And the transcontinental flight on a DC6 with a piston engine... it was like taking off to Mars, and that was what I was looking for.'





Clockwise from above Dallara receives his Miura's build sheet; the car is unveiled at Lamborghini Polo Storico; in the grounds at Sant'Agata; restored interior features leather doorcards – the only deviation from standard.





Above and above right Dallara takes Octane's Massimo Delbò for a drive close to Lamborghini's Sant'Agata headquarters. It was in 1963, while he was working on Maserati's Lucas mechanical fuel injection, that car enthusiast and friend Corrado Carpeggiani linked Dallara with Ferruccio Lamborghini. 'He told me of his project and I joined the team,' says Dallara, who was employed as an external consultant to work with Giotto Bizzarrini, trying to extract as much power as possible from his 3.5-litre V12 engine, along with two young talents from Ferrari and Abarth, Achille Bevini and Oliviero Pedrazzi. Some months later, Paolo Stanzani, who became a lifelong friend, joined too and together they became the foundation of Automobili Lamborghini.

'Looking back at those days, I'm increasingly convinced that only a new man in the car business, as Lamborghini was, could have hired somebody so young and unaware of how much he still had to learn as me.' At Lamborghini everything was new, and most of the time whatever was required was simply designed and manufactured in-house by the very young, passionate and sometimes conceited team, supported at all times by Ferruccio's motto: 'If we don't experiment, we can't create something new.'

Such innovation creates amazing, futuristic products, including the double-overhead-cam technology of Lamborghini's first car, the 350 GT, a sophistication that even Ferrari was yet to apply to its road cars. But it also comes at a cost, in reliability and development time, with the early customers having



the privilege of being the development drivers. And only three years after the first Lamborghini, the Miura arrived, a car that forced the car world to invent a new term to define it: supercar.

'The idea for the mid-mounted transverse engine location in the Miura came to the Lamborghini team while looking at the Mini, the genius invention of Sir Alec Issigonis,' says Dallara. 'He'd employed the transverse-engine concept to save space in his revolutionary, tiny car; Lamborghini simply moved the engine further back to allow for a mid-mounted V12 without a long wheelbase. Everything else was a consequence of this idea, and the Mini heritage can be seen in the first sketches by Pedrazzi.'



## **'I REMEMBER DRIVING TO SANT'AGATA FOR** A MEETING WITH FERRUCCIO, BERTONE AND ENZO PREARO TO SEE THE FIRST PROPOSAL'

When Lamborghini showed its first rolling chassis at the Salone dell'Auto di Torino in November 1965, they really had no idea who would clothe it. Every decision was taken on the spot, and a fundamental move towards turning the chassis into a car came with an improvised meeting between Nuccio Bertone and Ferruccio Lamborghini. Even today, Dallara remembers that his team rather liked the Ford GT40 and wondered if something similar could be created.

'It was around Christmas, it was snowing and the company was closed for the holiday. I remember driving to Sant'Agata for a meeting with Ferruccio, Bertone and Enzo Prearo [Bertone's commercial manager], to see the first proposal for the car. As soon as we saw it, we fell in love and we asked Bertone not to touch it any more. It was simply perfect. When Lamborghini saw the car, he said "I like it, with this we'll enter history, but we won't be able to sell it." Yet both he and Bertone forecast a 50-strong production run over five years.'

The result starred at the 1966 Geneva show. A few days later, it was driven to Monaco, during the Grand Prix, and the rest is now a legend.

THIS 1967 MIURA P400, chassis no 3165, the 68th built and still with the extra-thin 0.8mm chassis tubing, was originally delivered on 10 October 1967, through the Parma Lamborghini dealer Mariano to Pier Luigi Bormioli. He was the son of an Italian glass magnate, an ardent playboy and the personification of the best days of the Italian Dolce Vita.

The white-on-black P400 soon became well-known in Parma and throughout Italy, because it was often used by his mistress, starlet Tamara Baroni, one of the  $\rightarrow$ 







Above and facing page Now resplendent, having been restored to its original white-over-black scheme, the Miura poses outside the home of Dallara's late colleague, Paolo Stanzani.

## 'AS I APPROACHED MY 80TH BIRTHDAY I PULLED THE TRIGGER. IT'S NOW OR NEVER'

most beautiful girls to grace the covers of the gossip magazines of the period.

'I remember the car very well,' says Dallara, 'since the day Mr Bormioli came to Sant'Agata Bolognese to collect it. I later saw it, already nicknamed "the Tamiura" by the gossip press, during a weekend I spent in Parma. It was always parked in front of the most exclusive places, but the idea that I might one day have the money to buy a car of that sort was so remote that I never thought about it. Back then, since the early 1960s I'd been the proud second owner of a light blue Fiat 500, bought at the Lombatti Fiat dealer in Fornovo as my only means of transport. I drove it every weekend from Maranello to Parma and back.'

Only in the last 15 or 20 years did Dallara start toying with the idea of buying a Miura. However, again and again, the time it took for him to convince himself he should allocate the budget for it meant that the car had already gone up in value.

'But as I approached my 80th birthday I pulled the trigger,' he says. 'It's now or never, I told myself, and I bought the cheapest available car, a 400 offered for sale in Sweden, painted grey and not in very good shape. I was totally unaware that it was the Bormioli car, originally delivered in my birth city. I later discovered that the less you spend in purchase, the more you spend in restoration, but luckily I found the people at Lamborghini Polo Storico were happy to help me, and taught me how a good restoration needed to be done.

'I spent evenings with my daughter imagining the right colour to paint the car, until Polo Storico's guy told me that the only correct option was to respect the original white, and he convinced me. The only nonoriginal part I've been allowed is the leather that covers the doors, instead of the original Vipla.'

The restoration took 14 months, about 3000 manhours, and every single component of the car has been restored, if original, or replaced when not. Great attention has been paid to details, even the very smallest, to make it as close as possible to when it was delivered to that first customer. And when a very excited Dallara arrives in Sant'Agata on a sunny Italian autumn day to collect the finished project, we are there waiting for him.





'I haven't seen the finished car in the metal until now,' he says. 'So far I've only seen some pictures of it, published after it won the Best in Show trophy at the Salon Privé concours. I got an incredible number of phone calls congratulating me for that trophy, far more than when my cars won Daytona. I wonder if I'm still capable of driving it; the last one I drove was more than 30 years ago.'

But as soon as Paolo Gabrielli, director of after-sales at Polo Storico, hands Dallara the keys, he proves himself still more than capable of handling the Miura. 'Today's traffic is not the best environment for such a car. For me it will be not a big issue – so far I've planned just a single journey in it, to Locanda Lorena on the island of Palmaria, to eat fish with my granddaughter. Then I'll show the Miura to the young engineers working for Dallara, to show them how naïve we were, and how, back then, electricity was only needed for the distributor, a detail we had to modify because the Miura engine was running anti-clockwise.

'I'll make them laugh when I tell them how Ford's R&D department bought one and sent us a picture, showing how, during their test, the metal bar linking the suspension bent. I'll show them how we built one of the most amazing cars in history while making so many mistakes with safety – or the lack of it; putting too much weight over the back, and using four tyres of the same size. The cooling fans were too weak, and we

didn't know we should have closed the area beneath them to improve their effectiveness, and we did an inhouse gearbox and differential, because we needed it to make the car, without considering that none of us had ever designed one before.

In 1969 Dallara left Lamborghini to go racing, and he started working with Frank Williams and Alejandro de Tomaso for their Formula 1 team. In 1972 he established his own firm, in the garage behind his father's house, to save every possible extra expense, while still working for Lancia so he could earn a salary for his family. Yet despite his personal successes since, Dallara's love for the Miura and for his time at Lamborghini are very evident.

'We were all young, making our dreams come true; and even if I could imagine that without the Miura my career would have been the same, I'm proud to be considered one of its fathers and I have fond memories of the people I met during those amazing years.'

In saying so, he looks at the production sheet of his own car, immediately recognising the handwriting and signature of the late test driver Bob Wallace, and asks for a copy of it just before agreeing that we should take his freshly restored Miura to the late Paolo Stanzani's house for photography. 'It is a wonderful idea,' says Dallara. 'I can't imagine a better way to celebrate a great partner in work and a friend in life than by showing him my birthday present.'

### 1967 Lamborghini Miura P400

Engine 3929cc V12, DOHC per bank, four Weber triplechoke downdraught carburettors Power 350bhp @ 7000rpm Torque 262lb ft @ 5000rpm Transmission Five-speed manual, rearwheel drive Steering Rack and pinion Suspension Front and rear: double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar Brakes Discs Weight 1125kg Top speed 163mph 0-60mph 6.3sec

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## HERE'S SOME I MADE EARLIER

Gian Paolo Dallara could be Italy's best-kept racing secret. Here's why...

Words Richard Heseltine

YOU COULD SAY that Gian Paolo Dallara owns motor racing, but somehow that description seems wholly insufficient. With most modern-day categories being one-make series, Dallara builds cars for every major championship on the planet, from Formula 3 to IndyCar via all things in-between. And by that, we mean *all* the cars. Then you have to factor in his behind-the-scenes contributions to some of the greatest sports-prototypes of the past two decades (think Audi). Save for Formula 1, there are few arenas of motor racing that he hasn't conquered.

All of which is lightyears removed from when he started out at Ferrari in 1959 as an aeronautical engineering graduate. Dallara subsequently jumped ship to Maserati and then Lamborghini, where he initially worked on developing the 350GT's chassis and gearbox. He was also tasked with turning Giotto Bizzarrini's V12 engine design into something fit for a roadgoing gran turismo.

He lent his engineering skills to a raft of other models during the 1960s before designing a Formula 2 car for Alessandro de Tomaso. This in turn led to a position as technical director. That, and a Formula 1 bid with the Frank Williams-run 505 in 1970. Dallara also designed the chassis for the Pantera supercar before moving on to assist with the development of the Lancia Stratos.

After establishing Dallara Automobili in 1972, the designer also became a businessman – and a shrewd one at that. Constructing sports-racers for the local market brought in much-needed *lire*. The small factory in Varano de' Melegari near Parma soon became a hive of activity, while Dallara continued to act as a consultant to mainstream manufacturers.

During the 1970s, he developed the Fiat X1/9 Group 5 racer that inspired Lancia's competition chief Cesare Fiorio to commission the construction of the Beta Montecarlo Group 5 car – which claimed the 1980 World Championship for Makes. It marked the first international title for a Dallara-designed car and spawned the LC1 Group 6 car and LC2 Group C weapon.

Scroll forward to 1994, and Dallara's firm was given the job of designing what became the Ferrari 333SP. That's the very sports-prototype that claimed 56 wins into the following decade.

The 333SP was primarily targeted at the US, and it was via client/racer Andy Evans that Dallara was granted an entrée to Indy principal, Tony George, in the mid-'90s. Champ Car racing was in the midst of a controversial split, and George commissioned the construction of 15 new Dallara single-seaters for the new IRL breakaway series, plus 15 from rival constructor G-Force. Eddie Cheever won the Indy 500 in 1998, which marked the first victory for an Italian marque at this legendary venue for 58 years.

Dallara wasn't done with road cars, though. Over the past two decades, his firm has played a role in the creation of everything from the KTM X-Bow to the Bugatti Veyron via the Maserati MC12 and the Alfa Romeo 8C. The football-obsessed engineering great shows no sign of slowing down, either. We would be disappointed were it otherwise.

Clockwise from below

Maserati MC12, Ferrari's 56-time winning 333SP, the Alfa Romeo 8C and Lamborghini's 350GT: all made good by Gian Paolo Dallara.







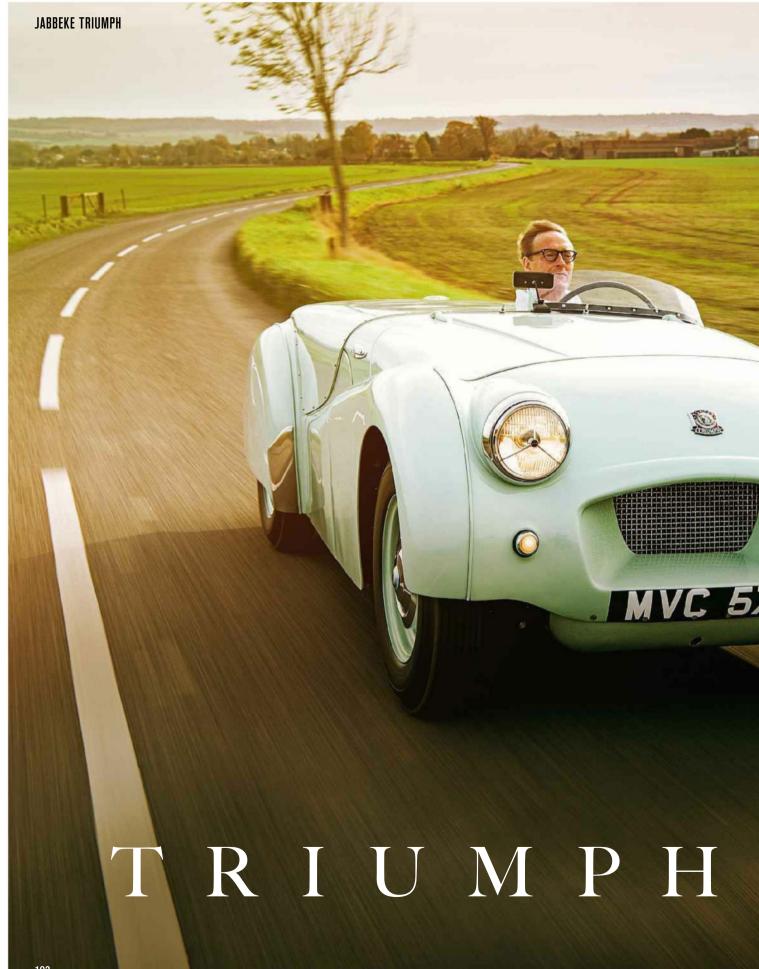
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More than 60 years ago, this special TR2 set a speed record at Jabbeke. Now Andrew English uncovers its deeper secret

751.

Photography Paul Harmer



odern Land Speed Records tend to be marked by four-figure target speeds and toiling teams of race and aerospace engineers, but it wasn't always so. At

one time the production 2.0-litre sports-car record was held by this car, MVC 575, an achingly modest Triumph TR2. In May 1953, this geranium-green 2.0-litre machine achieved a class record of 124.899mph at the Jabbeke highway in Belgium.

Back then, Jabbeke was a bit like the Nürburgring's Nordschleife is for today's hot-hatchback makers in terms of setting records. On that early motorway-graded road (with no barrier to separate record-breakers from normal traffic), in front of great-coated timing experts from the Royal Automobile Club Of Belgium, plus Brilliantined TV crews and a suited-and-booted press corps, Ken Richardson, a skilled engineer and plucky test driver, sitting on a cushion and crouched behind a tiny aero screen, coaxed out a new speed record. This was almost two months before production of the TR2 began at Canley in the West Midlands and the car's only modifications were the optional undershield, rearwing spats and a potentially lethal metal cockpit cover.

Lethal? It certainly feels that way sitting where Richardson sat 64 years ago in MVC 575, albeit in a proper seat, with that metal cockpit cover just brushing the back of my neck. With no seatbelts, rudimentary drum brakes and ethereal grip from its Excelsior crossply tyres, it wouldn't take much of a drama to have your correspondent's head bouncing free of its body down the road like an ancient leather football. In fact, this faithful recreation of the car's long-lost original metal tonneau normally sports a non-original safety head restraint to try to prevent drivers literally losing their heads.

This decollated end could also have been Richardson's on that record-breaking run, as he recounted in an article in *Triumph Over Triumph* magazine in 1998. In an unauthorised modification, the shepherd's crook-shaped engine breather pipe had been extended downwards below the level of the undershield, where the low pressure created a siphoning effect and sucked out the sump oil.

So the record-breaking run, he recalled, 'was very nearly ruined by inept interference. The whole of the underside of the car was plastered in oil... Had the oil reached the rear wheels



Facing page and below 'Guillotine-like' tonneau cover, aeroscreens and rear-wheel spats streamlined MVC 575 to the degree that it achieved nearly 125mph at Jabbeke in 1953.

on my practice run, I could have lost control of the car and shot over the central reservation and into the oncoming traffic.'

Richardson blamed a senior engineer on the team, who eventually owned up, but bad feeling remained. Which is strange, because Richardson got on reasonably well with Sir John Black, the controversial chairman of Standard Triumph. With his impulsive manner and tendency towards depressive moods, by all accounts including Richardson's, Black wasn't always the easiest to work with.

With the announcement of the new Triumph TR2 just months away in early 1953, Black had read of Sheila Van Damm achieving a speed of 120mph over a measured mile at Jabbeke in a 2.0-litre Sunbeam-Talbot Alpine. Concerned that this would affect his launch, Sir John told Richardson to organise a rival record attempt. A few days later, Black summoned Richardson to tell him the Jabbeke highway was booked for 20 May. Richardson was 'flabbergasted'. He thought the risks of car problems or bad weather meant a two-day window was the bare minimum for such a speed record attempt. Typically Black brooked no opposition: 'Everything's organised now, so we've got to get on with it.'

Richardson wrote: 'When Sir John says "Get on with it", you get on with it.'

Staying at the Queen and Castle pub near Kenilworth (it's still there), which became an unofficial base for the record-breaking run, Richardson and his small team would rise early for what became known as 'red-eye special' speed tests on the Bicester road near Oxford; they'd measure the road and stick in marker posts. Again disaster could have struck: 'Those icy roads were damn dangerous,' recalled Richardson. 'A patch of ice caught me out on the Bicester straight, which caused a bit of a moment.'

It doesn't bear thinking about – an engine seizure at speed, say, throwing this narrow prototype sports car into an uncontrolled slide that even a skilled and resourceful driver such as Richardson would have been able to do nothing about.

'They had wanted to let the press drive the car after the run,' says Glen Hewett, boss of Triumph specialist Protek of Wallingford, 'but they couldn't because the engine was knocking for all it was worth and there was oil all over the rear bodywork and even on the rear tyres.' It was Hewett who tracked down MVC 575, purchased it in November 2015 and over the following 18 months painstakingly restored it.

You can see how important this run was in a film commissioned by Standard Triumph (find it on YouTube by searching for 'Triumph TR2 Jabbeke speed test'). With cut-glass commentary from Raymond Baxter, the faded film shows Sir John Black, managing director of Standard Triumph, dapper in a trilby and overcoat. 'It was important enough to warrant a film crew,' says Hewett, 'but it's doubly important as the boss is there.'

As the film shows, not just Black but the cream of the European press corps, including Basil Cardew of *The Daily Express*, Courtenay Edwards of *The Sunday Telegraph*, Peter  $\rightarrow$ 











'There's a directness to the steering and a woofly exhaust note that remind of times gone by, and full throttle demands dainty feet'

Garnier of *The Autocar*, Laurie Cade of the London evening newspaper *The Star*, and Paul Frère. All told there were about 70 people at the eve-of-run dinner hosted by Black, all corralled by jovial PR chief Ivor Penrice in a bowler hat.

But that's really only half the story for this extraordinary car, which has been on display pretty much full-time since it was restored last year by Hewett. Like so many prototypes, MVC was then used as a test-department hack in the factory (it was Richardson's personal car for a while) and was sold on in October 1956 to a Mr John Hedger. Hewett has the original bill of sale for £650 from Welbeck Motors of London W1, where it was part exchanged for a Ford Popular. But through two more owners and the passage of years, it was driven into the ground until it was eventually dismantled with the intention of a restoration in 1976. And it was in that dilapidated state, spread around several lock-up garages, that Hewett tracked it down after persuading its reclusive owner to sell.

SO I'M THINKING about all this and the current value of this car (in excess of a quarter of a million) as I climb in, which is a struggle. Leg over like a Tory MP, then wobble upright standing on the driver's seat and with both hands on the metal tonneau in support, you waggle your feet under the big wire-spoked Bluemels steering wheel before, with a *pouf!*, you disappear like a magician's assistant into the cockpit with your head just poking out of the top. There's time to note the contrasting blue interior (Hewett is now convinced, with some justification, that MVC 575 was originally painted blue) and the virtually standard trim.

While Richardson notes that, sitting on the floor, the runs 'were not particularly comfortable', TR seats of this vintage feel like over-stuffed parlour chairs with no discernable side support. The blue-trimmed dashboard is straight out of the production brochure with, in splendid isolation on the left, a push/pull overdrive switch operable on all gears except first.

A bit of choke, press the starter and the old Standard/Vanguard engine burbles into life. This cast-iron, pushrod four-pot (also used in the Ferguson tractor) always sounds breathy and MVC 575 is no exception. Hewett did little to it other than making sure it had good balance, so gently engage first with that rifle-bolt precise lever and let up the light clutch. The smalldiameter SU carbs and soft cam profiles allow it to pull hard from about 1500rpm and it feels quite brisk without you ever needing to take the revs above 4000rpm.

So many TRs have been modified for practicality, safety and reliability and that's a shame: MCV 575 is a delight at medium speeds. It floats on those Excelsior tyres, there's a directness and lightness to the worm-and-peg steering and a woofly exhaust note that remind of times gone by, and full throttle demands dainty feet. In that respect MVC 575 feels like a very wellmaintained original TR: even the aero screens were an option



all the way up to late TR3a models, so the wind blast is familiar. It's only the inability to hook yourself in place with your elbow over the cutaway door that tells you this is a different sort of TR. Which is all fine and good if you don't want to go fast. When you do, however, this is a highly alternative kettle of fish.

Painfully twist your foot to get full throttle, the engine revs manfully and the gearchange slots cleanly even if the synchromesh action is best described as stately. The damping isn't bad, and the springs are stiff enough to resist too much body roll, but the tall tyres squish through the turns, which makes the steering feel disconnected. The outside front tyre squeals in protest at any form of spirited cornering and you need to plan hard stops with an early balancing push to get the drum brakes synchronised.



This is nothing to do with Hewett's expert preparation, it's how they were. And all the while that metal tonneau brushes hungrily at the back of your neck ...

'Richardson was a brave man alright,' says Bill Piggott, noted historian of all things Triumph and author of over 15 books. 'You need to remember that he had been BRM's test driver and drove that difficult V16 on the track and the road between the works at Bourne and the Folkingham test track.'

But Richardson's role wasn't just as a speed record driver; he'd been involved in the TR story from much earlier, which brings up the other remarkable part of this car's history. Whichever way you shuffle it, MCV 575 is *important*. There's little still extant from the earliest days of Triumph's sports car series, which ultimately begat the TR range from TR2 to TR7, the GT6 and the Stag. You see just a handful of the ex-works rally cars in various stages of originality, along with some of the earliest long-door TR2 models, so this early pre-production TR2 has a huge significance – but it doesn't stop there.

This wasn't Black's first attempt to challenge MG and Sunbeam in the lucrative sports-car market. Triumph's first post-war model was the Two Litre (as driven by television detective Bergerac), which was slow, ponderous and old fashioned – one of the last new cars to have a dickey seat. A second shot was the 20 TS prototypes (later erroneously known as TR1s); most historians concede there were at least two. These Manx-tail sports cars had ghastly flexible chassis  $\rightarrow$ 

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#### 1953 Triumph TR2

Engine 1991cc four-cylinder, OHV, twin SU H4 carburettors Power 90bhp @ 4800rpm Torque 117lb ft @ 3000rpm Transmission Four-speed manual with overdrive, rearwheel drive Steering Worm and peg Suspension Front: double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers. Rear: live axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, lever-arm dampers Brakes Drums Weight 955kg Top speed 120mph 0-60mph 11.9sec

and sleepy Vanguard engines and were roundly condemned by the press on a test drive. This is where Richardson, hired from BRM, comes in. On his first test drive, he is reputed to have described it as 'bloody awful'.

Richardson stayed with the project, which went back to the drawing board. Harry Webster improved the chassis, Lewis Dawtrey teased 90bhp out of the tough wet-liner engine, Walter Belgrove redesigned the body with a longer tail and a more practical boot, and Richardson tested and fed back. The resulting TR2 was unveiled in March 1953 at the Geneva show.

And what became of those two 20 TS precursors? Things moved too fast at Standard Triumph in those days to keep accurate records and they had no money.

'They wouldn't have thrown anything away,' says Hewett. 'There simply weren't the resources.'

So when Richardson required a pre-production TR for his record attempt, whence did he acquire the donor car? The solution became clear to Hewett as he revealed the secrets beneath the bespoke coachwork and lovely special bonnet badge of MVC 575. Riveted parts, special panels and hand fabrications, including a cover plate for the 20 TS's strange single-sided rear trailing arm, persuaded him that MVC had been built up from one of the two 20 TS models.

Piggott, too, is convinced and says that Hewett's car was in fact the second of the two 20 TS prototypes to be converted into a prototype TR2; the first being MWK 950, which used the uncompleted second 20 TS as a base. 'That other prototype also exists,' he says, 'and we know that it was the first car to be converted as its surviving logbook shows it as registered in January 1953, two months before MVC 575 was first registered.

'When I spoke to Ken [Richardson] he couldn't remember which one was the Geneva show car, but it was in fact MVC 575, which was also the one he'd jollied up with an aerodynamic kit to get the record. There is a third prototype as well, ORW 666, but that right-hand-drive car wasn't based on a 20 TS and no one is sure exactly what happened to it.'

'And yes, it [MVC 575] is an important car. It proved that a production 2.0-litre sports car could do preposterous speeds; 125mph is a speed that not many cars can do today. And it gave credibility to Triumph's sports-car project.'

He's not alone in that point of view. While introducing MVC 575 at the RAC Club dinner in its honour, Tom Purves, chairman of the RAC Club, referred to it as 'the most significant car Triumph ever built'. This former head of BMW UK and Rolls-Royce hillclimbs his Hewett-prepared TR3a and has a special place for Triumph in his heart.

'I like Triumph for personal reasons,' he explains. 'I think they did a good job of exploiting their export potential and they were very avant-garde using the Italian design house Michelotti. It's an unappreciated part of the British Motor Industry.'

There's an interesting footnote to the story in that Purves' former employer BMW owns the Triumph name, which it picked up along with Rover in 1994. Indeed, there are some folk who think that BMW might one day disinter the famous Triumph marque, particularly as its own sports cars have had an occasionally patchy history – witness the current collaboration with Toyota for a Z4 replacement.

Perhaps MVC 575 might inspire them? Who knows, but hopefully whatever might come out of such an idea would be a little less like a four-wheeled guillotine than this extraordinarily important record-breaking prototype.

The TR2 is soon to be in need of a new custodian. More information is available from Glen Hewett via protek-engineering.co.uk.



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# MY DAD KEN

Before he set speed records at Jabbeke, Ken Richardson earned an enviable reputation at ERA and BRM. Here he's remembered by his son, Paul Richardson

**BEFORE HE JOINED** the Standard Motor Company, Ken Richardson had spent 18 years building and testing racing cars. He found fame as the man who developed the Triumph TR2 – and scored a Land Speed Record with it – yet his interest in speed began with motorcycles in his hometown of Bourne, Lincolnshire. His first was a 'round tank' BSA, which he acquired at the age of 14, spending many an hour modifying it to increase performance. He then bought a 350 AJS, on which he had a serious accident on the Bourne to Spalding road. He broke both his ankles, yet his obsession with speed was undeterred. From the age of 15 Ken served a mechanical apprenticeship at Tuck Brothers of Bourne, a local engineering and car maintenance business. He worked under the guidance of Saville 'Sav' Turner. Sav, an extremely clever man, became a lifelong friend of Ken's, and indeed the Richardson family. I remember going round to Sav's bungalow in South Street with my father on several occasions during their retirement. It was there that I first set eyes on Sav's huge brass telescope, which was six or seven feet long and 8in in diameter; Sav and Ken would spend many an hour staring at constellations.

'Ken first demonstrated his skill in a racing car at Donington Park, when he equalled the lap time achieved by Raymond Mays'

The ever-inventive Sav designed an electrical system to replace the limelight stage lighting in London theatres, and Sav and Ken often went down there to install them. The business at Tuck Brothers included a fully equipped machine shop, and an electrical shop for reconditioning electrical generators. Piston rings and other intricate parts were manufactured in the machine shop and engines were re-bored and reconditioned on site. In those days white metal crankshaft bearings were hand-cast in moulds and the final finish accomplished by hand with special scrapers.

After his apprenticeship, Ken was offered the position of manager at an engineering and garage business near Spalding that also specialised in performance tuning. It was during this period, in the late 1920s and early '30s, that Ken helped local racing driver Raymond Mays, who also lived in Bourne, prepare his racing cars at weekends. These cars were a supercharged Vauxhall Villiers and the 'White Riley', which was the forerunner of the first 'A' type ERA.

Ken's professional career in motor racing began when he received a phone call from Raymond Mays in 1934, inviting him to join the recently formed ERA (English Racing Automobiles) team as a mechanic. Ken eagerly accepted and thereafter his career was described by motoring writer Kenneth Ullyett as 'one of the joyous adventures of motor sport'.

Based in premises adjacent to Raymond Mays' home, Eastgate House in Bourne, the ERA team raced on circuits and hillclimbs the world over – and very successfully. Ken first demonstrated his skill behind the wheel of a racing car at Donington Park, when he took the Mays ERA for a few warm-up laps and equalled the time eventually achieved by Mays.

Thus impressed, Mays appointed Ken works test driver and reserve driver to the team. I remember Ken relating a story about the tragic loss of Murray Jamieson, the renowned engine and supercharger expert at ERA. The ERA team was racing at Brooklands in the 1930s, and Ken and Murray had just enjoyed a cup of tea together in the pits before the start. Murray decided to watch the first few laps of the race a few hundred yards further round the circuit and on one of the first few laps an accident caused a car to slide off the circuit, demolish a fence and crash into spectators. Tragically, Murray was killed.



Ken remembered having to take Murray's car and personal effects back to his home in Stamford, near Bourne. He pointed out Murray's house to me and I'm still reminded of this terrible event whenever I drive past Rutland Terrace.

The ERA team is generally recognised as the cornerstone of British formula motor racing. One of my favourite examples of Ken's competitive spirit took place in South Africa, where he maintained Raymond Mays' ERA in a series of races over the Christmas and New Year period of 1937-'38. British and German battleships were anchored in Simonstown harbour on propaganda voyages, and Ray and Ken enjoyed much hospitality with the crews.

Ken, a powerful swimmer, was persuaded to represent the motor racing community in an internaval swimming contest, which included notable drivers such as Earl Howe, Luigi Villoresi, Count Jonny Lurani and Piero Taruffi. The race was across a wide section of the Vaal river near Johannesburg. Ken won the race, much to the surprise of the battle-trained sailors, and didn't have to buy a drink for a week, Facing page, and from top The late Ken Richardson, photographed in the 1990s; testing the fearsome V16 BRM at Monza; with the ERA that he prepared for Brooklands star Kay Petre.



#### Above

Ken Richardson, on right, with ERA and BRM boss Raymond Mays at a French meeting in the '30s. courtesy of Villoresi and Taruffi. He was a keen sportsman who played hockey and tennis at county level, and won the Lincolnshire swimming and diving championships three years running in the 1930s. We still have the trophy he was presented with.

In 1939 Raymond Mays decided to form his own team with his famed ERA R4D. The split with ERA team sponsor Humphrey Cook was amicable and Ken and designer Peter Berthon joined Ray. R4D was campaigned very successfully for the remainder of 1939, even breaking the Shelsley Hillclimb record with a time of 37.37 seconds, powered by a 2.0-litre engine with the usual Zoller supercharger, producing 340bhp. Other events included a second place at Donington, a win at Crystal Palace and another hillclimb record at Prescott, with a time of 46.14 seconds.

When war broke out in 1939 all motor racing activities ceased and Ken volunteered to become a fighter pilot. However, because of the specialised 'The team was soon concentrating on production of a revolutionary new Grand Prix car: the V16 BRM'

engine knowledge borne of his racing experience, he was seconded by the Government to take charge of an aircraft engine test facility in Coventry. There were eight test brakes for engines including Cyclone radials, American V12 Allisons, and the Rolls-Royce Merlin V12s that powered our Hurricane and Spitfire fighter planes. Ken always advocated that the Merlin was the finest piston-engine ever built.

He was subsequently transferred to a top-secret facility at Barnoldswick in Yorkshire, where he also became involved with a team working on the installation of the new reverse-flow Whittle jet engines into experimental aircraft. The first that took to the air was installed in the tail of a Wellington bomber, with the rear gun turret removed.

Ken also fitted one in the first prototype jet aircraft, the single-seater E28, so-named because of its 28ft wingspan. Twin Whittle jet engines were eventually installed into the experimental F940 – which became Britian's first production jet fighter, the Gloster Meteor. It first saw active service with 616 Squadron on 12 July 1944.

After the war Ken was approached by Raymond Mays to join his ERA team once more, and the R4D was again campaigned in international hillclimbs and road races with continued success. However, the team was soon concentrating on production of a revolutionary new Grand Prix car: the V16 BRM. The V16 had a design horsepower of 600bhp from its 1500cc supercharged engine and a top speed of 200mph, which was obviously an enormous undertaking for such a small team.

The first prototype was completed in 1949 and Ken spent many a day testing it at the local Folkingham airfield, then Silverstone and even a two-month period at Monza in Italy. Perhaps because of the ambitious nature of the V16 project, it was plagued with financial problems that hampered progress. Yet lack of funding didn't kill it. The project came to an end when the Formula 1 regulations were changed.

And it was during this time that Ken met Sir John Black of the Standard Motor Company, which had sponsored the building of a test house and the supply of a test brake for BRM. Not long after that, Sir John asked Ken to join the Standard Motor Company to develop its new sports car. And thus a whole new dynasty was born.









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# SAFET REVENGE

More than half a century since its win at Le Mans, the prototype conceived by Alpine and Lotus to beat René Bonnet is back on the track

Words Mitch McCullough Archive images Renault Communication Photography Chris Szczypala /@igiveashoot (action) and Tim Scott (static)



OLIN CHAPMAN WANTED REVENGE. His Lotus 23 racers had been barred from the 1962 24 Hours of Le Mans for minor technicalities (in his view, at least), each of which he'd addressed (in his view, at least). After vowing never to run his cars at Le Mans again,

After vowing never to run his cars at Le Mans again, Chapman turned his fury towards René Bonnet, convinced that the French constructor had protested the new mid-engined Lotuses to keep them from winning the Index of Thermal Efficiency – an award Bonnet coveted.

Journalist Gérard 'Jabby' Crombac suggested Chapman might channel his anger by assisting Alpine founder Jean Rédélé. Crombac knew Rédélé wanted to build a lightweight prototype to contest the small-displacement classes at Le Mans and, in the long term, win overall.

In Rédélé, Chapman found a kindred spirit – someone who shared not only his ambition to beat Bonnet, but also his philosophy. Like Chapman, Rédélé believed that performance was best achieved through the minimisation of mass. The pair discussed details of the proposed Le Mans prototype several times, and the best minds at Lotus, including Bob Dance, Keith Duckworth and Len Terry, were made available to Alpine.

Terry drew up plans for a chassis informed by that of the recent Lotus 23, but his design for the car dubbed 'M63' fell foul of the latest Le Mans rules;



Rédélé's engineers made the necessary alterations and added a backbone tube, a chassis element familiar to Alpine. Meanwhile, Rédélé himself approached Renault, which agreed to provide engines through Amédée Gordini. And the brilliant Marcel Hubert penned a sleek glassfibre body.

The car was successful right out of the box. With José Rosinski and Lloyd 'Lucky' Casner at the wheel, an M63 finished first-in-class at the 1000km Nürburgring in May 1963 – but triumph was followed by tragedy.

At Le Mans in June, three M63s and six drivers were entered. No Alpine completed the race, and only five drivers came home, with Christian Heins killed in a fiery wreck after swerving to avoid the upturned Jaguar E-type of Roy Salvadori and the crashed Bonnet Aérodjet LM6 of Jean-Pierre Manzon. Another Aérodjet, driven by Jean-Pierre Beltoise and Claude Bobrowski, claimed the Index of Thermal Efficiency.

It was a disaster, yet Rédélé, undeterred, was soon plotting his return to the Circuit de la Sarthe. At Alpine HQ in Dieppe a new car began to take shape, the team working to deliver a machine with improved stability and handling at very high speed.

The engineers kept the wheelbase and track of the M63 (90.5in and 50in respectively) but reverted to a spaceframe chassis more like that initially suggested by Len Terry and constructed from welded molybdenum steel tubes. The car that had performed so well at the Nürburgring was hardly a lumpen brute, but Marcel Hubert refined his design nonetheless, shortening it and reducing the frontal area to bring down the drag coefficient even further.

An 1149cc Gordini four-cylinder engine was installed amidships and the finished car, the M64, tipped the scales at just 648kg. It was a package that promised much, and at Le Mans in 1964 Roger de Lageneste and Henry Morrogh got the very most out of it: the pair completed 292 laps, covering 2436 miles at an average speed of 101mph while managing 21 miles per gallon. That was good enough for 17th overall – and the Index of Thermal Efficiency. The best Bonnet could manage was 23rd overall, three places behind an Alpine M63. Mission very much accomplished.

'BOTH RÉDÉLÉ AND CHAPMAN BELIEVED PERFORMANCE WAS BEST ACHIEVED THROUGH THE MINIMISATION OF MASS... AND BOTH WANTED TO BEAT BONNET'



#### 'AS LE MANS PROTOTYPES GO, THE M64 SEEMED LIKE IT WOULD BE AN EASY CAR TO OWN. THE WINNING BID WAS PLACED'

The de Lageneste/Morrogh car, chassis 1711, wasn't done yet, however. A few weeks after Le Mans, the same drivers steered it to a class win at the 12 Hours of Reims. A parched and ravenous de Lageneste gulped down some Champagne immediately after the race, just before a call came over the loudspeaker to demand a victory lap. With bubbly sloshing about in his empty stomach, de Lageneste volunteered Juan Manuel Fangio, on hand as a guest of Renault, to do the honours, much to the delight of the crowd.

The car was later used to help Michelin develop its first radial racing tyres, and also in the development of an oleo-pneumatic suspension for Allinquant that was ahead of its time conceptually, but not perfected in its day. In the autumn of 1965, chassis 1711 was rolled back into the Alpine factory and fitted with the dramatic tail fins used on the M65 and A210. The following year the car was put into long-term storage.

It re-emerged in 1977 and was acquired by Bugatti enthusiast Jacques Ohana, only to disappear again for decades. Ohana always intended to restore it, but by the time of his death little had been done. His family sold the car at auction in 2014 and it was displayed at that year's Le Mans Classic before becoming available again in late 2016 – which is where I come in, I suppose.

I'VE BEEN INTERESTED in Alpines since the early 1970s, but when my wife Kim and I decided to buy our first classic car, she was the one who insisted on an A110. An aggressive search landed a factory-prepared Group 4 rally car in 2006 and we were immediately hooked – suddenly in deep enough that we thought nothing of flying from New Jersey to Paris for Rétromobile in 2008 to buy wipers and other parts.

While there, we visited L'Atelier Renault, a café on the Champs-Élysées that happened to be showing a number of Rédélé's creations. We marvelled at the various Le Mans prototypes but assumed they were national treasures, not for sale to anyone – and most certainly not to an American.

One day in 2016, Kim and I talked about these cars again, and that very night I sat down at my computer and saw it. I couldn't believe my eyes: chassis 1711, to be sold at auction in Paris in two weeks. Pack the bags!

At the auction venue we walked into a brightly lit underground garage where the M64 was on display. It had such presence, and its condition was astonishing. Though it had recently been painted and prepped for sale, most of it was clearly original.

The Plexiglas hatch had broken during shipment but we knew it could be replicated, and there was little else to cause concern. There was work to be done, of course, but nothing beyond the understanding of an enthusiast familiar with a Formula Junior or early '60s sports-racer: spaceframe, mid-engine, dual Weber 45 DCOE carburettors, Girling brakes, Hewland gearbox, Dauphine steering box, Renault wheel bearings.

The car was fitted with the original wheels drilled for aerodynamic covers, but if replacements were needed the rear wheels from a Lotus 23 would bolt right onto all four corners. Windscreen, hardware and trim – all shared with the A110. I was aware that the Gordini engine could present something of a challenge to an owner based 3500 miles from France but, as Le Mans prototypes go, the M64 seemed like it would be an easy car to own. The winning bid was placed.

It was a big day when the car arrived, cleared ports at Newark and was unloaded in the driveway. For a while it stayed at home, partly because we hadn't quite figured out what to do with it, and partly because we enjoyed just looking at it. Eventually we concluded that there was one event the Alpine simply had to attend: the 2018 Le Mans Classic.

The first stop on the long road back to Le Mans was Graham Long Engineering in Clifton, New Jersey, where everything critical or likely to wear was rebuilt, repaired or replaced.

'Don't drill any holes, don't fill any holes,' advised our friend Tom McIntyre, and his words have kept us honest. We've not replaced the partially broken air vent in the centre dash. The M64 has a beautifully integrated roll bar, but the rules don't require a roll cage, so we haven't added one. With great reluctance we've changed the shift linkage, stripping off the red rubber boot and painting the shafts military grey to match the old ones.

The original fuel tanks – the M64 has two, with fillers on both sides – have been retained, but we've installed custom-designed ATL bladders inside. A new exhaust header has been fabricated with reference to period photos. The gauges, switches, dash and seat all appear correct and have needed little attention.





1964 Alpine M64

Engine 1149cc Renault Gordini four-cylinder, DOHC, two twin-choke Weber 45 DCOE carburettors Power 105bhp @ 7000rpm Transmission Hewland five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive Steering Rack and pinion Suspension Front: double wishbones, coil spring/damper units, anti-roll bar. Rear: trailing arms, horizontal top tie-rods, coil spring/damper units, anti-roll bar Brakes Drums Weight 648kg Top speed 150mph

#### 'THE MOMENT I CENTRE THE STEERING WHEEL THE CAR REVEALS ITSELF TO ME FULLY. IT IS AN ARROW PIERCING THE AIR, UNWAVERING'

Mark Cramer, who runs Remarc Restorations in bucolic Upper Black Eddy, Pennsylvania, was given the task of solving the problem of the broken Plexiglas hatch. He heated and flattened the old one to make a perfect double from Lexan. We've considered whether the body should be returned to its 1964 appearance, but replacing 1965 bodywork with 2018 glassfibre intended to look like 1964 really isn't something we want to attempt. And we like the perky tail fins.

A crossbar has been added for a shoulder harness, but we've been able to match the original welding style, paint the bar and smudge it up with dirty hands to make it look like it's been there for 50 years.

FIFTY YEARS... On the morning of our first test it is not lost on me that this car has not been driven on a track in half a century. I sit warming the engine in the paddock at Monticello, a picturesque private circuit two hours north-west of New York City, telling myself that our preparations couldn't have been any more thorough.

I cinch up the new Sabelts, tilt my head to pull on the unwieldy helmet and HANS combination, slide the gearstick over and down into first, and move down to pit-out, full of anticipation.

As I approach, the flagger smiles and immediately signals that I'm good to go, no need to stop. I've got Monticello's South Course completely to myself.

I pull onto the track and into a tight right – and discover immediately that the Gordini engine will hardly run below 5500rpm, the car chugging around what ought to be a sweeping, fast right.

In order to prolong the life of the engine, it has been



deemed sensible to keep the revs below 8000, but, as it turns out, that's more than enough to get a sense of the car's potential. It lugs and spits as I navigate another tight right, the aptly named Patience. Then it happens: I find second as I enter a set of S-curves called Prudence, the engine clears and the M64 surges ahead.

I power through the left-hander, the M64 on rails as it moves left to right and then round a long, hard left. It feels similar to a Lotus 23B, only more stable and a little more substantial. The steering is light and free – rather like that of an Alpine A110, unsurprisingly.

After a short break the car has an opportunity to really stretch its legs on Monticello's full, 4.1-mile circuit. I turn onto the 1200m back straight and the moment I centre the steering wheel the car reveals itself to me fully. It is an arrow piercing the air, unwavering as it flies across the tarmac.

I won't pretend to know how the car must have felt on the limit in 1964; even a Roger de Lageneste full of Champagne could have taught me a thing or two about racing. But as I flash towards the kink about halfway down the straight I think: maybe this is a small taste of what it was like. The M64 feels ready to go a very long way, very fast. Bring on Le Mans.

#### From top

The enormous Plexiglas hatch covering the Gordini four-cylinder engine was damaged en route to auction in 2016, but not so badly that it couldn't be used as a template for a perfect replica; wherever possible original parts have been retained, hence the brokenin-period air vent in the dash. We would like to thank all our clients, partners and friends for the trusting co-operation and wish all enthusiasts for classic cars an eventful year 2018!

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# MIKE ANTHONY

A member of the BRDC since 1954, Michael Anthony raced among all the 'greats' of the era – while building and prepping his own cars

Words Mark Dixon Photography Matthew Howell

**'THERE WERE STEN GUNS** always lying around the house and I remember going on holiday to my uncle's farm, aged 16, with an attaché case containing two Sten guns, a Luger pistol, plenty of ammunition, and a couple of bottles of whisky for my uncle. Can you imagine a schoolboy carrying that lot through Victoria Station today?'

There is, of course, an explanation for such behaviour. These were the dark days of World War Two, and Michael Anthony's father (a travelling salesman before the war) had become a Home Guard instructor in the Sten submachine gun. His mother having died at the age of 28 from tuberculosis, the teenage Mike and his two brothers were regularly sent to stay at their uncle's farm in Suffolk. 'We used to shoot rabbits with a Sten gun,' Mike chuckles. 'And no, there wasn't much left of the rabbit afterwards.'

Mike himself entered the Army in 1944, and during his three years in the Service he acquired his first car, a Singer Le Mans. This kindled his lifelong love of motoring and he would become a successful club racer during the 1950s and '60s, a contemporary of many of our greatest drivers when they were upand-coming. Today, aged 89, he's one of the longest-standing members of the British Racing Drivers' Club, having joined in 1954.

'I sold the Singer to my Sergeant-Major and my father then helped me buy what we thought was an SS100, but turned out to be the sidevalve Standard-engined SS90. As a result, I became expert in reshaping combustion chambers and I fitted a modified Standard 16 head, after which the car went very well. I was completely self-taught – the idiot's revenge!'

After a few years of competing with the SS90, Mike was suddenly and unexpectedly introduced to a new marque of sports racer: 'I was racing the Jaguar at Goodwood, and it broke down at St Mary's,' Mike explains. 'As I was watching the other cars go through, I saw a little silver car go past, and the driver was doing absolutely nothing and was still faster than I had been! I tracked the driver – Colin Chapman – down in the paddock afterwards and ordered a Lotus MkVI on the spot.'

At first, Mike's relationship with Chapman was perfectly amicable. He built up most of the car in the loft of Chapman's Hornsey

#### Facing page and below

A sprightly Mike Anthony looks back over a lifetime of motoring memories; hillclimbing in his first competition car, an SS90 with a souped-up engine.



workshop before taking it home, and in April 1954 the two men, together with fellow MkVI driver Peter Gammon, formed Team Lotus for the British Empire Trophy race at Oulton Park. Gammon, whose MkVI was particularly light and highly tuned even by Lotus standards, finished an incredible third overall, ahead of three Jaguar C-types, but Mike's race wasn't so successful:

'Chapman had built a new streamliner, the MkVIII, and Mike Costin was driving it up to the circuit after working on it day and night, when he fell asleep and woke up on a roundabout,' he explains. 'The car was making a terrible noise, so he rushed back to the factory before the police could arrive. Colin therefore asked if he could borrow my MkVI for Practice, but I think he must have over-revved the engine because on the first lap of my race, it blew up.'

At this stage of his competition career, Mike was still driving the MkVI to races and then driving home again. 'I was up at Snetterton one day, going down the straight, and there was a big bang. When we took the cylinder head off in the pits, we could see the road through the engine, so there wasn't much hope. Jack Sears took my wife Anne and I home to sleep at his house, we caught the train next day back home to Brighton, and Brian Lister delivered the car to Brighton for 12 quid, which wasn't bad!'

Not all of Mike's racing contemporaries were so obliging. Mike soon fell out with the aforementioned Mr Chapman...





#### 'I DIDN'T LIKE THE JAGUAR D-TYPE – TOO LIGHT AT THE FRONT – BUT I GOT DOWN TO MIKE HAWTHORN'S TIME, WHICH I WAS PLEASED WITH'

'Colin could be a sharp operator,' he says wryly, 'and I'll give you an example. In 1955, I decided I wanted to move into the two-litre class, which was dominated by Bristols. So Colin agreed to make me a Lotus MkX, with a Bristol engine. When it was nearly finished, he told me, "I've had the chance to buy some special brakes for you, but they'll be £1000." I said, "Don't be silly, the car's only £1000." "Ah, but these are very special. Pay me when you sell the car later."

'So I agreed to have the brakes, and I was at Charterhall on the long straight, and I was finding that I'd have to start pumping the brakes halfway down the straight to get them ready for the next corner. I sought advice from Wilkie Wilkinson, the chief mechanic of Ecurie Ecosse. "Where do you start pumping them?" "Towards the end of the straight." "Oh, we start pumping them *before* we get to the straight at Le Mans!"

'Wilkie then suggested that I have a word with the Dunlop rep, who greeted me by saying, "So how are you getting on with those experimental brakes that we gave Chapman?" So I wrote to Colin and told him that he wouldn't be getting any more money from me, other than 20 quid for the brackets he'd made up – and he sued me in the High Court. The first day of the hearing turned out to be



Clockwise from above Mike hillclimbing at Prescott in the Lotus MkVI; leading in his Bristol-engined MkX at Crystal Palace; road-testing a paratrooper's scooter for a newspaper; racing an Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar D-type at Silverstone.

the first day of practice at Le Mans, so Colin didn't turn up, and I won by default!'

Not surprisingly, relations between the two were frosty for a while, but Mike did end up buying another Lotus from Chapman.

'I bought an Eleven and laid a Bristol engine on its side in it. That was a disaster... It would have been clever, if it had worked; in fact, it did work but only spasmodically, and in hindsight I should have dry-sumped it.'

A more successful conversion by Mike was his Standard Vanguard race-car transporter, inspired by the Mercedes *Renntransporter*. 'I asked my local chassis repairer to let me know when they had a damaged Vanguard in. A few months later they rang up and said that Coombs of Guildford had just written-off a Vanguard with a damaged front, so I asked them to cut the front off and I'd have the rest. Using a scrap van bought for £150, I joined the various pieces together and extended the wheelbase by 5ft 6in, with steel-angle welded to the chassis to strengthen it.

'The engine came from a scrap Vanguard, and I did a lot of work on the head so that I could fit modified downdraught Solex PBI32 carburettors to clear the steering column. The vehicle would cruise quite happily at 85mph, helped by an overdrive gearbox that I'd taken out of my father's Vanguard without him knowing! He only used the car around town and so he never used the overdrive...

'One day at Silverstone, the BRDC secretary asked if I would be interested in  $\pounds$ 500 starting money – the catch being that the race was in Bari, in Southern Italy. And this was in the days before autostradas.

'A mate and I got halfway down Italy before the water pump spindle broke. I blanked off the pump and we drove on thermo-siphon the rest of the way, with no temperature problems at all. Coming back, I'd ordered a new pump to be collected from Rome airport, but they wanted me to pay duty on it, so I told them to keep the bloody thing and I drove off again!'

Mike's ability as a racing driver led to a drive in Marcus Sieff's Jaguar D-type at Goodwood, and another in an Ecurie Ecosse D-type at Silverstone, but he didn't enjoy either. 'At Silverstone, I lost it at Abbey, the long left-hander, which was a sod in the wet in the "D". I didn't like the D-type – too light at the front – but I got down to Mike Hawthorn's time, which I was pleased with.'

There was also a brief period racing the ex-Mille Miglia AC Ace, PYF 800, owned by dentist Malcolm Knights (featured in *Octane* 167) and fitted with the Bristol engine from Mike's own Lotus MkX. Mike and the Ace scored a notable victory at a wet Spa in 1958, beating the 22-year-old Jim Clark into fifth place. 'It was Jimmy's first race abroad for Border Reivers, driving a Porsche, so we rather took him under our wing. He was a very nice chap,' Mike reflects.

He grows sombre as he recalls some of his other racing contemporaries who died too young. 'I had two co-drivers killed in races. Mike Keen and I were sharing a Cooper-Bristol in the Goodwood Nine Hours; he tried to take Fordwater flat-out, went off into the infield and hit a stook of corn. It was very upsetting. And my former co-driver Mark Lund – who had got the best result my Bristol-engined Lotus Eleven ever achieved, when he won at Brands Hatch – was killed testing for Aston Martin.'

The Bristol-engined Lotus Eleven led to Mike's last 'serious' race car, a Lister-Chevrolet. 'Archie Scott Brown always beat me, and when he went to Lister to drive a Lister Jaguar I decided I wanted a Lister Chevrolet. If only I'd been sensible!

'Bob Hicks bought me a Chevy V8 for £40 from an American car dump in Paris, and I bored and stroked it to 5.5 litres and fitted four twin-choke downdraught Solexes. They were buggers to tune! It broke the record at the Brighton Speed Trials by doing 139mph over the line – on seven cylinders, because I'd taken a plug lead off due to water in a cylinder – but I sold it at the end of the year for £875. I saw it advertised for sale last year for a million pounds.'

Changing tack dramatically, Mike moved to Formula Junior for a few seasons, initially driving front-engined, single-seater Elvas. 'I raced with the Fitzwilliam team and before we got the cars I would go up to the factory in Hastings and help build them. I loved Formula Junior and won a lot of races, particularly in Denmark. I was very fond of Copenhagen, which had a track you could fit in my back garden. I used to get everybody to go to Copenhagen – Moss, Brabham, Surtees, Hill – and on the Sunday evening after a race we'd all go to the Belle Terrace restaurant and have a great time.'

The Elvas were followed by a rear-engined Gemini in 1962, which Mike also assembled, but growing family commitments impelled him to hang up his racing helmet. He took over the family business trading in furs, which his father had set up after the War; when the bottom fell out of the fur trade, he bought a Shell service station and went into business making the chassis for Southern Roadcraft Cobra replicas. Other projects included a Lotus Esprit display race-car built from a spare shell - commissioned by Lotus for the Geneva motor show - and in latter years several go-karts for his grandchildren, based on electrically powered invalid cars. 'They're so well-engineered; the back axle is an aluminium casting and it even has a diff.

Looking back, he muses: 'I suppose what I'm most proud of is that I built, prepared and raced my own cars single-handedly for most of my career. "Ambition beyond ability" probably sums it up best. I've always been rushing around like a bloody idiot.'

Long may he continue to do so.

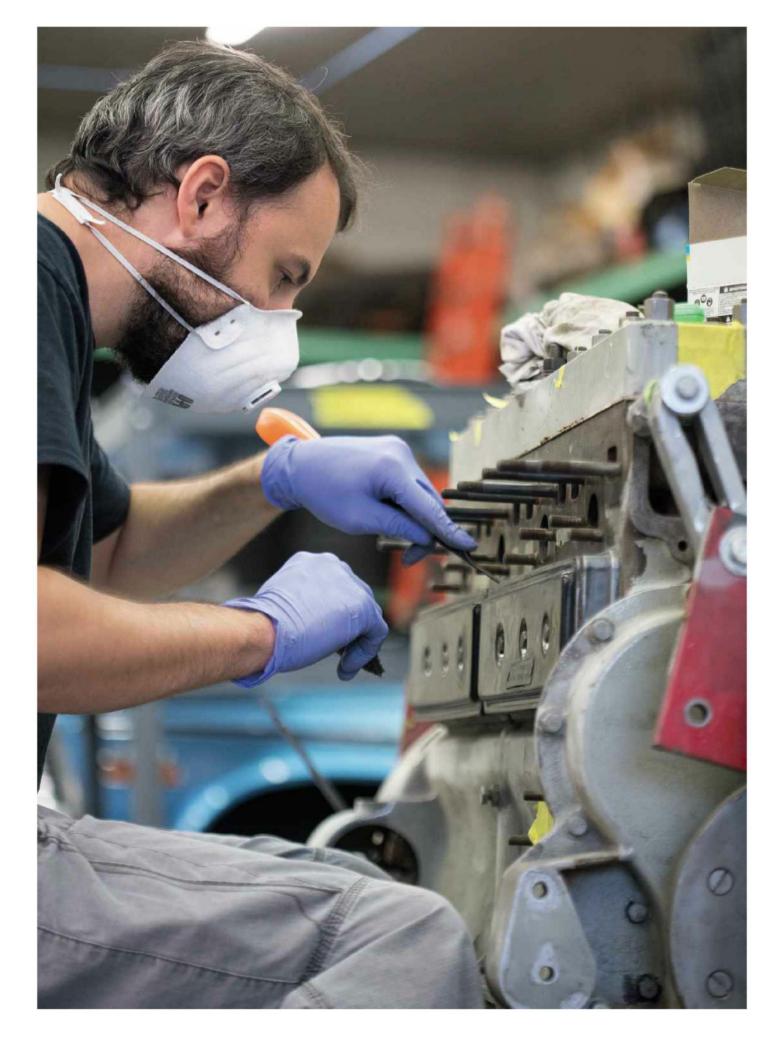




# THE BEST EXOTIC BUICK HOTEL

Nicola Bulgari, of jewellery fame, collects overlooked American cars. Some are in his native Rome, many live in this Pennsylvania collection

Words Massimo Delbò Photography Erik Fuller



hese were the ground rules. 'You can do an article on my collection; not an article on me, because nobody will care. But you must be sure to write that the origin of car style, design and engineering was in America. What the USA was capable of creating in

those areas between 1920 and 1942 is simply unbelievable. It drives me crazy that something so amazing and important is becoming more and more forgotten, even by American collectors.<sup>2</sup>

You would expect such words to come from the mouth of the most radical of American car collectors, so you might be surprised to learn that they were actually uttered by an internationally educated, highly successful Italian entrepreneur: 76-year-old Nicola Bulgari. Born in Rome in 1941, the grandson of the founder of the jewellery firm bearing his surname spent the immediate post-war years peering through the windows of the family apartment, in the upperclass area of Parioli, to watch the cars of the embassies or Vatican City passing by. Most were American sedans and limousines, which imprinted themselves firmly on the young Bulgari mind. Before the war, American car-production numbers were astonishing. In 1929, for example, the USA built five million cars while the whole of the rest of the world managed 500,000. Many American cars were assembled in Britain during pre-war years, and because Buick had a factory in Ontario, Canada, which was then part of the British Empire, it could export cars to the Commonwealth countries without paying import duties. In 1933 Railton created the first Anglo-American car, based on a Hudson chassis and engine. Browsing through advertisements in 1930s English car magazines soon reveals the extent of the success.

Then America lost the advantage. 'With their victory in the war,' says Signor Nicola, as Mr Bulgari is called by everybody in the car world, 'Americans lost their heads. Their cars became bigger and bigger, they derailed themselves with the fin craziness and an always-decreasing build quality. It took them decades to recover from that disaster.'

In 1959, as soon he was old enough to drive (18 years old in Italy), Signor Nicola bought his first car. It was a pre-war Fiat Balilla four-speed, very used, which was soon followed by another Fiat, a 509 Torpedo.

With his third purchase, though, the dream of owning an American car became real. In 1961 he

Clockwise from below

Our man meets a Buick 'Woody'; mezzanine lounge gives a great vista of Buick's finest vintages; service workshop keeps the collection's cars ready to go.







#### 'A stroke of luck comes in 2011 when the big lot facing

became the proud owner of a two-door Buick 37, which was originally registered to the Italian Ambassador in Ottawa, Canada, who brought it back to Italy with him.

'It was registered with a very old number plate, something like ROMA 59.000. When I bought it for 50,000 lire (about  $\notin$ 25 today) several owners later, it was re-registered as ROMA 126.500. I kept it until 1980, when I had to sell it because I needed money, but I know that it is still alive and well in the Rome area.'

A decade later the Bulgari collection of American cars was a reality, occupying a garage in Rome. The idea was to preserve examples of mass-produced American cars from 1920 to 1948, once commonplace but now in danger of disappearing, so future generations could envisage what once had been. But, as often happens, destiny planned something different. Today the American division of the NB (Nicola Bulgari) Collection, located in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in the USA, has grown far beyond the original idea.

'The Allentown site,' says Signor Nicola, 'has come together through an amazing series of circumstances. Most likely if we had planned all of them, something would have gone wrong and we could not have done what we have done.' So, what happened?

In 1996 Signor Nicola bought a 1942 Buick Special Estate Wagon Model 49 from an American friend and car collector living in Allentown, the late Bernie Berman. Just three examples were known to exist, and this one needed some restoration work. The seller suggested a visit to a local workshop run by the Flickinger brothers, Keith and Kris.

Fast forward several years and, thanks to the quality of their work and their deep knowledge, the Flickinger



#### the shop, an old drive-in cinema, is offered for sale'

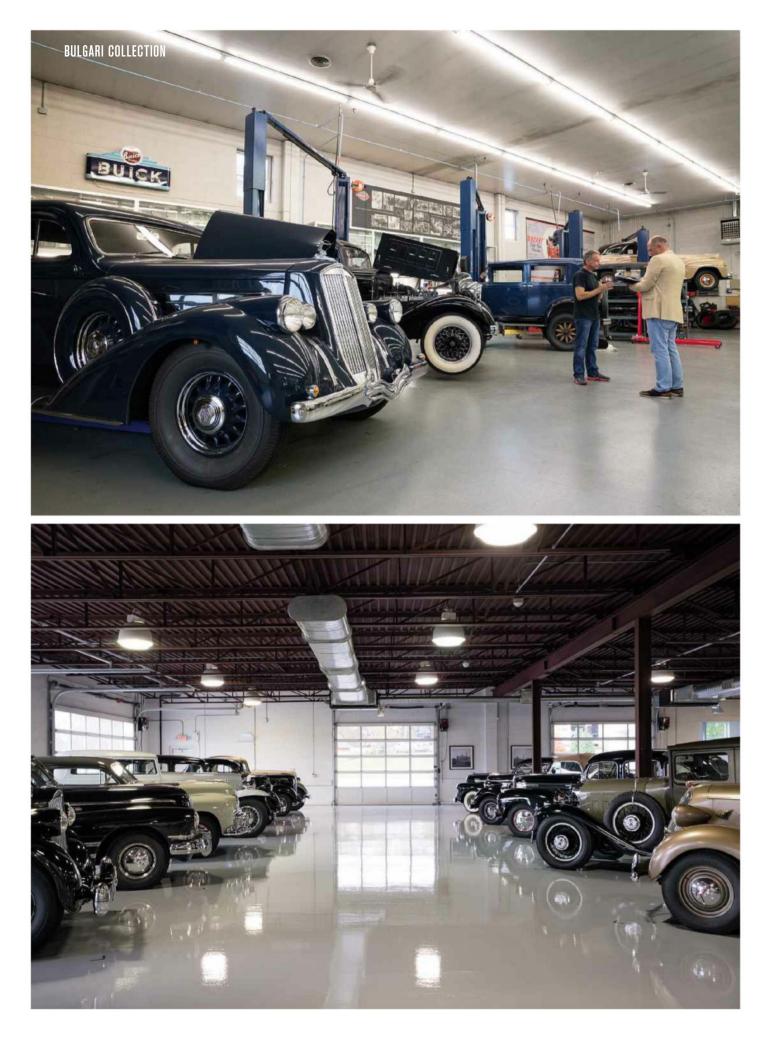
brothers and their workshop are engaged full-time on projects for Mr Bulgari. His collection, located in buildings he has bought close by, is growing. A stroke of luck comes in 2011 when the big lot facing the shop, an old drive-in cinema, is offered for sale. It is big, but the market value is low after the financial crisis. So Signor Nicola is able to buy it to use as the American headquarters of his collection and to fulfil his dream of creating space for training young specialists. He asks the Flickinger brothers to work for him, with Kris as restoration manager of the whole collection, supervising a team of about 10 people.

'If we don't show these cars to the younger generation, we'll lose the passion for them,' says Signor Nicola. 'If we don't train young people in working on these cars we'll lose them, because we will lose the knowledge of them. In every area of the human spectrum, when something is lost it's lost forever. This is the reason why Allentown is structured to be a training centre for students in every area of the motor collection, with a mechanics' shop, a body centre and another for upholstery. We host trainees from schools and workshops all over the world, and they can work with experienced people.'

He warms to his theme. 'We love the HVA's project [Historic Vehicles of America, the North American branch of FIVA] of creating an archive of all the vital information about a car, which is then deposited in the Library of Congress. We've allocated a space inside our premises for them to work on this programme, and we provide technical support to the local museum, American Wheels.'

Today almost everything needed for a restoration is managed in-house, with only chroming, and the

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machining of engines or other mechanical components, done outside. Electrics are rewired on-site, mostly by a technician from Rome, after the most challenging part of the process – supplying the right cables in the correct colours and materials – has been resolved. It's just one example of the continuous exchange of people, parts and experience between Rome and Allentown.

Other materials require a different approach. 'Our nightmare, in every restoration, is the interior,' says Signor Nicola. 'We tend to keep as much as possible of the original, cleaning and repairing it as needed. Sometimes, though, after researching every possible source, the only solution we are left with is to manufacture what we need. When we have to make new fabrics, the minimum order required is definitely bigger than we really need, but we do it anyway. We always hope that one day we'll have another car that uses the same material, or that we'll be asked for it by another collector restoring a similar car.

'It amazes me, when I see friends restoring their classic Ferraris, how almost everything is available, even though only a few tens of examples were built. I have to hunt for everything and rebuild components of cars that were built in the hundreds of thousands. Usually the final cost of restoration is quite similar to that of the Ferraris, so I smile when I hear somebody complaining that the cost of a restoration is close to the value of the car. For us it's normal that the cost of restoration is bigger than the market value of the car.'

It's not just the restoration work that makes managing the collection a challenge. Bulgari has a rule that a car has to be ready to use unless it's undergoing some work. 'Driving my cars is what I like the most,' he says, 'and luckily for me the crew understands this feeling because it is theirs, too. I don't go to Allentown as often as I'd like, but when I go I take a car out for a drive, then I take another, and another, and another. It is my personal regeneration, and when other friends join in it is yet more fun.'

Buick is the most-represented brand in the

collection, simply because it is the favourite brand of Signor Nicola, who has an especially soft spot for the Series 90. 'I buy the cars I like, usually humble cars built about ten years before the Second World War. They were the cars – like the Series 40 or 50, affordable, reliable, refined, comfortable and beautiful to drive – that created the mass movement of people, ideas and goods. My favourite vintage is 1932 to 1935, when they became lower and faster.

'For me, the easiest car to drive is a 1941 Buick, the 1934/35 Buicks offered the best package, and the best gearbox is from Buick's 1938 model year. I adore originality. I love to buy cars that are preserved and that can be kept as they are, or need less work than a full restoration, but it is becoming more and more difficult to find them.'

Only when you ask about the future does Mr Bulgari's voice betray some indecision: 'I know we are just at the beginning, that a lot still needs to be done. In 15 years from now, I hope somebody else will take my legacy and move it forward.

'If I look at the Smithsonian Museum, I feel sad. They collect everything about space and aeroplanes because of the funds they receive from aircraft companies, but they do nothing about cars. There is still a lot to do to promote these magnificent objects.'

They say that if you can dream it, you can do it. Looking at Allentown and the concentration of energy and knowledge it contains, it is very easy to believe in that as you imagine the nine-year-old Nicola looking out from his Rome window, dreaming.

'Everything is available for classic Ferraris, even though only tens of examples were built. I have to hunt for everything for cars built in thousands'

#### Clockwise from above English wheel for in-house panelwork; all the collection's cars are kept in running order; Delbò gets hands-on in the workshop; Allentown's craftsmen are keen to train the next generation.

#### TWO FOR THE ROAD

Our correspondent is let loose in the toyshop

This was exciting and frustrating in equal measure. I could pick any cars from the 155 examples in the collection and drive them as much as I wanted, but the need to catch a flight would limit me to just two. So after a sleepless night, I chose the 1938 Hudson 8 De Luxe Convertible and the 1940 Lincoln Zephyr V12 Coupe.

A dark red V12 seems a good choice to start with, even one made in Detroit rather than Maranello. Its John Tjaarda-designed shape looks wonderful with its long, rounded tail, while inside it is reminiscent of grandma's living room, with cloth covering almost everything.

All you hear from the 4.7-litre engine when it is warm and idling is a distant hum. First gear is selected via a lever on the steering column, a first in this 1940 model year, and we proceed with a smoothness amazing for the age of the car. Soon we're in third, the highest gear, and the engine still sounds distant despite the 120bhp resulting from the petrol and air sucked through the Holley carburettor. A touch on the brake pedal slows us immediately, without apparent exertion from the four drum brakes.

When I turn the steering wheel to point the distant front of the bonnet in the right direction, though, I have to wait a little to see the results of my manoeuvring. This is no sports car, but you could happily drive it from New York to LA.

And so to the blue Hudson 8 (below), which looks very sporting with its low fabric roof and high chromed grille. This is a car to impress, to make you look cool rather than encouraging you to drive it a lot. But I picked it because I was curious to drive a car equipped with the 'electric hand' of pre-selector, power-controlled gear shifting, a semi-automatic transmission manufactured by Bendix. It changes gear with a vacuum system when the clutch pedal is pressed, to the ratio you have already selected via the small joystick that takes the place of a regular gear lever.

It works more slowly than a conventional system and it needs some practice to achieve a smooth shift. You should be able to downshift without matching the engine revs, but the system appreciates your co-operation here and it takes some miles, with the system and the driver warming up, to achieve a good result. The cabin is more cramped than the Linclon's and the view is limited by the windscreen's narrowness.

Of the two, I'd pick the Lincoln. I suddenly remember that Enzo Ferrari declared that his love for the V12 engine started after driving one installed in an American car in the 1930s. Perhaps it's more than just the colour that links this Zephyr V12 to the cars built in Maranello.

Thanks to Paolo Ciminiello and Kris Flickinger.



#### NICOLA BULGARI ON HIS ALLENTOWN TOP TEN

#### 1935 BUICK SPORT COUPE 96 S

I fell in love with it after seeing it in a sales brochure when I was nine years old. It took me years to find this one, believed to be the only survivor of 42 built.

#### **1937 STUDEBAKER PICK-UP**

Simply the most beautiful pick-up ever made.

#### 1939 LINCOLN ZEPHYR V12 Convertible

A very original car, one of only 20 known survivors. Finding it was difficult, then I had to wait three years until the owner decided to sell it to preserve its future.

#### 1941 BUICK 8 SPECIAL SEDANETTE

Still totally orginal, with only 5558 miles covered since new.

#### 1942 BUICK SPECIAL ESTATE WAGON MODEL 49

The car that started everything. Of 326 units built, only three are known to exist today.

#### 1933 GRAHAM BLUE STREAK Four-door Sedan Model 64

Styled by Amos Northup, with the rear axle slotted through the chassis to make it very low. It looks like the model that in 1933 did a record-breaking drive across the US in 53 hours and 30 minutes.

#### **1940 NASH 8 CONVERTIBLE**

A very rare eight-cylinder car, which was an icon for the brand. Following a very difficult restoration it was first shown at Hershey in 2017. It is believed to be the only survivor.

#### 1942 DE SOTO SEDAN

A beautiful design complete with the 1941 model-year trademark, the Airfoil hidden headlights. Few were built, very few are left; they're forgotten by collectors.

#### 1955 CHRYSLER 355 COUPE

Built as a 'restomod', prepared by the Rick Hendrick shop famous for its work on Nascar cars. Probably the funniest car to drive of anything in my collection.

#### 1931 WILLYS KNIGHT

I bought it as soon as I saw it at Hershey 2016. It is the epitome of originality, totally preserved and with an as-new interior.

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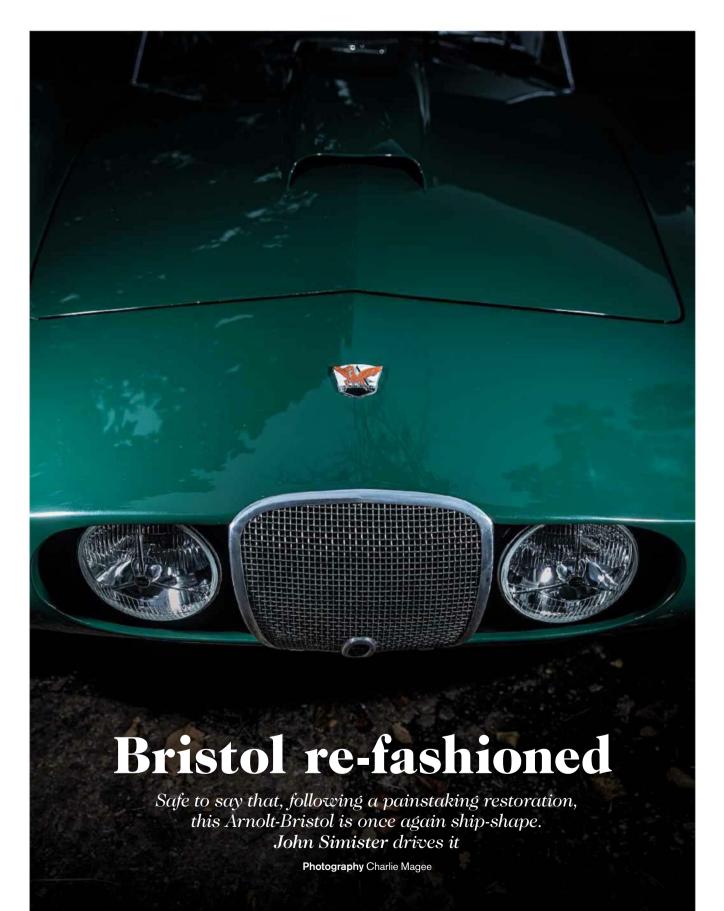
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t used to have a Chevrolet V8 engine. Big flared wheelarches caked in filler and covering chromed wheels with enormous tyres. And squinty headlights useful only for illuminating kerbs. And it was bright red. Yet Bristol chassis number 404/X/3065 was still a rare car of historic importance, which is why it had found itself brought 'home' from the US to today's Bristol Cars emporium in Kensington, to await further developments. 'Home'? It's complicated.

It was (almost) home for the chassis, anyway. It had originally left Bristol's factory in Bristol in April 1954, headed for Bertone in Turin, where it was fitted with a very non-Bristol two-seater body. The now-clothed car was then sent to the Warsaw, Indiana, works of SH Arnolt Inc to become an Arnolt-Bristol, the brainchild of Stanley H 'Wacky' Arnolt. He planned to sell 200 of them from his Chicago showroom, mostly in the US, but the tally stopped at 130. It would have been 142 had not 12 gone up in smoke at the works. (Cue on-trend thoughts of a 'continuation series'...)

The now, and indeed originally, green machine you see here, the 66th Arnolt-Bristol to be made, is the Bolide version. Bolide: a large meteor that explodes in the atmosphere. That's a good name for a speedy sports car. While we're on definitions, Wacky: a man who crossed Lake Michigan in a 13ft boat during heavy fog over treacherous waves, thus earning the nickname. Clearly this car is designed to spring surprises.

ADAM REDDING RUNS a restoration business in Farnham Common, Buckinghamshire. He'll tackle anything interesting: several E-types, a Dino, a DB5, a Porsche 912 and a Lancia Flaminia Coupé are among recent projects. But he's particularly knowledgable about Bristols, having done restoration work for the Kensington operation. So when he got wind of the Arnolt, his next project became clear.

With the Arnolt in the workshop, the assessment, and the sleuthing it would

generate, began. The idea was to restore the Arnolt back to an originality as forensically accurate as could realistically be achieved, not least to make it eligible for Mille Miglia entry should a future owner so desire, and that meant finding parts for which Adam's (and my) friend Simon Worland, a stickler for neat detail, happily pitched in.

So, in May 2016, deconstruction of the Arnolt began. With the filler ground away, all that joined the expanded 'arches to the body were just a few easily chopped tackwelds. Now the resulting gaps had to be remedied, and there was also the matter of the heavily reshaped nose section, which needed the reinstatement of the original air intake shape, the removal of the wonky headlight mountings, and the repositioning of the headlights in the air intake.

In fact, the front end's outer metalwork – the panels are steel – was beyond reasonable redemption, so Gary Pitney at GP Panelcraft made a complete new nose and front-wings assembly, helped by known measurements and photographs. Adam and his team  $\rightarrow$ 

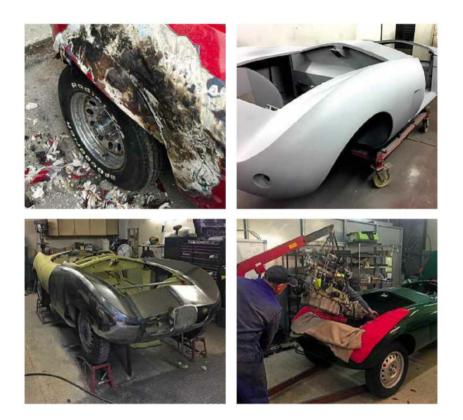


Right and below

Interior is simple and sparse, yet the instrumentation required ingenuity to reinstate; Bertone's sweeping shape is perhaps best viewed from the rear three-quarter.







#### Above and below

Restoration involved ridding the Arnolt-Bristol of its glassfibre wheelarch extensions before renewing the entire nose section; it had been powered by a Chevrolet V8 but the correct triple-carb straight-six is now resplendent and back in place, boasting a race-tuned 130bhp.



reinstated correct-shape rear 'arches and remade the bent front section of the bonnet.

That was just the tip of the steelberg. Adam also made new floors, keeping the original tunnel between them, an aluminium honeycomb bulkhead and toeboard as close as possible to the original aircraft-derived material, a new dash panel and new beading around the edge of the cockpit. The doors, sills, bootlid, boot floor and most of the rear outer bodywork are original, as are the inner front wings and the chassis, whose V8 engine mounts had to be expunged.

Then there was the matter of the engine. The V8 found a new home in a friend's pickup and an ad in the Vintage Sports-Car Club's newsletter revealed an ex-Grand Prix Cooper-Bristol engine for sale complete with gearbox. Bristol engine expert Mike Robinson, veteran of 100 rebuilds, rendered the engine ready for its new life with around 130bhp, and Bristol parts specialist Spencer Lane-Jones supplied many components.

But not all of them, an Arnolt not being quite as other Bristols. That neat little mesh front grille, for example, was an eBay find. How? 'There's a man who has the original 1954 motor show car,' Adam explains, 'and he wants to build ten replicas. So he had these grilles made.' Also found on eBay were new/old-stock Bristol 401 hubcaps at £26 each to adorn the perforated-steel Bristol wheels shod with Michelin X tyres, but the unique handmade Arnolt-Bristol badges for them (from Pamela David Enamels, which already had a pattern from US-based Ed Howell's restoration of the Arnolt-Bristol prototype) were a little dearer than that. Other badges, including the Bertone 'b' on the flanks, came from the US.

There are parts in an Arnolt-Bristol borrowed from other contemporary cars. The steering column is Aston Martin DB2/4, attached to Bristol's steering rack. The front brakes are Jaguar XK120 apart from the ironlined aluminium drums, made by Wellworthy (cylinder barrels its main speciality) and unique to Bristols. Adam and Simon found a pair at Bristol's own parts department, just £17.50 each. They had been on the shelf for decades, and the price had never changed.

Then there are the electrics. The Jaguar XK120, again, shares its numberplate light and much switchgear. The warning lights have particular colours – a green and a pale blue – used only in Astons and hard to find. And the missing tri-sector instrument dial was recreated by Simon using one from an early Land Rover but substituting a Morris Eight fuel gauge and carefully bending the needle. A graphics friend then applied the Arnolt Pegasus logo to the centre of the face.



A Bristol 406, decayed beyond redemption, provided many useful parts such as the pedal-box casting and the pedals themselves. 'It all bolted straight in,' says Simon, 'but the pedal positioning seemed wrong. Then we realised an Arnolt has its pedals cranked into the right shape, so we found photographs of how they should be and made these the same. That meant we had to make another new toeboard.'

Worn hardened-steel suspension pivot pins were turned fractionally undersize, new ones being unobtainable, and new phosphorbronze bushes machined to suit. These and the steering rack are lubricated by an Enot's one-shot oil system. Spax built new bespoke dampers, Radtec made the radiator and the fuel tank (the latter foam-filled to meet FIA regulations), and the original fuel cap was welded to an FIA-spec inner cap with today's approved thread.

Nearly there... The original, flimsy and ropey seats were made from a single skin of aluminium, so Adam re-made them with a steel frame but to the same shape. His team made the wiring loom too. Myrtle Productions supplied a fine replica steering wheel, back-mounted Lucas P700 headlights took up residence in the front air intake, Simpson Race Exhausts took care of spent gases via a deliciously curvy manifold. And exactly a year after work started, Arnolt-Bristol number 66 was completed, the unusually detailed combined workshop manual and parts list was closed, the engine was fired up and Wacky's creation lived again.

NOW RUN-IN, the rare Arnolt is raring to go and I'm about to take it on its longest run since the resurrection. First impression: how can a sports car look so simultaneously sleek and so lofty? Bertone designer Franco Scaglione, his Alfa Romeo BAT cars yet to appear, had somehow to disguise the tall, BMW-derived straight-six with its three Solex carburettors plonked on top of a longstroke, hemi-head pushrod engine that looks like a twin-cam but isn't. Scaglione did this by allowing more than half the front wheels' height to be revealed under the front valance, by making the bonnet very 'crowned' with an air-scoop for good measure, and then causing the waistline to fall steeply towards the rear haunches to reduce the depth of the body sides. The result is a car apparently in a state of permanent visual acceleration, with power ready to burst out of its bonnet.

I said this is a Bolide. That's a term that emerged after the launch, because the original handbook describes two versions, designated Standard (pared-back equipment, simple dash, no weather gear, ready to race as was Arnolt's intention) and Deluxe (plush seats, weather gear, proper Bristol instrument cluster, ineffectual bumpers). This car sits between the two, with the Deluxe's slightly deeper windscreen, its hood and its sidescreens, but the racy seats and dash. Pure spec but road-usable: that's the Bolide.

And what a keen thing it is. I'm being gentle at first while I get to know the Bolide's  $\rightarrow$ 



behaviour, but the throttle is super-crisp at small openings yet without a trace of snatch. The clutch is light and progressive, the long, cranked gearlever with its Bakelite knob clicks with oily smoothness into its ratioslots. Conducting the Arnolt with driverflattering fluidity is disarmingly easy. Even a double-declutch down into the nonsynchronised first gear is a piece of cake.

So I try a bit harder. Below 3000rpm, more throttle merely brings on dyspepsia. From that crankshaft speed the induction and exhaust notes start to harden, but there's still a beat, a throb slightly odd in a straight-six. At 3500rpm it starts to clear and the engine to pull harder; at 4000rpm the note is a pure, hard-edged blare and momentum is exploding meteorically. Bolide indeed.

I call time at 5000rpm because I don't want to be the one to break this engine with its slender bores and fearsome piston speeds, but the claimed 130bhp – correct Arnolt spec, with regular Bristol 404s offering just 85bhp – arrives at 5500rpm according to the handbook. And when it was in Grand Prix tune, this particular engine must surely have ventured well beyond that.

On the motorway, I suspect that no one has a clue what this car is, but they're impressed with its pace and its vocals. And now we're heading into the Buckinghamshire countryside, where bumpier roads reveal an impressively all-of-a-piece feel with no shudder or shake. On the sinuous sweeps of Stokenchurch Hill I can get a greater sense of what a 1950s Bristol is like when re-imagined as a lightweight sports car, and it's all good.

Precise steering, confident straight-line stability, a benign balance but lots of scope for tightening the trajectory on the throttle(s) once settled into a bend: the Arnolt has all these things. It's a straightforward, talkative, transparent fourwheel drifter, which does what you ask it to do and clearly enjoys every minute. To race one of these would be very entertaining. Even the drum brakes do a confident job once their racing linings are warmed up. They feel a bit wooden before that point, an impression heightened by the brake shoes' unusually strong pull-off springs, but you soon learn to press harder.

I've become thoroughly smitten with the Arnolt-Bristol, but now it's time to return. Back on the motorway there's time to take in the front-end bodyscape of curves and ridges and bulges beyond the curved dashboard, whose tri-dial is obscured by my right hand so I might not immediately know if the oil pressure has disappeared, the coolant has boiled or the petrol tank has emptied. I'm compact enough to be looking mostly through the windscreen rather than over it, but back at base I have an oddly numb sensation on my scalp where the wind has been doing its best to deplete what remains of my hair.

I switch off the engine, tug on the leather-wrapped cord that, like an early Mini's, retracts a rudimentary door-catch. A final glance at a cabin beautifully trimmed in its sparseness, another at the razor precision of the panel gaps, and my Arnolt adventure is over.

This is a car about which few people, at least on this side of the Atlantic, know. That doesn't include an elderly gentleman who correctly identified it during a turn-round for our action photography, but then he's owned a Bristol or two in the past.

For this reason of obscurity, Adam, now a bit of an Arnolt expert, doesn't think there would be much mileage in making some 'new' ones, Jaguar XKSS-style. The considerable joy of driving an Arnolt-Bristol will remain a secret shared with few. I'm glad to have been one of them.

The Arnolt-Bristol is now for sale at Abbeyfield Sports & Classics, abbeyfieldclassics.co.uk.



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1965 DB5 SALOON Dark Green with Black hide. An exdemonstrator, this example of arguably the world's most iconic car is fitted with the 6-cylinder engine and 5-speed ZF Manual gearbox. Supplied with 1-year Aston Martin Warranty.

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2008 V8 VANTAGE COUPE Toro Red with Obsidian Black interior. Features include satellite navigation, heated front screen, powerfold exterior mirrors, 19'7-spoke design wheels, full leather interior and a bright finish grille. 6-speed Manual. 34,000 miles.

£39,950



1969 DB6 MK1 VANTAGE SALOON Bahama Yellow with Black hide. A multiple Concours winner, this example has undergone a full 4,500 hour Aston Martin Works restoration to original specification. 5-speed Manual. Supplied with 1-year Aston Martin Warranty.

£695,000



2014 DB9 VOLANTE

Onyx Black with Obsidian Black interior. Features include glass switch gear, front and rear parking sensors, cruise control, satellite navigation and ventilated carbonceramic disc brakes. 6-speed Touchtronic II Automatic. 16,000 miles.

£97,950



1988 V8 VANTAGE ZAGATO Gladiator Red with Black hide. One of the four prototype models. Restored in 2012, this example was entered into the 2016 Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este. 5-speed Manual. Supplied with 1-year Aston Martin Warranty.

£695,000



2013 VANQUISH COUPE Tungsten Silver with Obsidian Black interior. Features include a carbon fibre facia, One-77 steering wheel, Shadow Bronze Jewellery Pack, reversing camera and a tracking device. Touchtronic II 6-speed Automatic. 10,200 miles.



2006 V12 VANQUISH S Meteorite Silver with Obsidian Black interior. Features include satellite navigation, heated front screen, full-grain leather interior and silver brake callipers. 19,500 miles Supplied with 1-year Aston Martin Warranty.

£169,950



2017 RAPIDE S

£134,950

Midnight Blue with Dark Knight and Winter Wheat interior. Features include four heated sport seats, rear seat entertainment system, cruise control and front and rear parking sensors. Touchtronic III 8-speed Automatic. 2,000 miles.

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## Living up to his name

These are the cars by which Stanley Arnolt retained his 'Wacky' epithet Words Richard Heseltine

Clockwise from top left Only three of the striking Arnolt-Aston Martin DB2/4 were made; six Arnolt-Bristol coupés were built; Arnolt-MG was first of the breed.

AFTER A HESITANT START, 'Wacky' Arnolt's first car, the Arnolt-MG, sold in reasonable numbers despite the inevitable problems with delivery dates between Italy and the US; deadlines were at best flexible. Ultimately, it was a rather more fundamental problem that bought production to a juddering halt. MG announced that it was shelving its TD model at the end of 1953 and, at a stroke, Arnolt didn't have a chassis.

That wasn't altogether the end of the marque, though. Having made a significant investment in Carrozzeria Bertone, and with commitments to building a minimum of 200 cars, Wacky Arnolt had already initiated a raft of sister models. A trio of Arnolt-Aston Martin DB2/4s was made, only for the Newport Pagnell firm to back out of the deal (although, just to add to confusion, Bertone later built a further batch of Astons for its American paymaster, but they weren't badged as Arnolts).

A one-off Bentley R Type Continental was also created for Mrs Arnolt, and painted in a striking shade of gold. Wacky himself had Bertone rustle up a rather lovely Siata Daina SL Coupé for his personal use, but it wasn't strictly an Arnolt model in the accepted sense, and wasn't badged as such.

With Wacky acting as Bristol's US concessionaire, it's no great shock that the

Filton firm loaned a platform for a perceived volume-selling Arnolt – the 404-based Arnolt-Bristol featured on the preceding pages. Stylist Franco Scaglione found accommodating the loftiness of its BMWderived straight-six a chore. He managed it, though, the result a car of singular beauty which also enjoyed success trackside. Honours included a class win in the 1956 Sebring 12 Hours and the Team Prize.

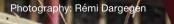


Sadly, despite being offered in a variety of specs, ranging from pared-back racer to luxury cruiser, it didn't sell in the numbers once envisaged. Around 142 units were made to 1959 (with 12 destroyed in a fire), including six coupé variants, although the final car wasn't sold until as late as 1968.

Intriguingly, three of the fixed-lid Arnolt-Bristols were sold in Europe. One was displayed at the 1955 Paris motor show, where it was spotted by actor Lee Marvin. He purchased the car off the stand and retained it until his death in 1987.

Once it became clear that building cars wasn't a great revenue earner, Arnolt the entrepreneur stuck to what he did best: making deals. Having started out in business in 1939 with just one employee, by the end of the '50s he had close on 500. Away from cars, his manufacturing interests ranged from furniture to tail hooks for carrier planes; trailers for Sears to travel cases for atom bombs. It is highly unlikely that Arnolt ever recouped his investment in automobile production, let alone made a profit.

But it would appear that this didn't really matter as long as other enterprises replenished his coffers. Wacky died on Christmas Eve 1963, his legacy being a raft of distinctive and desirable sports cars that were owned by few, but admired by many.



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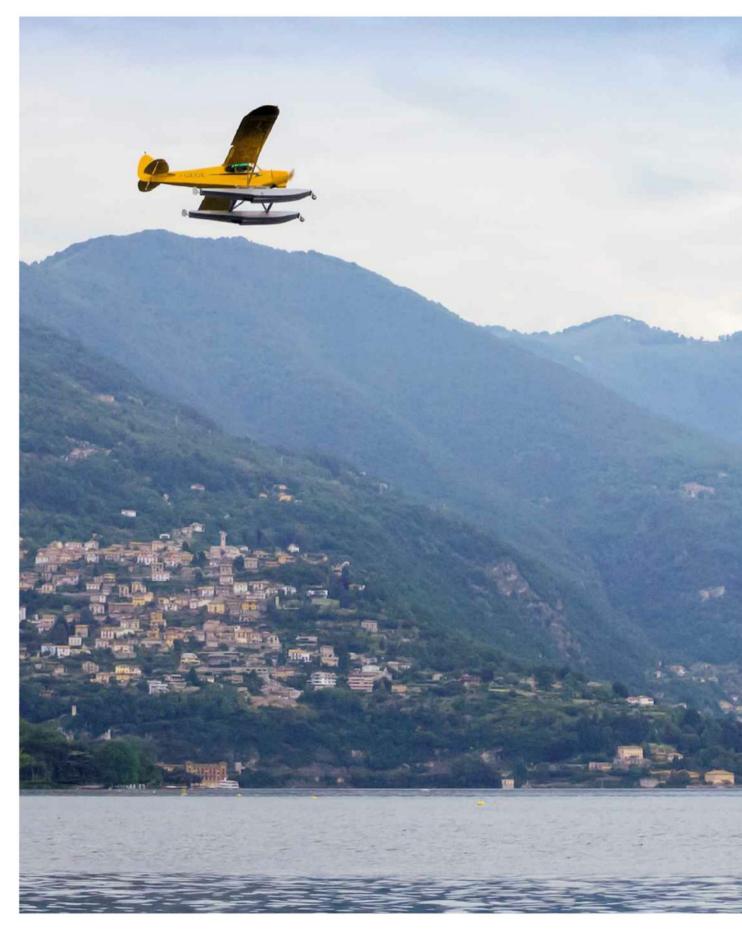




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CELETTE

CELETTE



# THE ONLY WAY TO ARRIVE

Italy's Lake Como is the site of the world's oldest seaplane base. Dale Drinnon takes a very special flight over Villa d'Este Photography Martyn Goddard

....

ey, Carlo,' I say into the headset mic, 'can we swing towards Villa d'Este?' He

gives a little nod from the front seat and banks the aircraft around, wings flashing vivid Cub Yellow. A quick flyby seems only fitting; down below, admirers linger among some of the world's most exotic cars after one of the world's most celebrated concours, and for many regulars the experience wouldn't be complete without the added magic of seaplanes over Lake Como. Style and charisma, after all, aren't exclusive to vehicles of the roadgoing variety.

Of course, Italy is synonymous with beautiful, desirable cars, and *Octane* readers will immediately associate Lake Como with the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, founded in 1929 and home every spring to those worthy of Shakespearian love sonnets. Even the concours faithful, however, often don't know that the yellow Piper Cub and its stablemates they watch swooping across the water year upon year are part of a flying tradition of equal heritage, if not greater.

Lake Como aviation dates from the balloon era, and in 1913, a mere three years after Frenchman Henri Fabre made the first successful powered flight from water, it hosted Il Gran Circuito dei Laghi, a seaplane Grand Prix of the lakes, won by legendary aviator Roland Garros. In 1930, a group of enthusiasts established the Aero Club Como, in the city that gave its name to the lake, from which the organisation flies to this day.

It's the oldest seaplane base in the world, continuously operated since its inception except for a brief period during the Second World War, when the northward retreating Wehrmacht reportedly sent the Club's planes to the bottom of the 400-metre deep lake as a pre-emptive strike – likely a prudent measure, given that Mussolini's final dispatch was at the hands of local partisans and conducted a few villages up the shore.

The terms seaplane and floatplane are often interchanged, but to most connoisseurs seaplane is the preferred generic for any fixed-wing aircraft that can fly from water, either inland or ocean, whereas floatplane is a specific type with pontoons hung below the fuselage. Flying boats are essentially boat hulls with wings (like the Short Sunderland or PBY Catalina). Both floatplanes and flying boats can be amphibious: equipped with retractable wheels and capable of operating from land as well as water.

That such marvellous inventions should find a following in Como was probably inevitable. Take-off and landing without expensively contoured stretches of viable real estate held great appeal for pioneer experimenters – witness the efforts of Langley and Voisin – and Italy was an early adopter of the concept, no doubt thanks to its extreme ratio of coastline to land mass.

Italy participated in every Schneider Trophy seaplane race. From the initial 1913 event on, the progenitor of Britain's renowned Supermarine Spitfire won three and was controversially disqualified after winning a fourth. In addition, Italy's Schneider-intended but never raced Macchi MC 72 retains the piston-engined speed record for seaplanes even yet, set in 1934 at 440.681mph. The nation's first airlines were almost totally water-based, and Italian aviators of the genre became world famous between the Wars, including adventurer Francesco de Pinedo, the 'Italian Lindbergh'.

Alas, the glory days of all marine aviation were shortlived: World War Two left behind a global abundance of dry aerodromes. Seaplanes were soon largely relegated to service in remote bush areas – along with, fortunately, general aviation use in beautiful resort locations surrounded by rough, undulating, runway-hostile terrain and close to large bodies of water. Such as Como. The Club has prospered ever since.

Today the Aero Club Como is a busy seaplane flight school, Europe's biggest, where students can either add a seaplane rating to their PPL (Private Pilot's Licence) or learn to fly from scratch. It's also a restoration and maintenance facility, offers hourly rentals, provides aircraft for film shoots, and everything else incomegenerating you'd expect of a not-for-profit organisation, staffed heavily by volunteers.

The main hangar is available for corporate and private functions, too, and club manager and driving force Cesare Baj, long-time Como resident and newspaperman, 'Seaplanes were largely relegated to remote areas – and beautiful resorts surrounded by runway-hostile terrain. Like Como'

historian, instructor, and authority on all things seaplane, sounds especially pleased with the nights when the Como Film Festival uses the club's hangar doors as an open-air movie screen. Core membership averages 200 Italians, plus 250-ish outside Italy. The club's fleet numbers roughly a dozen planes, modern and historic, including a recently acquired 1947 Republic RC-3 Seabee.

Pride of place, at least as far as I'm concerned, goes to the delectable Piper Cub. The Cub is both a classic and a perennial, manufactured by Piper Aircraft USA in original Model J-3 form between 1938 and 1947 (and evolved from a design launched eight years earlier still), then resumed as the upgraded, hot-rodded Super Cub Model PA-18 from 1949 to 1983, and again in '88 to '94, when this example was built. Faithful replicas are in current production.

Throughout the run, Cub Yellow has been the standard colour, although purists will argue variations in shade, and improvements to engines and ancillaries notwithstanding the basic design remains the same traditional fabric-covered 'tail-dragger' – that is, the third of its three wheels is out back, not under the nose (float conversions are an aftermarket job). Cubs were always aimed at the more affordable market, by founding philosophy, and in innocent, litigation-lite 1950s America my uncle Leonard could comfortably afford to fly a secondhand J-3 on the income of an hourly-wage welder.

#### Right

Lake Como is a suitably glamorous backdrop for the world's oldest seaplane base; bright yellow Piper Cub is the perfect craft for getting around here.





'There's no such thing as an "ordinary" plane – they can fly, for goodness' sake. Light aircraft are airborne Formula Fords'

Founding philosophy furthermore made the tiny Cub nimble and responsive, the sensory equivalent of a vintage biplane, and it's not uncommon to see them scoot to and fro in pleasant weather with the single door locked open – or removed entirely. A pretty good match, when you think about it, to the Austin-Healey 100 we've driven to the Aero Club: two classic motoring products of the same era, Spartan, reasonably priced, userfriendly, and huge fun, ideal for young people with still-fresh memories of a terrible war and a determination to enjoy life for a while.

Our pilot Carlo, an Aero Club volunteer flight instructor who earned his PPL here as a teenager and now flies for a major airline (and like flyers from Charles Royce through to the Mercury Seven, is an ardent car guy), says the biplane comparison extends to practical matters as well. In addition to the usual pre-flight fuel contaminants check, radio check, controls inspection and so forth, his walk-around includes the network of various biplane-like struts and cables securing the floats and commanding the rudders used for aquatic steering, plus, this being an amphibian, the wheels that emphatically must be retracted into the floats whenever the plane moves through water.

Those floats have to be purged of leakage during his pre-flight as well, and by hand pump, after removing black rubber plugs from access holes atop each pontoon. Carlo tells me 'You know, those plugs used to be white, but seagulls thought they were food and stole them, so they made them black instead.' Only much later do I wonder if that's the seaplane counterpart of sending the rookie for a left-handed screwdriver... at the time, though, I'm climbing into the cockpit and kid-in-a-sweet-shop focused on the sheer exhilaration of it all.

Don't be put off by the sneering of computer-game fighter aces, there's no such thing as an 'ordinary' airplane – they can *fly*, for goodness' sake. Light aircraft such as the Super Cub are airborne Formula Fords, rally-prepped Mini Coopers with lift. The minuscule seat, knees-scrunched-up-againstarmpits stance and naked widgets everywhere are pure Series 1 Lotus Seven. The obligatory engine run-up before we taxi

#### Left and below

Water taxis are so passé... Next time you visit Villa d'Este, make sure to get about Lake Como on a seaplane.



out would be deafening *sans* headphones, and I'm surprised that, despite appearances, a static Cub on floats very much feels nosehigh, like its tail-wheel cousins do on land.

'A sea pilot also has to be part sailor,' Carlos says, as he enters the buoy-marked runway area. 'The water is really busy here in summer, and your situational awareness, very important for any kind of flying, has to extend to waves and boat wakes and crisscrossing water traffic – extremely dangerous stuff during take-off and landing. So I love the lake on still, calm, smooth winter days; it's like landing on silk.'

Then, satisfied that we're clear, he progressively throttles-up; the PA-18's uprated 180 horsepower may not seem impressive by supercar standards but, in an airframe first issued with 40, it puts us on the step of the floats, like a ski-boat, with a heartswelling surge. Carlo pulls back and we're airborne, undercarriage trailing wet streamers in the wind, and with both water and land dropping away behind, the Piper transitions into a natural creature of the sky, the tiniest change in air density or direction telegraphed instantly as microscopic movements travelling through its skin and directly to your spine. It's as though the machine itself is tingling with excitement.

The ceiling is high and virtually unlimited, stunning mountain vistas stretch around the full compass, and time, distance and altitude pass by in a glorious, awe-inspiring eye-blink. Carlo is already tapering the climb rate when I realise where we are. 'Hey, Carlo...', I say into the mic, and he rudders left to Villa d'Este. Down there I know faces are tilting upwards, and I wouldn't trade chairs right now for any on the concours lawn.

THANKS TO Cesare Baj and Aero Club Como, www.aeroclubcomo.com; to our 'Healey-owning Italian aviator friend, and to Carlo.

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# ANO PLACE

Three GM bosses sought to reinvent the Corvette and the mid-engined Two Rotor was the result. Mark Hales tracks down a unique survivor

Photography Paul Harmer





he Corvette is America's only home-grown sports car. Now, 65 years up the road, it still features a separate chassis and a plastic body and it still has a large V8 engine in the front, driving the rear wheels. It's a kind of Stars and Stripes statement, a bit like NASCAR. A set of traditional values that represents everything about a brand. If the rumours are correct, the Corvette's engine might finally be about to move – but it won't be the first attempt at revolution.

The 1960s and '70s saw giant personalities heading up the big car corporations and directing the next model range was a good measure of influence. The other essential was to do so for less money. There are many players in a story that began at the end of the '60s but three stand above the parapet.

Russian-born maverick Zora Arkus Duntov had risen through the US motor industry to become an engineer at GM in the early 1950s, responsible for most of the Corvette's development. He was convinced that the next Corvette should have a midmounted engine.

A flamboyant John Z DeLorean had also begun as an engineer, becoming the

youngest-ever head of a GM division – Pontiac – and taking over at Chevrolet in 1969. He was keen to have a new Corvette as an early mark of his leadership.

Ed Cole was the biggest of the three beasts, another engineer, beginning his career at GM in the 1930s, becoming chief engineer in 1946, then GM President in 1967. The Corvette of 1953 was his project, as was the introduction of the small-block V8 engine in 1955. Later, he would push through the illfated air-cooled, rear-engined Corvair, which earned him a controversial reputation but also suggested to creatives like Duntov that he was open to new ideas. This was a good time for Cole to lay the Corvair's ghost to rest and have one final significant influence on the automobile. Mid-engined or otherwise, it was clear to all that it had to be lighter, more fuel-efficient and cleaner.

Felix Wankel's inspiration for the rotary dates back as far as 1929 so it had already endured a long gestation, but by the late 1960s it looked as if its time had finally come. More than 20 companies worldwide bought licences from Wankel GmbH and German carmaker NSU, which was an early champion. In America that included Ford, Chrysler, AMC and GM – all via aviation and industrial giant Curtiss-Wright, which had acquired the rotary's rights for the US. Perhaps surprisingly for a company regarded as the ultimate conservative, only GM saw some advantages: emissions legislation was a growing reality and at first it looked as if the rotary's very high exhaust temperatures would be helpful in meeting the new rules.

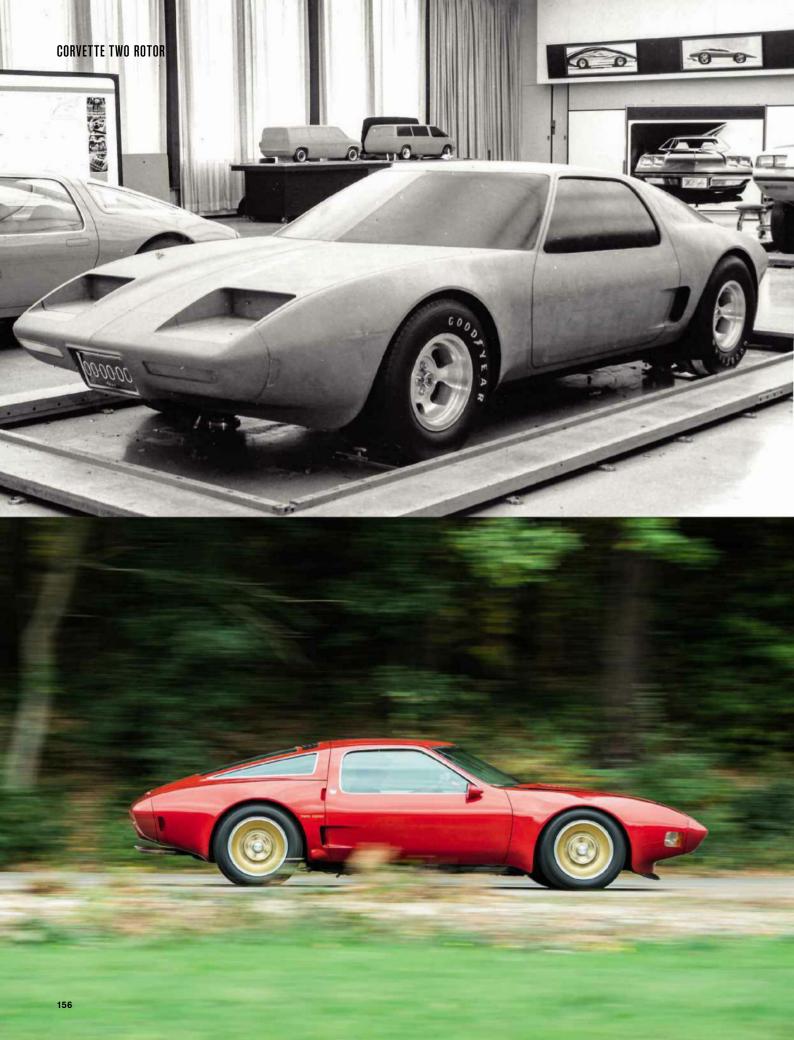
More important to a company that had eschewed front-wheel drive and radial tyres because they added a few dollars to manufacture, the Wankel had fewer than half a piston engine's moving parts, so it might be cheaper to produce. And it was extremely compact, so a smaller car could offer similar space inside, and it could be lighter: according to GM's engineers, crash legislation and emissions equipment could add 270kg to a car – or 1mpg less. There was the modular aspect too: add more rotors to get more power but use parts you are already making. Automation and standardisation were company watchwords.

Having looked at buying Wankel GmbH outright, in November 1970 Cole instead agreed to pay \$50 million for production rights. It was a bargain in GM terms and his



M-

AFPIN MAND BRAK



Facing page and right Clay model in GM's studio led by design chief Bill Mitchell, next to the real steel thing; badging tells the tale of a car that – officially – was not powered by a Wankel engine.

grand plan was that the GM of the future would be all-Wankel. Cole had enough power to see his rotary plan become reality, and the problems that he and his engineers knew about (and took Mazda so long to fix) would surely be easy for a giant like GM.

The volume Vega model was to be the first recipient of GM's RCE – as in Rotary Combustion Engine, for the Wankel name was taboo – which featured two rotors, each with three combustion chambers and equivalent to a total chamber volume of 6538cc, according to the way GM measured it. Power was 180bhp, low for such capacity but in line with what the European Wankels were achieving, even if their nominal volumes were a lot smaller. In the end, GM declared the capacity as 266ci, or 4362cc.

The development of the Corvette replacement – the 'Two Rotor' – went in parallel with the Vega's and it was to be Eurosized, partly to perform on the available power but also to meet Cole's new spacesaving initiative. The stylists chose a midengine layout mainly because it could use the engine and transmission package destined for the front-wheel-drive volume models.

GM was flat-out with the saloons so design and production of a suitable Corvette chassis fell to Duntov's Corvette Group, which was also short of both staff and time. The answer was simple, and logical. If the new car was to be Euro-sized then start with some borrowed Euro underpinnings.

A mid-engined Porsche 914/6 was acquired and its chassis shortened to reduce wheelbase by 6.5 inches. The Porsche strut front and semi-trailing arm rear suspension were retained – as were the brakes – but the mounting points were moved, widening the track by 3in at the front,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in at the rear. A two-rotor engine was installed, driving a three-speed auto transmission from the GM range, leaving plenty of room for a four-speed manual, and more rotors.

The chassis modifications were completed in record time, and by mid-1971 the studio had created a fresh and modern body shape. The green light was given to build a working prototype, and a brutal June '72 deadline to present to the top men.

So there was no alternative but to get someone else to build a body, and in January the rolling chassis and body buck were shipped to Pininfarina in Turin, a location



### 'PININFARINA COMPLETED A STEEL BODY IN A RECORD 12 WEEKS AND THE CAR WAS FREIGHTED BACK TO AMERICA'

that has implications for our story. Pininfarina completed a steel body – though the styling was all the GM studio's own work – in a record 12 weeks and the car was freighted back to America for fitting out.

A little over a year later, in October 1973, the Two Rotor – as it was by then officially known – was a major hit at the Paris Salon. However, the reaction of potential buyers – the Corvette faithful – was less enthusiastic. Crash structures had ensured that the car was heavy despite its size and it only went as well as 180bhp could propel it. I suspect the fact that it didn't look or sound like a Corvette also had something to do with it. But then outside events took a hand. The oil crisis hit the world and, for a while, fuel economy became more important than emissions and the Wankel's thirst was an even bigger problem for a car that didn't go.

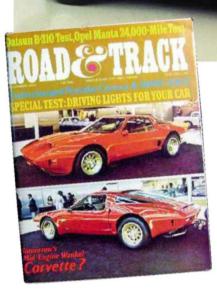
Duntov's four-rotor of 1973 was a yet more dramatic attempt that did go, but unsurprisingly consumed twice as much fuel. And then DeLorean was moved sideways to the commercial division and Ed Cole retired. The rotary and the mid-engine lost their champions and the revolution was over.

GM WOULD HAVE promptly crushed the Two Rotor prototype, not least because a complete set of Porsche underpinnings might have proved an embarrassing revelation for a company that 'could do anything it wanted', but there was a snag. The bill from Pininfarina had been considerable so, to avoid duty when the car returned to the US for fitting out, it had become a 'temporary import'. The only way to avoid another bill was to send it back to somewhere in Europe. That turned out to be up in the roof at Vauxhall, GM's outpost in Luton, Bedfordshire, where it sat in its crate for ten years until an office expansion brought another brush with the scrapman.

How these large companies can be so dispassionate about their significant history is beyond me but, with just hours to go before the jaws closed, Englishman Tom Falconer – arch enthusiast for all things Corvette – received a phone call from Geoff Lawson. The then-designer at Vauxhall, later head of styling at Jaguar, thought Tom might like, as an office ornament, a metal cube that represented a \$50-million investment.

He certainly didn't want the ornament: he wanted the whole car, but Lawson didn't have that authority. 'You'll have to talk to Chuck. He's the only man who can say yes.'

Falconer is by nature modest but, crucially, during his many visits to the Corvette's shrines he had made plenty of friends in high places, among them head of styling Chuck Jordan, about whose Cadillac Seville Tom had written a book. 'He had enormous power,' says Tom; 'he was one of a very few men who could say yes and nobody would



argue with him.' Jordan had also famously once asserted that no Corvette would ever have a steel body, or a mid-mounted engine.

Tom got through to Chuck and managed to charm him. 'Hell, what d'you want that thing for? It has no engine, and no transaxle.' What had once been the harbinger of GM's new dawn was duly loaded onto a trailer behind a Citroën estate car and transported to Tom's premises in Newcastle, where it again sat for a while before featuring a Vauxhall Cavalier engine and three-speed auto gearbox in an early attempt to make it driveable, then, in an ironic twist, a two-rotor Mazda engine. The Mazda mounts the opposite way round, so the exhaust ports are on the wrong side, and the crank turns the other way, which obliged Tom to design and install a transfer gearbox. But the car drives, and does so with a two-rotor engine - which will do for the moment.

The story doesn't end there though. All the known RCEs had been zealously gathered

#### Above and left

The prototype with three men who shaped it: from left, Henry Haga, John Wasenko and Otto Soeding. Cover story in R&T asked the important question.

and scrapped – save for one that survives in a museum at Ypsilanti. The engine's internal details had been as secret as GM could make them – it was not a Wankel, remember – and it wanted to control the legacy, a difficult task in a country the size of America, especially when every assembly plant had been required to have an engine on prominent display.

Years later, Tom's network threw up another piece of serendipity. Someone knew of a genuine RCE engine that one of the plants had donated to a university, and one of its lecturers had taken it home. 'He wanted too much money for it,' says Tom, 'but with the passage of time, he became more realistic.'

In October 2017 the engine was loaded into a crate and shipped to Tom's workshop, now in Snodland, Kent. There's a bit of work to do but, from what I know of Tom Falconer, his Two Rotor will once again feature a GM rotary, and it will be the only one.

It's too easy to blame emissions and the fuel crisis for the Two Rotor's demise, but it's more complex than that. Fuel economy wasn't the most important thing at the beginning of the 1970s; only with the fuel crisis did it move to the top of the list, and America could have so easily embraced the diesel like much of the rest of the world, but it didn't. GM could have made a smallerengined Corvette, but it didn't. DeLorean left GM in 1973 and set about trying to buy the Two Rotor project for his eponymous car company, to build the 'World Car' he'd



envisaged. Predictably, the parties couldn't agree, so DeLorean did his own mid-engined thing using a Renault V6.

The sense of what might have been is frustrating. The Two Rotor is undeniably handsome as well as innovative and there's no doubt it left its mark – as Tom wryly observes, '... after it had featured in *Style Auto* in 1976. Well, every car designer reads that'.

The front end of the new Vega inherited the headlight set-up, and the Pontiac Fiero – ironically the only mid-engined American car to be made in volume – took the nose shape. And can we see the rounded door windows and rear aspect on Porsche's 928?

Meanwhile, Mazda went on to prove that the rotary could be cleaned up and sorted out and that a car of the Two Rotor's size with rotary power could be a success, even



an icon. GM could so easily have badged it as something other than a Corvette but, without Cole and DeLorean, the establishment prevailed and the Corvette went back to the front-engined future.

THERE ARE SO MANY details that strike you about Tom's Two Rotor. Its condition for one, not to mention originality. Other than the engine, absolutely everything is as it was when it left America all those years ago, even down to the motor show 'plates, the original space-saver spare wheel and tyre, and all the original air conditioning equipment. The underbonnet still has that matt black bigmanufacturer production look about it rather than that of a special with welded-up brackets and bright blue hoses. And just look at the original data plate, which acknowledges 'The builders and craftsmen of Chevrolet Mock Up dept.' Even the original radio works.

There are the smaller styling details too. The reverse cleavage in the screen that meets the one in the bonnet was one of design chief Bill Mitchell's tics, harking back to his formative years in the 1930s. It's a dual manufacturing and optical nightmare, and obliges a wacky wiper system that sweeps outwards from the centre, operated by huge cantilever arms just in front of the firewall. And there's the three-headlamp system that was to be universal across the range, still complete with its spirit-level adjuster.

The overall impression, though, is much more European than 1970s American. Was that really in DeLorean and the designer's minds? A brief for a world car? The Corvette had never sold in the UK because it was left-

#### 'THE TWO ROTOR IS UNDENIABLY HANDSOME AS WELL AS INNOVATIVE AND THERE'S NO DOUBT IT LEFT ITS MARK'

hand drive. This would be easier to engineer. We will never know.

It squats on a set of handsome goldpainted very American Racing wheels that, together with the red paint finish, Tom reckons was a nod to Ferrari. When Tom collected the car, it still wore the original 205/60x16 tyres. 'We heard a bang one day and went into the shop to find one had burst all on its own.' Also striking is how low the car sits, despite riding high on relatively soft suspension. The roof measures only 42in from the ground, not quite a GT40 but Sin lower than the 914 on which it's based.

The Wankel engine's compact dimensions and rear location clearly allowed designers additional freedoms with transmission and driveshaft heights as well as elegant proportions, without a weight penalty right at the rear. And the doors are simply huge. You can pretty much sit in sideways and swing in your legs in the modern supercar fashion. There you find excellent visibility over the sloping nose and a spacious lay-back driving position with vast legroom.

The seat doesn't adjust but the pedalbox does, like a LaFerrari (or 1960s Marcos), and the steering wheel is reach-adjustable. Dials are buried in deep holes, a GM fashion of the time, and things that seem like gimmicks are logical given the cutaway dash: the lights and wiper switches fall easily to hand in the door.

I've complained so often how it's impossible to find a car that is mechanically as it was, but other than the engine this is about as close as it gets. The Mazda substitute is certainly noisy – keeping a Wankel quiet is another rotary challenge – but, once moving, the suspension is compliant, which is not quite the same thing as soft; it moves about as you drive, which is another characteristic we miss these days, when big weights have to be firmly controlled.

Move the wheel and there's a response that comes via the seat as well as the wheel's rim and your sightline, something I used to describe as 'involving' and which most often came from small masses concentrated near the car's centre. The latter is true here, but the car certainly isn't light. It rolls quite a lot too, as you can see in the pictures, yet it doesn't aggressively dip and squat, staying nicely flat while riding well. The steering is unassisted so it's quite heavy but it's direct and informative. Edge a bit too quick into a turn and add a bit more, and the car turns a bit more. Lose a bit of grip and the message is there at your fingertips. But... The car impresses for its nice, easy balance and its layout, its looks and the amount of space for luggage behind the engine as well as occupants in the cabin. It's also sophisticated, at least potentially. However, it doesn't challenge and excite and it's difficult to see how it could. The Mazda engine is probably pushing out about 120bhp, or 60 less than GM's would, but some of 180bhp would still get lost with three gears and a lazy torque converter, which a big V8 can overlook.

The last Corvettes I drove would spin-up an inside wheel on a roundabout at will; such things are not a measure of a car's excellence, but they are a statement of intent. The Two Rotor would have undergone some refinement, and, as Mazda was able to show, it would have been possible to extract more power from the existing engine, or it could have acquired some more rotors.

It's a huge shame the Two Rotor didn't go into production, but it probably carried too much weight of expectation at the wrong time. As someone said, if they'd spent a fraction of the amount spent on gas turbines, the rotary would have been sorted long ago.

How about we just go back in time, call it something else, and see what happens?

#### **'IT'S A HUGE SHAME THE TWO ROTOR DIDN'T GO INTO PRODUCTION. IT PROBABLY CARRIED TOO MUCH WEIGHT OF EXPECTATION'**



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# Scratching the 30-year itch



1986 FORD SIERRA RS COSWORTH Jesse crosse

AFTER THE EXCITEMENT

of being reunited with my former long-term test Sierra RS Cosworth after 30 years – as described in the feature in *Octane* 174 – had abated a tiny bit, I couldn't wait to get it back to the workshop. This is the only known remaining car from the original Ford Great Britain press fleet of ten Sierra Cosworths and I'm keen to make it closer to standard condition.

When I handed the Cossie back to Ford in 1987, it was sold to Brodie Brittain Racing, where the power was upgraded from the standard 204bhp to 300bhp. Its third owner took it with him when he emigrated to Australia (see *Letters*) and the engine underwent further changes. Today, it is equipped with a colossal turbo, enormous intercooler, uprated ECU chip and high-capacity injectors.

The plan is to replace the turbo with an original Garrett T3, complete with standard intercooler and plumbing, and return the engine to original mechanical specification and sort out the calibration. Various other aftermarket bits are also scheduled to be swapped for standard items.

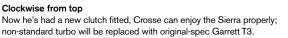
When I drove the Cossie earlier this year it became obvious that the clutch was in need of attention so, once the deal was done, I collected it on a trailer and delivered it to my friend and Sierra Cosworth expert, Richard Upton, at ITG Motorsport in Bucks. Richard fitted a new Helix clutch and changed the oil, and the RS500 grilles in the front spoiler were swapped for original three-door



Sierra Cosworth foglights. The aftermarket aluminium cambelt cover was also replaced with an original black plastic cover – fortunately, Richard had these rare items among his stash of Cossie bits and pieces.

With the clutch sorted, I had a chance to open the car up a little and, as expected, the turbo lag can be measured in lightyears. Now I'm looking forward to fitting a fresh T3 turbo and rediscovering the responsive, punchy engine that makes the Sierra RS Cosworth such a fantastic car to drive.





#### **OCTANE'S FLEET**

These are the cars – and motorbikes – run by the magazine's staff and contributors

#### **ROBERT COUCHER**

International editor

- 1937 Bentley 41/4
- 1955 Jaguar XK1401988 Mercedes-Benz
- 560 SEC

#### TONY DRON

Test driver

• 1932 Austin Seven

#### MARK DIXON

Deputy editor

- 1955 Land Rover Series I 107in
- 1963 Ford Galaxie
- Country Sedan
- 1989 and '91
- Land Rover Discoverys
- 1994 Range Rover 4.0

#### ANDREW ENGLISH

- 1960 Triumph TR3A
- 1965 Aston Martin DB5

#### SANJAY SEETANAH Advertising director

- 1981 BMW 323i Top Cabrio
- 1998 Aston Martin DB7 Volante

#### **GLEN WADDINGTON**

Associate editor

**ILEX TAPLEY** 

- 1983 Porsche 944
- 1989 BMW 320i Convertible

#### SAMANTHA SNOW

- Advertising account manager
- 1969 Triumph Herald
- 13/60 Convertible
- 1989 Mercedes-Benz 300SL

#### MARK SOMMER

Art Director

1969 Alfa Romeo Giulia
 1300 Saloon

#### JOHN SIMISTER

Contributor

- 1934 Singer Nine Le Mans
- 1961 Saab 96
- 1968 Sunbeam Stiletto

#### JAMES ELLIOTT

Editor-in-chief

- 1965 Triumph 2.5PI
- 1968 Jensen Interceptor

#### **Octane Cars**

BY OCTANE STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS

### OCTANE'S FLEET

#### **JESSE CROSSE**

Contributor

1968 Ford Mustang GT 390
1986 Ford Sierra RS Cosworth

#### DAVID BURGESS-WISE

Contributor

- 1903 De Dion-Bouton
- 1911 Pilain 16/20
- 1926 Delage DISS

#### MARTYN GODDARD Photographer

- 1963 Triumph TR6SS Trophy
- 1965 Austin-Healey 3000 MkIII

DAVE KINNEY Markets expert • 2005 Ferrari 612 Scaglietti

#### DELWYN MALLETT

Contributor

- 1936 Cord 810 Beverly
- 1946 Tatra T87
- 1950 Ford Club Coupe
- 1952 Porsche 356
- 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300SL
- 1957 Porsche Speedster
  1957 Fiat Abarth Sperimentale
- 1963 Abarth-Simca
- 1963 Tatra T603

#### SARAH BRADLEY

Contributor

- 1929 Ford Model A hot rod
- 1952 Studebaker Champion
- 1956 Chevrolet 3100 pick-up
- 1969 Plymouth Roadrunner Various motorbikes

#### MASSIMO DELBÒ

#### Contributor

- 1967 Mercedes-Benz 230
- 1967 Mercedes-Benz 230 • 1972 Fiat 500L
- 1972 Flat 500L
   1979/80 Range Rovers
- 1982 Mercedes-Benz 500SL
- 1985 Mercedes-Benz 240TD

#### EVAN KLEIN

- Photographer
- 1967 Alfa Romeo Giulia Super

#### JAMES LIPMAN

Photographer

- 1968 Porsche 912
- 1995 Buick Roadmaster

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# Day tripper, yeah



#### HALL 2 OF THE NEC in

Birmingham was deserted when I sneaked into it at 7am on the Friday of the Classic Motor Show to take photographs of my Austin-Healey. 171 YNO was one of seven cars on display on the JME Healeys stand, and I was able to shoot away unhindered by the crowds that would later be attending the bustling show.

The fact that my car was there at all was due to a chat with JME's Dan Everard while we were on a photo session back in the summer. JME will be celebrating 40 years in business in 2018 and I will have owned my 'Healey 30 years since purchasing it in 1988. There are other connections. I had known and classic-rallied with the late Jonathan Everard, who set up JME in the early 1990s, and I felt honoured that my well-used car, albeit nicely valeted, should be shown alongside wonderful cars that had had ground-up restorations.

A few days before the show I was able to take advantage of a bright autumn day to make a test drive in the 'Healey to Braintree in Essex – top down, as usual – to photograph the ex-George Harrison Porsche 928. The former Beatle bought the car in 1980, when he was living in Henley-on-Thames, and kept it for three years; it was sold for just £2000 in 2003 to a chap in Leeds who wanted to dismantle it for spare parts – until his wife spotted Harrison's name in the logbook and suggested that might not be a good idea.

The Porsche was resold at auction earlier this year for £37,500 and is now being restored. I am producing a set of photographs of it for a story and wanted to shoot while the car was still in bare metal, before a new topcoat of gloss black, the original colour, was applied.

The display of the 'Healey at the NEC also coincided with the publication of the second volume of my book *Rock 'n' Roll* and Fast Cars, in which the car features, so I took time for a bit



of book promotion with a display card on the bonnet and an interview for Scottish radio.

Later, I had a good look around the show, which is vast. Classics from just about every make seemed to be on display, and you could also buy one from the many dealer stands or at the Silverstone Auctions sale. I headed home after ten hugely enjoyable hours at the event – but left my Austin-Healey behind because it was on duty for another two days on the JME stand.

#### Above and below

Goddard's 'Healey was one of seven on the JME Healeys stand at the NEC; ex-Harrison Porsche mid-restoration.



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# **Rolling restoration**



1955 JAGUAR XK140 robert coucher

I REALLY DON'T want to tempt fate but the Jaguar is proving to be the most reliable classic I have ever owned. It just... works. I bought it some ten years ago from XK specialist Jeremy Wade. A good car, it was sold as described and had benefited from a full body-off restoration in the 1990s so was solid and straight. It came with some desirable modifications including an ally rad and expansion tank, front disc brakes, alternator conversion, oil cooler, ally fuel tank with quick-release filler cap and, being an original Special

Equipment-spec XK, it has the desirable C-type head, wire wheels, twin exhausts and overdrive.

Incorrect 15-inch wires with 205-section tyres were on the car, so I changed them immediately for correct 16-inch jobs from Motor Wheel Services and it is now shod with excellent Michelin Pilote X radials from Dougal Cawley's Longstone Classic Tyres.

And so it goes on. My Jaguar logbook now consists of 84 pages (just counted) of work done to the car during my decade of ownership. Add up the total cost – I bravely keep a running tally – and it currently equates to the initial purchase price. Ouch. But a couple of grand per year spent getting the Jaguar to where it is today has



been extremely rewarding and, as these classics don't suffer catastrophic depreciation as modern cars do, I'm happy to spend the spondoolies!

As reported over the years I've had pretty much everything done to the mechanicals of the XK. The late Tim Waddingham rebuilt the engine, upping it from 3.4 litres to a naughty 3.8 by way of lipped, torsionally stiff competition liners, with a balanced bottom end fitted with modern, effective oil seals. Since then the Jaguar has never leaked a drop of oil. He also fitted a period-correct, all-synchronised Jaguar gearbox with competition overdrive.

Oops, I've run out of space, so will report next month on the XK's return from its recent service at Twyford Moors.



# Right place, right time



2005 FERRARI 612 SCAGLIETTI dave kinney

I'M PROBABLY BEST described as an accidental Ferrari owner right now. I had been admiring and talking about buying a 612 Scaglietti for a year, tracking prices, calling and emailing friends and spending countless hours scanning the ads.

Long before Hurricane Irma was a thought, I took a trip to central Florida to complete the purchase of another, entirely different car that I had bought on eBay. The car was less than described (surprising no-one, including myself) but the deal included an interesting twist: the sellers had no paperwork, a detail they did not disclose until I actually arrived on the scene. After the initial shock, I politely told them I was still interested should they find a legal way to exchange title, and made my way south for an evening dinner meeting with a collector-car dealer friend.

Still primed to buy a car after the earlier disappointment, we soon reached agreement on the lovely, 20,000-mile Tour de France Blue 612 Scaglietti that had been in his showroom for seven months. I had seen, and coveted, the car on previous trips to Florida, but did not imagine I would own this particular example, its asking price being a bit too dear for my budget. However, he was ready to sell and, as it turns out, I was in the right place to buy.

The possibly true story about the actual birthing of the 612 is a great one. Ferrari dealers, long-suffering in their ability to sell cars that would fit newly wealthy footballers, rugby players or, here in North America, NFL football or NHL hockey players, requested a Ferrari for guys with wide shoulders, long legs and trunks, or possibly even those with less than a rockstar waistline. The 612 Scaglietti is a big car that accommodates big guys, and, well, let's just say I'm the guy you don't want in the middle seat next to you on a flight.

About that hurricane. Since the car I bought was in Florida, between paying for it and arranging for shipment to my home 1000 miles away, Irma became a thing, at one time predicted to make a landfall close to its temporary Fort Lauderdale home. The 612 rode out the storm unscathed, tucked away in a secure building, and is now safely in my garage. Driving impressions at this point are nil, but that's about to change.



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Lancia Aprilia Francis Lombardi Woody - 1948 Awarded "Most Special & Unique Bodywork" at the 2017 Zoute Concours. Price : 95.000 euro



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#### **Octane Cars**

BY OCTANE STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS



# Mirror, signal, hand over cash



1955 LAND ROVER SERIES I Mark dixon

FOR ME, the best part of visiting any classic car show is scouring the autojumble. Auto Moto d'Epoca in Padua, Italy, can usually be relied upon to throw up something really unusual, and my favourite find there was a huge wrought-iron gate from the Alfa factory in Naples, complete with a skeletal iron version of the Alfa badge as a centrepiece. Sadly, it wouldn't quite fit in the overhead locker on my easyJet flight home.

The NEC, Birmingham,

doesn't have the glamour of Padua. In fact, it's one of my least favourite places on Earth, which is partly why I've resisted going to the annual Classic Motor Show in November for the past few years. This time, however, I thought I'd give it another chance – and I'm glad I did, because it was a really good event, with an amazingly varied and eclectic array of cars.

The autojumble wasn't bad, either, and while browsing the stalls I remembered that I needed an interior mirror for the Land Rover. It had a horrible modern plastic thing when I bought it, which I quickly replaced with a more period version found at Beaulieu a couple of years ago. That did the job, but not terrifically well, as I soon found out when I was using the vehicle on the road.

The problem is that any mirror stem has to be screwed onto the vertical face of the windscreen header rail, which means that the vast majority of mirrors available – new or used – end up slightly too high to give me the right viewing angle through the Landy's truck cab rear window. I found myself having to hunch down in the seat to be able to see the road behind, which wasn't comfortable or convenient.

However, at the NEC show I spotted a period-style mirror (made, I suspect, in China) that had a usefully cranked stem to

#### Top and above

Helping partner Paula move house; new mirror can be adjusted to be precisely the right height.

give a couple of inches of 'drop'. Not only that, but the stem is also telescopic, so it can be adjusted to exactly the right position and then locked in place with a knurled ferrule. Fifteen quid? Done!

Of course, shiny chrome is hardly appropriate to a Land Rover but a quick once-over with wet-and-dry and a dusting of grey aerosol will soon sort that, and I can now look forward – or rather, backward – to see exactly whom I'm holding up behind me.



#### Hamburg · Berlin



Mercedes-Benz 300 S Roadster, 1953, fully restored according delivery specifications, restoration recently finished.



Lagonda V12 DHC, 1939, 1 of only 35 exemplars built, great investment with potential, unique opportunity!



Maserati 3,7 l Spider, 1969, only 51 vehicles produced, "matching numbers", \_\_\_\_\_\_ only 30.000 km original.



Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 SS Convertible, 1949, RHD, completely and freshly restored.



Bentley 6,51-Speed Six LeMans Team Car Spez., 1928, restored by Bentley specialist David Ayre.



**Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Roadster**, 1957, 1 of 25 built, over 40 years in collection, rudge wheels.

Aston Martin Virage Volante, 1994, only two owners. Bentley 4 l Mulliner Sport-Saloon, 1931. Bentley Continental GT Speed Zagato, 2005, service book. Bugatti Type 55 Roadster, 1937, French registration. Bugatti Type 51 Grand Prix Race Car, 1933, FIA Papers. Bugatti 57 C Stelvio Cabriolet, 1937, ext. restored.



Ferrari Dino 246 GT Coupé, 1972, "frame-off" restored, "matching-numbers", well documented.



Aston Martin DB 6 MK 2, 1970, documented 3rd hand car, LHD ( ex RHD ), 5 Speed , older restoration.

Lagonda LG 45 Rapide, 1937, ext. restored. Lamborghini Countach 400 S, 1982, revised, like new. Lancia Delta Integrale EVO 16 V, 1992. Maserati 4.9 liter Ghibli SS Coupe, 1971, 1 of 425. MB 170 S Cabriolet A, 1952, maroon red, ext. restored. MB 280 SL Pagode, 1971, 1st delivery Germany, 2nd hand.



Lamborghini Miura P400 by Bertone, 1968, over 20 years one owner, extensively overhauled, "matching".



Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 Freccia d'Oro, 1949, RHD, older restoration, big sunroof.

MB 280 SE Cabriolet, 1968, dark olivegreen, perfect! MB 280 SE 3.5 Cabriolet, 1971, silver grey metallic. MB 300 Sc Coupe, 1957, 1 of only 98 built. MB 320 Cabriolet A, 1938, ultra-rare. Porsche 911 T 2.2 Targa, 1971, albertblue. Porsche 930 Turbo 3.3 l Coupé, 1980, white.

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# **Hibernation begins**



**THE SALT SPREADERS** have been out in force in Berkshire, so I have decided to put the Giulia away for the winter.

The weekend before doing so, however, the weather was glorious and we took the little Alfa for its last run up to Oxfordshire, for an overnight stay at a vineyard for a spot of wine tasting.

I wanted to give the car a thorough clean before she goes into hibernation, but upon removing the rubber mats in the boot I noticed a fuel leak. The petrol had obviously been sitting long enough to remove some of the paint from the tank.

On investigation I noticed the rubber neck filler overflow pipe had come loose so I re-attached it and went for a quick test drive, but it was still leaking.

I syphoned out some fuel and put the car into the garage, planning to sort out the leak over winter, as well as fitting some original Mille Miglia centre caps, which will finish off the reconditioned alloys. The last little job is to refit the front quarter-window catch, which decided to drop off on the way up to the vineyard.

Longer-term improvements include a new clutch because the existing one is very heavy, and I plan to replace or rebuild the worn distributor, which I hope to get done in the spring.



Left and below Cause of fuel leak yet to be identified; Giulia has now been tucked away for a winter of pampering.



# Eagle eyed



1978 MOTO GUZZI LE MANS delwyn mallett

IN MY ICON PAGE, Octane 172, I speculated that the Mobil Pegasus was the only corporate logo with a left- and righthanded version. This prompted a reply from Alan Blair in last month's *Letters*, who pointed out that the Moto Guzzi 'Flying Eagle' has a left and right version that has 'been attached to every Moto Guzzi motorcycle fuel tank since 1922.'

Well, Alan, I gladly concede the Moto Guzzi point, but one thing I have learned (and failed to heed) as a part-time scribe is to avoid using the words 'first' or 'every'. There's always an exception waiting to spring from the shadows to prove you wrong – and not every 'Guzzi has the eagle on its tank.

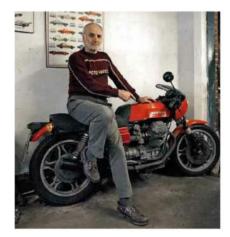
Prompted by Alan's letter, I popped into my garage to check out my Moto Guzzi Le Mans Mk1, which I have owned from new. No eagles! The only eagle on the Le Mans is a rather tiny transfer on top of the tank, to the rear and virtually obscured by the seat extension. Few 'Guzzis of the 1980s carried the eagle, but it did make a prominent return on the MkIII Le Mans – albeit not 'handed'.

A better example of a 'handed' logo would be the Honda wing. I spent several years of my advertising career promoting Honda motorcycles, I have two in the garage, and much to my embarrassment I can only put the oversight down to a senior moment.

Incidentally, the fabulous 'Guzzi *Nibbio II* streamliner record car of 1956 carried both the Mobil Pegasus – two each side and flying forward – and the 'Guzzi eagle, pointing to the rear on the left flank.

Not having ridden any of my 'bikes for some time due to a dodgy hip, the 'Guzzi was looking a little sorry for itself and I decided it was time to dust the beast off.

Flat tyres pumped up, followed by an exploratory twist



of the throttle, revealed a complete lack of 'twist'. Presumably the carbs are seized. I could walk (or limp) away and forget about it, but I feel that now I've shown some interest in my neglected machine I should undertake a little maintenance.

Not sure whether to thank Alan for prompting another job in the never-ending stream emanating from my fleet.

#### Left

Reader's letter prompted Mallett to check up on his 'Guzzi. Thanks to that he now has work to do on it.



#### 1952 Aston Martin DB3 "Works" car chassis #5

One of the five Factory Team cars and winner of the 1952 Goodwood Nine Hours driven by Peter Collins in the 1952 season it also competed at Le Mans, Sebring, Monaco, Silverstone and in the Mille Miglia. Supplied by us to the current owner, it has proved highly competitive in historic events, most recently with a win in the 2017 Goodwood Freddie March Trophy.

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#### Gone but not forgotten

WORDS GILES CHAPMAN IMAGE SAAB MUSEUM

# SIXTEN SASON

The designer of Saab's defining cars also penned some of Sweden's most recognisable products, and died too young

IT'S HARD TO PASS BY a Saab, any Saab, and not feel sad that this wonderful Swedish marque died such a painful death in the wake of the 2008 economic meltdown, undermined by the ineptitude of its custodian General Motors. Saab had been a credible competitor to premium heavyweights such as Merc and BMW. It innovated constantly, won rallies, and gathered a devoted customer base. But while 9-3s and 9-5s still run around, their source has gone.

Saab's demise would have bewildered Sixten Sason, the man responsible for the quirky yet logical appearance of its products. With the company's relative isolation and corporate bravery, he was allowed to forge an unmistakable image for Saabs that really did embrace the aircraft influence that its late 20th Century advertising broadcasted.

Sason, born in Skövde, Sweden in 1912, had a sculptor father. The young man likewise trained in fine art, including a spell in Paris, before beginning his career as an illustrator. He then branched into draughtsmanship, producing motorcycle technical drawings, and he gained a fine reputation for 'ghosted' pieces showing working parts within the outer shell of the machine itself.

Hopes of becoming a World War Two fighter pilot were finished when his training aircraft crashed, but Sason found a key role at Svenska Aeroplan AB (SAAB), where he was part of the design team for aircraft including the 17 propeller fighter and 18 bomber.

After the war, Sason set himself up as a freelance industrial designer. Pretty much the first project he was asked to contribute to was Saab's all-new car, intended to take up the slack created by the steep fall-off in demand for military aircraft.

With his unusual position at the axis of art and design, Sason lost no time in producing fantasy brochure-like renderings of how he saw the new car – light, strong, aerodynamic and futuristic, with a bullet-like profile and a low frontal area. He showed them to chief engineer Gunnar Ljungström and was promptly engaged as chief designer.

Saab 92001 was built as 20 running prototypes that translated Sason's teardrop design to metal reality. His aerodynamics instincts were bang-on: wind tunnel tests



#### 'AFTER THE WAR, PRETTY MUCH THE FIRST PROJECT SASON WAS ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE TO WAS SAAB'S ALL-NEW CAR'

produced a drag co-efficient of just 0.32, a blessing for the hard-working twin-cylinder two-stroke engine. The wheels were tucked under fairings inspired by Saab's J21 aircraft, that aided airflow and, in theory at least, kept snow out of the wheelarches.

The 92 production car of 1949 looked less radical but its structure was impressive, with airframe-like strengthening (even the rear window's dividing pillar played its part), and a 'safety cell' passenger compartment to withstand crash impacts. There was a firstprinciples freshness here; like the entire development team, Sason had never worked on a car design before. Nor was he a skilled driver, the factory mechanics complaining that he was always knocking into things. Saab wouldn't launch new cars often. There was time for the Sixten Sason AB consultancy to work on other products, such as the bodies for a series of medium-format cameras for Hasselblad. Another Swedish classic bearing Sason's signature was the versatile Electrolux Z 70 vacuum cleaner introduced in 1957. There was work on the Husqvarna Silverpilen motorbike and Monark Monoscoot scooter too, plus fridges, power tools, waffle irons; even preliminary designs for the epic Oresund bridge linking Sweden and Denmark that was not completed until 1999.

However, Sason was back whenever a new Saab was called for, honing the style for the subsequent 93 and 96, and the 95 estate. He'd drawn the lines for a one-off glassfibre GT car called the ASJ Catarina and then created the Sonett two-seater roadster in 1956 with similar plastic bodywork. Just six experimental examples were built. Sason's design was chosen for the production Sonett GT, finally launched in 1966.

That year, Sason began work on Saab's most significant car of all, the 99. A paragon of safety and comfort, this once again fused road car aerodynamics with aerospace thinking, notably in its dramatic, wraparound windscreen. It ushered in numerous Saab innovations throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, from headlamp wipers and heated seats to side-impact bars and integrated headrestraints, and it became one of the first turbocharged production saloons before forming the basis for the much-loved 900.

Not that Sason was to know any of this. Since his pre-war air crash, when he'd lost a lung, his health was not the best. He died aged just 55 in spring 1967, six months before the 99 made its startling debut.

Always an intriguing mix of artist and showman, the Saab designer was actually born plain Sixten Andersson, but changed his surname in his 20s to something snappier. He chose Sason – Spanish for 'spice'.

Despite his premature passing, Sason's ideals endured to Saab's bitter end. His apprentice Björn Envall took over as head of design in 1969 and stayed until 1992. Thanks to him and his mentor Sason, Saab enjoyed a rare level of design consistency and high ideals. Until General Motors got involved.

# COLLECTORS CARS



1964 Ferrari 330/250 Testa Rossa *Ex-Innes Ireland, 1 of 5 alloy bodied examples built by Jim Rose* 



1956 Frazer Nash Le Mans Rep by Croisthwaite & Gardiner Fitted with 1949 Mille Miglia Work's engine



1972 Ferrari Dino 246 GT ex-Jean Todt, Factory restored example



1972 Porsche 911E 2.4 Litre - £109,995 *Fresh Autofarm engine rebuild, 5 owners from new* 



1924 Rolls-Royce 40/50HP Silver Ghost Original coachwork by Hooper, delivered to the Earl of Derby



1932 Lagonda 3 Litre Open Tourer 1 of 66 3 Litres thought to be left, matching numbers example



1988 Ferrari Testarossa UK RHD example, Rosso Corsa with Blu Scurro, 13k miles



1970 Porsche 911E 2.2 Litre - £89,995 California delivered example, original colour, COA

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# PLYWOOD TEA CHEST

As well as transporting the world's goods for over a century, plywood has shaped planes, cars and even musical instruments

**IN THE EARLY DECADES** of the 20th Century, Britain was the world's largest importer of plywood, much of which was soon re-exported to the far side of the Empire in the form of easily assembled knockdown containers and then re-imported after being packed with Britain's favourite beverage – tea. Factories turned out plywood tea chests in their millions.

Plywood, a name coined early in the 1900s, consists of thin veneers, or plys, of wood glued together with the grain of each layer at right angles to its neighbour. Ancient Egyptian wall paintings and surviving objects show that the strength, lightness and stability of cross-laminated wood was understood millennia ago.

However, a little like concrete so beloved by the Romans, plywood seemed to fall out of use for a few thousand years. Hand-cut veneers persisted in furniture-making, but it was the invention of mechanical cutting machines in the mid-1800s that enabled plywood to move from a woodworker's craft into mass production on an industrial scale.

The East India Company tea chests that Bostonions angrily off-loaded into the harbour in 1773 to start their 'tea party' were made from solid wood, and heavy. It would be more than a century before the lightweight tea chest arrived, primarily as the result of developments in another great tea-loving nation – Russia.

The Estonian plywood furniture manufacturer, AM Luther, had been producing a three-ply board for several years when in 1896 they patented a waterproof glue that made Luther board more stable and resistant to delamination through moisture absorption. It rapidly became a best-seller throughout Europe. Meanwhile, in London, EH Archer, a businessman in the teapackaging trade, had created a collapsible metal-sided tea chest, space efficient but unpopular with merchants. Catching wind



#### 'SHACKLETON TOOK 2500 VENESTA BOXES PACKED WITH PROVISIONS ON HIS ANTARTIC EXPEDITION, AS DID SCOTT'

of the Luther board, he travelled to Russia and negotiated a joint venture to manufacture tea chests in Britain. The resulting Venesta company (an acronym of 'ven' from veneer and 'esta' from Estonia) was formed in 1897. Venesta tea chests – initially lined with lead, which was later replaced by aluminium foil – were soon whizzing back and forth across the Empire's trade routes.

Their journeys were not restricted to the tea trade. Shackleton took 2500 Venesta boxes packed with provisions on his Antarctic expedition, as did Captain Scott on his ill-fated expedition a few years later.

Although for decades plywood was frowned upon as being 'fake' in comparison to solid wood, engineers were never in doubt about its benefits – either flat or moulded. As early as 1884 a plywood-framed airship was under construction in Russia and, only a few years after the first aeroplane flew, the French Antoinette monoplane sported a plywoodclad fuselage. Many other plywood-bodied aircraft followed, the WW2 De Havilland Mosquito being one of the most famous – and the fastest. Size was no barrier to plywood construction, Howard Hughes' *Spruce Goose* (actually made of birch) being the largest aeroplane in the world when it was built, and it can still claim the largest wingspan of any aircraft: 97.54 metres.

Plywood was also used extensively in car bodies between the wars, and Frank Costin designed and built some remarkable plywood monocoque sports cars in the 1960s and the Formula 2 Protos single-seater. Planes, boats, cars, houses, furniture – plywood became ubiquitous through the 20th Century. Today there are even plywood bicycles.

Tea chests were frequently recycled, firewood being the least imaginative use, and perhaps the simplest upgrade was for them to serve as a base for a makeshift coffee table. But, quite unexpectedly, the 1950s skiffle craze saw the humble tea chest, with the addition of a broom handle and a length of string, providing the bass beat for a thousand aspiring bands.

In 1956 a bunch of Liverpool schoolboys started a skiffle group with the obligatory tea-chest bass in the instrumental line-up. Skiffle fizzled out but three of The Quarrymen decided to rock on, and, with a new band name, John, Paul and George, plus a new drummer, met with some considerable success.



AUTOMOTIVE WATCHES BY AN AUTOMOTIVE DESIGNER



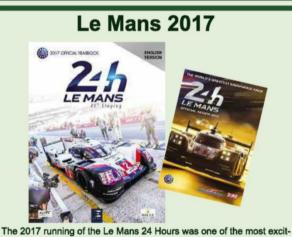
#### MHD AG

MHD Watches latest Automatic limepiecel The MHD AGT is a special watch edition in association with Britain's Electric Car Company, Alcraft Motor Company, and its first car, the Alcraft GT. Both Car and Watch are designed by MHD, (Matthew Humphries).

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# A SANT'AGATA TAKE ON TELLING THE TIME

First fruit of Roger Dubuis' partnership with the Italian manufacturer Lamborghini

**IN 2018, IT WILL BE** two decades since the German automotive behemoth VW acquired the flamboyant Italian carmaker Lamborghini, which means that it has owned it for twice as long as its founder. And to judge from a recent knees-up at Sant'Agata, things have moved on quite a bit since I was there at around the turn of the century, when they were making a couple of hundred cars a year and, from what I can recall, the factory might still have looked familiar to Ferruccio Lamborghini.

Like anyone else who saw *The Italian Job* as a child, I have been in thrall to the Lamborghini marque since before I even knew what a supercar, let alone a hypercar, was. And with my usual eye for practicality, I spent about a year studying advertisements for a modestly priced Lamborghini Espada, believing that it would make the perfect runabout.

When I visited Sant'Agata, the Murciélago was just being launched and I remember being exhilarated by the turn of speed this egg-yolk yellow wedge of rapidly moving metal could lay on. It is the sort of vehicle that does what great cars do best and inspires you to dream – I envisaged myself roaring along one or other of the three Corniches between Menton and Nice, when in reality I would, of course, be stuck in the terrible traffic that is an inalienable part of motoring on the Côte d'Azur. Having duly scared myself and anyone else unfortunate enough to be sharing the roads of Emilia Romagna with me that day, I disentangled myself from the car fully understanding why it was that rich young men – and rich old men trying to recapture the exhilaration of youth – favour these cars.

For the past 15 years I have been meaning to go back, which is why I was a little disappointed to have been unable to attend the dinner in the middle of the Lamborghini factory on 20 September, when a new horological partnership was launched with Roger Dubuis – but, alas, I had a prior engagement at a watch factory.

Dubuis is a perfect partner for Lambo because, like the carmaker, it is allergic to understatement. As CEO Jean-Marc Pontroué put it: 'Like Lamborghini, we deliver "engines" distinguished by their extreme quality and cutting-edge performance. But like the owners of such exceptional Italian hypercars, our customers are above all interested in stand-out aesthetics that ensure instant recognition matched by ultra-exclusivity and rarity.'

At last, someone who says it as it is: the engineering may be exceptional but it is the *Blade Runner* meets Baroque styling that sets it apart. And the Roger Dubuis Excalibur Aventador S is a worthy partner: all titanium, layered carbon, DLC and rubber, with a rubber strap inlaid with Alcantara; and coloured stitching to match the bezel detailing, second hand, and accents on the hours and minutes hands. The skeletonised carbon lugs add further purposefulness to the design. Even the skeleton movement, a mechanically interesting double-sprung balance dead-seconds affair, seems to be at the service of the design: the twin balance wheels are arranged at an inclined angle and kept in position by components intended to recall 'triangular wheel suspension assemblies'.

Forget about tourbillons, split-second flyback chronographs and perpetual calendars: this is strictly time-only. The Lamborghini driver



LOOK FOR IN OUR TIMEPIECES' has no need of the diversions that we lesser watch lovers look for in our timepieces. At the wheel, he is too busy trying to break the sound barrier; and when not driving he is too busy having fun to play with his wristwatch. As well as looking great at the wheel, the Excalibur Aventador S looks equally effective at the nightclub, on the yacht or in your Gulfstream G650 ER. Needless to say, the one you want is an

Giallo Orion is arguably more 'classic' (a relative term). This is go-faster styling par-excellence and I love its sheer joie de vivre. I would estimate that strapping this beauty to your wrist will add at least another 30 or 40 horsepower and a couple of dozen newton metres of torque to the performance of your car.

orange highly limited version, the Arancia Argos, but the yellow



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Places to go words and photography BARRY WISEMAN



# FOYNES FLYING BOAT AND MARITIME MUSEUM

Fly back through time – with some excellent coffee

FLYING BOATS IN A CAR MAGAZINE?

Well, surely we all enjoy looking at all sorts of fine engineering work and the flying boat is as much an icon of the glamorous days before World War Two as a fine vintage car.

In the spectacular Shannon Estuary on Ireland's west coast, Foynes Flying Boat Museum captures the romantic era of the first flights across the Atlantic. There are wonderfully restored buildings, as well as the star turn, a replica Boeing B314 PanAm Clipper, cleverly displayed on water.

Enthusiastic guides will take the visitor through the original Terminal Building, housing an excellently arranged and lit range of exhibits, illustrations and posters. Then there's the Radio and Weather Room and into the 1940s cinema to view Atlantic Conquest, compiled from original news film. Other displays include period newspapers, uniforms and equipment. Upstairs, the control tower has been reinstated with terrific views of the Shannon, its docks and Foynes. Then you can try your hand at flying a mighty Boeing B314, on a flight simulator.

Foynes was the starting point for finding better ways of flying the Atlantic and displays feature the Short Mayo composite, where a mother aircraft *Maia* took off with a smaller float plane, *Mercury*, fastened to it. Once airborne, the two separated and *Mercury* flew on, without having used fuel in the take-off. Air-to-air refuelling was also tested here, where a cable was fired from the tanker (using a rocket-propelled harpoon) to the flying boat and a hose connected for gravityfeed refuelling. Remember, this was only 70odd years ago and Foynes points out that it wasn't until 1942 that the first passenger flight made it non-stop to New York, taking more than 25 hours.

World War Two was one of the main reasons that flying boats died. Many airfields were built during the war, so landing on water became unnecessary and the last passenger flight left Foynes in 1949.

The Flying Boat Museum was established in 1989 and was officially opened by actress Maureen O'Hara Blair, wife of a flying boat captain. The most spectacular showpiece at Foynes is that full-scale replica of the Boeing B314. None of the actual aircraft were preserved, but visitors can walk through this replica, climb up to the flightdeck, check the 14-seat dining room, view the made-up sleeping berths, and marvel at the tiny galley, which was usually manned by two stewards. At the tail of the aircraft is the deluxe compartment, a nicely fitted cabin that was often used as a honeymoon suite.

So, where does the 'excellent coffee' come into it? Boarding and leaving a flying boat could be a wet and cold experience and one stormy night in 1943 a flight to Newfoundland was forced to turn back to Foynes. The chef, Joe Sheridan, was told to prepare some 'warmers' for the returning passengers, so he put some good Irish







#### Clockwise from top left

Boeing B314 PanAm Clipper rep is displayed on water and is the undoubted highlight; spacious carpeted fuselage and flightdeck; loads of info in the converted terminal; Confederate uniforms in Maritime Museum.

whiskey in the coffee. A passenger thanked him and asked if the coffee was Brazilian. Joe replied: 'No, that was Irish coffee.' It has become a world-famous drink, but that served at Foynes is extra special and they make no secret of the recipe.

Nextdoor is the bright new Maritime Museum, again full of surprises, including a display case of United States Civil War Confederate uniforms. Did you know that they were made in Ireland?

Foynes makes a different and probably unique day out, in good driving country.

Foynes Flying Boat and Maritime Museum is open mid-March to mid-November, 09:30-17:00. It's fully wheelchair accessible (except for the B314 replica). Adults  $\in 11$ , children  $\in 6$ . There is an excellent gift shop, atmospheric restaurant and that Irish Coffee Centre! Foynes' enterprising website is at www.flyingboatmuseum.com.



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## lcon

VARIOUS CONTRIBUTORS, Foxtrot Papa for Jaguar Land Rover, \$50 inc UK p&p, ISBN 978 0 9568013 4 0



Coffee-table books rarely make it into our Book of the Month slot, and this one is assuredly the kind of product you would expect to find neatly aligned on a slab of glass in the

trendier kind of home – or a Land Rover dealership (it was commissioned by JLR itself).

It ticks all the boxes for its genre. Beautiful photography – check. High-quality paper – check. A sprinkling of celebrities – yep. And, yes, the text is definitely on the scanty side.

For all this, though, there's something about this book that made us linger over it for longer than we normally would. Partly it's the subject matter. The sub-head to the book's title describes it as *The Official Story of the Series Land Rover and Defender*. Unusually for a manufacturer-sponsored book, there's no shoehorning-in of current 'product', and it's all the better for it.

It's the photography that really grabs your attention, however. Whether recent or archive, shot on location or in the studio, it's superbly presented. One of our favourite images is reproduced above: a close-up of an early Series I dashboard, it's part of a 24-page chapter entirely devoted to details of Land Rover L03, the third production model built. Individual pictures are used full-page or across a spread; it's amazing how engrossing the texture of a galvanised windscreen frame can be when shot in extreme close-up.

After a lengthy and convincingly personal foreword by serial Land Rover owner Richard

Hammond, the book launches into a series of diverse photo-stories that include epic road trips, explorations, owners both famous and ordinary, archive pictures, military Defender drivers and more. And here's the third element of this book's appeal: it focuses on people as much as on the machines. There are lots of photographic portraits and accompanying anecdotes, from 'names' such as Sir Ranulph Fiennes and ex-SAS trooperturned-thriller writer Andy McNab to Series IIA ice cream van owner Neil Trillo.

However... while the accompanying text is generally well written, it's let down by poor grammar. For example, the intro to chapter one begins: 'Often fuelled by raw wanderlust and fascination with the unknown, this chapter highlights how far some of these globetrotting pioneers were willing to go...' It's the pioneers who had the wanderlust, not the chapter. Grrr! And there are several other instances, which are made more glaring by the otherwise excellent production quality.

Regardless, this is a lovely book to own and one that will bear revisits from time to time. Any Landy lover would be pleased to receive it. **MD** 





## The Classic Motoring Review

Godwyn House Press, £38.50 for four issues on subscription via classicmotoringreview.uk

This A5-sized, quarterly paperback on cream paper is billed as the antidote to short attention spans and the age of the internet. It celebrates 'long form' journalism, with stories around 3500 words, no photographs (but a few lovely sketches), no ads and some top authors. Some of this first issue's stories are re-runs from the likes of *Car* magazine – a Setright here, a Cropley there - while others are new, such as Lotus aero guru Peter Wright's revelations. We applaud it. JS



## Aston Martin: Behind the Wheel of a Motoring Icon

VARIOUS CONTRIBUTORS, Mitchell Beazley, £25, ISBN 9781784722692

This edited-down compilation of tales from *Octane*'s sister-publications *Evo* and *Vantage* (though the latter isn't credited on the cover) is a useful introduction to the marque, but not for readers expecting the same depth, context and personality to be found in the original, uncut and author-attributed articles. The pictures are very nice, of course, and at £25 it's a decent stocking-filler. **JS** 





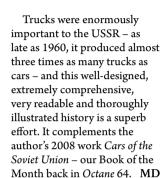
## Trucks of the Soviet Union

£45, ISBN 978 0 9928769 5 1

We like to think that Octane readers are a bit more broad-minded than the average classic-car enthusiast – which is why we have no hesitation in recommending a book about Russian trucks.

Thing is, it's a genuinely fascinating book. Random fact: the last Russian-designed GAZ cars of 2008 had the same wheel stud pattern as the 1920s Ford Model A, as did every

GAZ car in between. And here's another: Russia still has a celebratory Day of the Driver each October, originally decreed to celebrate the achievements of Russian truck drivers and workers.







In the mid-1960s, Peter Darley was a freelance motor sport photographer, and he so impressed Colin Chapman that he was asked to become Team Lotus's official snapper.

Coterie Press was founded in 1996 with the aim of producing very high-quality motoring books, and this 2007 collection of Darley's images – presented with extended captions – is one of the best of its type. Taken at the major British circuits, the pictures show not just Clark but also his



PETER DARLEY, Coterie Press 2007, value today £325/£650 (see text)

> team-mates and rivals during 1964-67, driving a huge variety of machinery.

This large slipcased book was sold in two editions: Limited (1000 copies) and Publisher's (leather-bound, signed, 100 copies). The former is now worth £325 and the latter £650 – or about three times their respective prices when new in 2007. Ben Horton





## Classic Car Auction Yearbook 2016 2017

ADOLFO ORSI & RAFFAELE GAZZI, Historica Selecta, €24.95, ISBN 978 88 96232 09 5

The latest edition of Orsi and Gazzi's hardback institution is a Ronseal book of the first order: between its covers are the details of every sale from every major auction from the past year. It's a valuable reference for those in the old car trade, but it's also worth the time of enthusiasts interested in understanding market trends, with the authors breaking down all that data in several different ways to offer sensible analysis. **CB** 

## **Immortal Austin Seven**

DAVID MORGAN, Veloce, £74.99, ISBN 978 1 845849 79 5



According to an Austin Seven owner of our acquaintance, this book isn't without its errors. As evidence, he cites the introduction of coupled brakes with the launch of the longer-wheelbase

Sevens: they were separate developments, he says, not linked as is suggested here. And his ire was stirred by several errors of spelling.

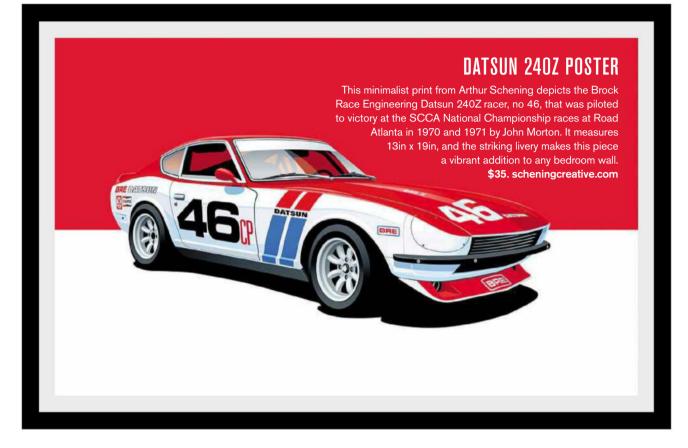
Looking at the bigger picture, however, there is much to enjoy in this extensive history of the Seven, which covers not only the years it was in production but its post-war racing history and service as the basis of many a 'Special'. The influence of the 750 Motor Club, founded in 1939, ensures that it has its own chapter ('... but the early days of

750 racing are covered very lightly, fulminates our Seven owner). Perhaps the biggest joy to be had is

in the variety of digressions and eclectic photographs that pepper this book's 230 pages. There's a brilliant chapter, for example, on other kinds of machines that were powered by Seven engines: the Flying Flea aircraft, motorboats, garden tractors, and even a Wickham railcar conversion. And almost every page seems to throw up another fascinating archive pic; the photo of an abandoned Austin Military Tourer, stripped and disabled, on the beach at Dunkirk in 1940 is especially poignant.

Overall, the book is handsomely produced, with very clear and readable text; and what at first thought might appear a failing – the slightly 'stream of consciousness' approach to the format – is also part of its charm. Not everyone may agree but we liked this book very much, its £75 asking price notwithstanding. **MD** 





## McKLEIN 2018 CALENDAR

McKlein has once again raided its spectacular archive to bring you 26 of its most evocative historic motor sport images from the 1950s, '60s and '70s in the form of a 2018 wall calendar. Featuring two pictures per month, it compiles the best of the Nürburgring, Monaco Grand Prix, African Safari Rally and more. €39.90. rallywebshop.com





## ROUE CHR WATCH

Roue's CHR chronograph watch draws inspiration from classic cars, German Braun radios and Scandinavian furniture, all of which are strangely evident in this timepiece if you look hard enough. **\$230. rouewatch.com** 

## ASTON MARTIN STORCK BICYCLE

Only 107 units of this carbonfibre road bike will be built, weighing in at just 5.9 kilograms. It features a wireless electric gear shift, with handlebar-mounted levers that operate like a car's paddle shifters. Argentum Nero paint finishes off the limited-edition Fascenario.3, which blends aerodynamics, stiffness and comfort... for a price. £15,777. storckworld.com



## PORSCHE 911 SOUNDBAR

Made from the rear silencer and exhaust module of a Porsche 911 GT3, this 200-watt surround-sound speaker features an LED display and Bluetooth connectivity. Promising the ultimate sound experience, it would make an excellent display piece. £2300. shop4.porsche.com



## TAMIYA R/C NSU TT

Tamiya's 1:12 scale, radio-controlled, Jägermeister-liveried NSU TT is front-wheel drive and features an adjustable wheelbase so that you can fit alternative bodyshells. £99. modelsport.co.uk



## 1:8 FORD GT40 By Javan Smith

Handbuilt by well-known model maker Javan Smith, this 1:8 scale Ford GT40 is limited to just 25 units, available in your choice of livery and model variant. It is believed to be the only available GT40 model in this size, and commands a six-week turnaround time. £3000

reviloclassicmodels.co.uk



## Models

REVIEWS AND PHOTOGRAPHY MARK DIXON

## 1:18 scale 1980 Triumph TR7 convertible

By Cult Models Price £155.95 Material Resincast

Cult Models is a relatively new brand that has already issued some imaginative subjects in 1:18 scale – its recent Rover SD1 is a favourite in this office. Continuing the Leyland theme is this fine Triumph TR7 in Persian Aqua metallic, with characteristic tartan interior trim. It's cast in resin, and features steerable front wheels – although the steering wheel itself is fixed. We love it nevertheless.





### 1:43 scale

1. 1962 Alfa Romeo Giulia SZ By Renaissance Price £253.40 Material Resin and metal handbuilt Superb (and weighty) model, with delicate detail, of Scuderia Sant' Ambroeus' 1962 Le Mans entry.

2. 1934 Austin 7 Ruby By Oxford Price £17.95 Material Diecast OK, the wire wheels aren't totally convincing from every angle, but it's a fantastic model at this price level.

3. 1903 Gordon-Brillié LSR car By Touchwood Price £125.95 Material Resin and metal handbuilt The hand-painted numbers on Arthur Duray's 1903 record-breaker are nicely depicted on this English-made model.

4. 1950 Jaguar MkV By Neo Price £68.50 Material Resincast Handsome model of a handsome car, with gorgeous two-tone paint and interior visible through the sunroof.

5. 1952 Lancia Aurelia B20 By Spark Price £53.95 Material Resincast Well-detailed and finished replica of the works Le Mans class-winner.

6. 1974 Lancia Mizar show car By Alezan Price £164.65 Material Resin handbuilt Neat, simple and pleasing replica of Michelotti's 1974 Turin show car.

7. 2017 McLaren 720S By TrueScale Miniatures Price £89.95 Material Resincast Great colour and a full interior benefit this fine model of McLaren's latest.

8. 1911 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost By Carbone Price £299.95 Material Resin and metal handbuilt Super-fine lining, brightwork and wire wheels distinguish this exquisite model of the Maharajah of Mysore's Royce.

9. 1970 Triumph Spitfire MkIV By Norev Price £39.95 Material Diecast

Not a bad model, but on a par with an Oxford diecast costing half as much.

## Classic models Bentley by Rovex



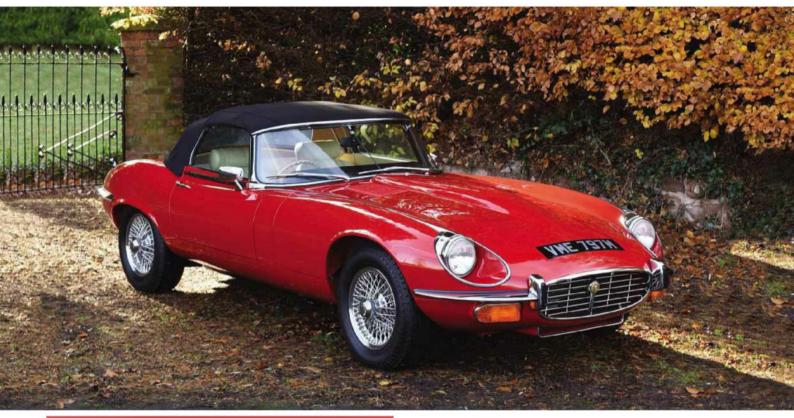
This simple little replica of a postwar Bentley comes from an almost forgotten range of plastic vehicles made in the late 1940s by a company called Rovex, a name usually associated with model railways.

The technology associated with moulding plastics had made rapid progress during WW2 and the toy industry was quick to adapt it. A man called Alexander Gregory Vanetzian founded Rovex in 1946 and secured a contract to supply plastic toys to Marks and Spencer. Among these were a small group of clockworkpowered vehicles around three inches in length, including an Austin A30, Austin A40 delivery van, Commer coach and the Bentley. The special feature of these models was 'automatic self-return steering' which really meant that the car zig-zagged alarmingly from side to side!

However, Tri-ang, Britain's largest toy company, soon bought Rovex and transferred production to a new factory at Margate. Tri-ang Rovex's plastic-based model railways quickly toppled Hornby from its seemingly unassailable position, while Rovex vehicles were absorbed into Tri-ang's own Minic series of similar toys.

Models such as the plastic Bentley therefore proved to be little more than a brief interlude in Rovex's progress to higher things. While they are undeniably crude, in the antique toy market it's often the items that were not highly rated in their day that turn out to be collectable, simply because so few survive, and finding a Rovex vehicle in its original box is not easy. The plastic will probably have deformed and the wheels melted, but that just adds to the challenge.







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This superb original **Right Hand Drive Austin Healey 100/6, BN4**, supplied new in January 1958 to its first lady owner and today remains in its original colours of Duotone Colorado Red over Black with red interior and black soft top and factory hard top. The condition of this 4 owner motor car is exemplary and a credit to its previous long term owners. The last keeper had owned this car for 17 years and his predecessor for just short of 20 years. It comes with a comprehensive history file dating back to 1961 and a British Motor Industry Heritage Trust certified copy of its factory record sheet confirming that it retains its original engine and gearbox with overdrive. Sitting on perfect chrome wire wheels, the car is a delight to drive and will undoubtedly continue to appreciate. Realistically priced for one in this condition at **£77,500** 



This is the best driving **1959 Jaguar MkII 3.4 (chassis number 181)** that we have ever had the pleasure to own. The history file is simply vast and records expenditure amounting to £108,000 spent on the restoration and upgrades to this exceptional motor car together with photographic evidence. The car has been the subject of a complete, no expense spared Chassis and Body restoration, a complete engine rebuild to 3.8 specification, Uprated Harvey Bailey suspension with Koni shock absorbers and rear anti-roll bar, 3 pot Zeus brake callipers, 420 Jaguar based rack and pinion power assisted steering, heater upgrade, Body coloured wire wheels, 5 speed T5 gearbox with uprated clutch, stainless steel exhaust, Coombs style rear spats and much more. Finished as per original specification in Cornish Grey with red hide interior, this car performs more like a 150"S" than a MkII. This is a very rare and exciting motor car, probably under-priced ay only **£59,950** 



1988 Ferrari Testarossa finished in Rosso Corsa with Crema Hide interior. This is a very fine example that has had only 5 owners from new and is in superlative condition as to be expected from an 80's Supercar that has covered only 21,000 miles. This is a twin mirror example and comes with a comprehensive service history together with numerous MOT certificates all of which back up the low mileage of this motor car. Both the exterior coachwork and the sumptuous interior are completely unmarked and the car has only just had a full cambelt service and refinishing of the cam covers with Ferrari experts QVL ondon, an invoice for which is on file. Competitively priced for such a low mileage example at \$137,500.



**1968** Aston Martin DB6 finished in Dubonnet Rosso with Magnolia hide interior. This superb motor car has been in the same careful ownership since 1979 and during this time the car has always had the benefit of a heated garage. In 1985, the car was the subject of a full body restoration, photographs of which are on file and at the same time the whole of the interior was completely re-trimmed with Magnolia hide and contrasting beige carpet throughout. Although this work was carried out over 30 years ago, the car remains in really excellent unblemished condition. In addition to the body restoration, further mechanical works have been carried out by such well known Aston Martin specialists as R.S.Williams in Cobham and Main dealers HWM Aston Martin in Walton on Thames. Such works have included improvements to the suspension, new shock absorbers, and a full brake overhaul. This is a very attractive and well-kept example which continues to appreciate. Now very realistically priced at **£285,000** for a quick sale.

Also in stock: 1961 Aston Martin DB4 to full GT specification, 1961 Aston Martin DB4 in Wedgewood blue, 1962 Aston Martin Project 214 (Perfect tool room copy), 1964 Aston Martin DB5 currently being restored, 1987 Aston Martin V8 series V (very low mileage), 1997 Aston Martin V8 Coupe in Buckingham green. All can be found by visiting our website at www.runnymedemotorcompany.com or please call Martin Brewer for more details on any of our cars.

# **MARKET NEWS**

ANALYSIS

BUYING + SELLING +



# **Primordial Peugeot sets the pace**

*More high-profile pre-wars made big money in November* 

**LINDLEY AND ANN BOTHWELL** owned what is said to have been the last orange grove in the San Fernando Valley on the western side of Los Angeles. They were also long-time car collectors, responsible for saving dozens of vehicles – including some important racecars – from scrapyards.

The Bothwells were the go-to people to interview about old cars in the 1950s, at which point they had already been collecting automobiles for decades. Their collection was a working one, so there's a decent chance that you have seen cars owned by the Bothwells. Many of their cars have appeared in Hollywood productions.

So Bonhams' Bothwell Collection Sale was a fine example of the single-owner collection sales that now happen with some regularity. It wasn't the lush land that car collectors were coming to look at and potentially buy; rather it was the extremely eclectic collection of cars, both important and less important, that made this a highly interesting sale.

The star of the event was also the top seller, a 1914 Peugeot L45 Grand Prix two-seater. Catalogued as chassis number one and engine number one of Peugeot's pioneering twinoverhead-camshaft design, this was the ex-Indianapolis car later raced by Ralph Mulford and Arthur H Klein. To that we would add the Bothwells themselves, as Lindley and Ann were more than just collectors. It's not very often an auction catalogue devotes 14 full pages to a single car, but such is the stature of this Peugeot. Selling for \$7.26m (against a \$3-5m pre-sale estimate), it accounted for over half of the proceeds from the day's sale of vehicles.

The second most expensive Bothwell car was a 1908 Benz, a 75/105hp Prinz Heinrich raceabout once raced by Barney Oldfield, who was arguably the most famous name in early American racing. Lindley Bothwell had bought it from Oldfield's sponsor, Eddie Maier. This handsome racing car brought \$1.87m, and was surely well bought despite exceeding its \$1-1.5m estimate. A 1908 Mercedes-Simplex 65hp two-seater raceabout rounded out the top three at \$1,072,500.

There were dozens of other interesting vehicles, among which a 1925 Ford Model T speedster was one of the more affordable purchases of the day at \$6600. When the dust settled, total sales amounted

## TOP 10 PRICES NOVEMBER 2017

#### €5,504,000 (\$7,260,000) 1914 Peugeot L45 Grand Prix Two-Seater Bonhams, Los Angeles, USA 11 November

£1,417,500 (\$1,870,000) c1908 Benz 75/105hp Prinz Heinrich Raceabout Bonhams, Los Angeles, USA 11 November

**£1,277,500 (€1,438,880) 1925 Bugatti Type 35** Artcurial, Paris, France 5 November

#### £813,000 (\$1,072,500)

c1908 Mercedes-Simplex 65hp Two-Seater Raceabout Bonhams, Los Angeles, USA 11 November

#### £703,500 (€792,280)

1954 Bentley R Type Continental Fastback Sports Saloon by HJ Mulliner Artcurial, Paris, France 5 November

#### £500,000 (\$660,000)

1968 Chevrolet Yenko Camaro Mecum, Las Vegas, USA 16-18 November

#### £371,000 (\$490,000)

1968 Chevrolet Yenko Camaro RS/SS Mecum, Las Vegas, USA 16-18 November

#### £326,666

1903 Panhard et Levassor Model B 10hp Four-Cylinder Rear-Entrance Tonneau Bonhams, London, UK 3 November

£321,000 (\$423,500) 1902 Packard Model G

Four-Passenger Surrey Bonhams, Los Angeles, USA 11 November

£320,000 (AUS \$550,000)

**1972 Ferrari Dino 246 GT** Shannons, Sydney, Australia 13 November to \$13.081m with all 48 cars sold. Like many people steeped in the hobby, the Bothwells also had a huge collection of automobilia along with streetcars and trains, both real and scale-model.

The Sotheby's Contemporary Art Evening Sale in New York featured just one vehicle, but it did become the most valuable modern-era Formula 1 car ever sold at auction. The Monaco Grand Prixwinning Ferrari F1 F2001, chassis 211, ex-Michael Schumacher, brought a jaw-dropping \$7,504,000.

Mecum held its inaugural Las Vegas sale mid-November at the city's Convention Center. With 557 vehicles sold over three days, receipts exceeded \$22m. Camaros, specifically Yenko Camaros, were the top news and also the top sellers from Sin City. One of the two 1968 Yenko Camaros that sold set a new world record of \$660,000, while the other brought \$490,000.

Bonhams' recent sale in Padua, Italy, featured much home-market metal, but the top-seller turned out to be German – a 1957 Mercedes-Benz 300SL roadster that made a market-correct €895,000. Runner-up was a 1960 Maserati 3500 GT Vignale Spyder at €637,000, but just 31 cars sold of the 59 on offer.

In Paris, Artcurial held its Automobiles sur les Champs event, selling a reported 59 cars out of 78. A 1925 Bugatti Type 35, described as ex-Jo Siffert, topped the field at  $\in$ 1,438,900, followed by a 1954 Bentley R Type Continental by HJ Mulliner that changed hands for  $\in$ 814,100. Perhaps the most unlikely lot was a 1963 Studebaker Avanti supercharged R-2 coupe, sold for \$41,680.

Auction news from Australia centres around Shannons' mid-November Sydney sale in which 24 out of 25 cars sold. A quarter of the AUS \$2,126,000 revenue came from the last lot, a right-hand-drive 1972 Ferrari Dino 246 GT that made AUS \$578,000.

The Bonhams London to Brighton sale returned to the company's New Bond Street location, selling 25 of 26 automotive lots, of which the most

## 'THE BIGGEST SILVERSTONE STORY WAS THE £97,875 PAID FOR A 1980 FORD ESCORT RS2000, DESCRIBED AS SHOWROOM FRESH'

valuable proved to be a 1902 Westfield Model G 13hp tonneau at £287,100. A 1898 Germain 6hp, twin-cylinder 'open-drive' limousine was runnerup at £225,500. Cars eligible for the London to Brighton run continue to be sought after.

Brightwells held its third Bicester Heritage sale, shifting 70% of the 105 cars on offer – or 87% if you're just counting the pre-war cars, a demand upturn perhaps mirroring that in the US. Revenue approached £1.4m, the biggest contribution (£134,200) coming from a 1976 Ferrari 308 GTB *Vetroresina* in rare right-hand drive.

Cars from the Blue Oval were the talk of Silverstone Auctions' sale at the NEC Classic Car Show. Of the 120-plus cars on offer, 67% of them sold to generate £3.6m. The biggest story was the £97,875 paid for a 1980 Ford Escort RS2000, described as 'showroom fresh'. This low-miles example is said to have set a new world record.

Not so long ago, the few sales held in the late autumn months tended to be small ones run by small companies. That's not the case any more; auction calendars in Europe and North America might not be quite so busy when the weather turns cold, but the scene remains active while buyers hunt for next summer's classic wheels. No one yet knows what 2018 holds for us in the auction arena, but change is the one constant we can count on.

**DAVE KINNEY** is an auction analyst, an expert on the US classic car auction scene, and publishes the USA's classic market bible, the *Hagerty Price Guide*.

#### **KINNEY'S PICKS**



Bonhams, Los Angeles, USA Not cheap at \$423,500, but this immense 1902 Packard Model G Four-Passenger Surrey, part of the Bothwell Collection for over 70 years, is the world's only known surviving two-cylinder Packard.



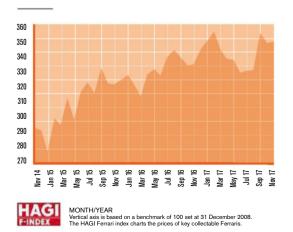
#### Silverstone Auctions Birmingham, UK

The price of £97,875 is a little more understandable when you know that this 1980 Ford Escort Mk2 RS2000 Custom is essentially a new car, with only 927 miles on the clock.



Mecum, Las Vegas, USA At \$33,000, this 2000 Dodge Viper RT/10 Roadster offers a lot of horsepower for not a lot of money. Be warned: supplies of low-mileage cars like this one are starting to dwindle as savy buyers cotton on.

## HAGI FERRARI INDEX



THERE WAS PRECIOUS little movement throughout the collector-grade classic car market in November, with month-onmonth adjustments of no more than a single percent either way across the board. Indeed, since the spurt put on in September, all sectors have subsided. Moreover, based on the year to date there is no possibility that the HAGI Top, Ferrari and Porsche indices will match 2016's year-end figures over the month to come.

With a marginal gain of 0.4% in November, Ferrari, like all other segments, remains shy of its standing in September. That month represented a peak in most segments, but Ferrari's peak was in February, and today the HAGI F is below its level at the end of January.

That translates into year-to-date growth of 1.35%, and 4.33% year-on-year for a brand that has historically achieved annual average growth rates in the order of 15%. It will be a miracle if in the next month the HAGI F comes anywhere near the 6.37% achieved in 2016.

This is not just a Ferrari story but part of a general alignment across most segments of the collector car market, so investors whose only motivation is pacy growth won't be full of seasonal cheer. But then again they won't be reading this.

Cars are currently underperforming other areas of the collectables sphere, as well as other mainstream financial measures. With trading volumes remaining subdued, those who own classic cars can get on with enjoying them – and of course Ferrari owners will reflect that, regardless of recent developments, the HAGI F has more than tripled since 2008.

Visit historicautogroup.com for further market analysis. Dave Selby

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# **Copper-topped investment**

Barrett-Jackson, Scottsdale, USA 13-21 January

**THE STATEMENT-MAKING** Ferraris and Lamborghinis of today pale into insignificance beside this ostentatious Rolls-Royce Phantom III, set to cross the block at Barrett-Jackson's bonanza January auction.

Originally sold in 1937 as a rolling chassis costing £1533, the car was first bodied by Birmingham coachbuilder WC Atcherley as a limousine, then driven only briefly before entering wartime storage.

In 1946 it was bought by car dealerturned-property tycoon Alfred John Gaul – once described as a 'colourful but secretive character of ill repute' – who commissioned Freestone and Webb to convert it into a serious contender for the big post-war concours d'elegance events staged in places such as Deauville, Monte Carlo and Cannes.

The result was the car as it appears today: a Sedanca de Ville dressed in rich 'chianti' paintwork set off by 'basketweave' rear doors and a generous application of brushed copper, which highlights everything from the radiator surround to the bumpers, wings, wheel centres – and even the Spirit of Ecstasy. There's more copper inside, along with ivory and brass veneers and an electric division, blinds and passenger window.

The over-the-top Gaul wanted his Phantom III's performance to match its looks – which is why it runs a 7.3-litre V12 engine and a four-speed manual transmission.

Known in Rolls-Royce circles as 'Gaul's Copper Kettle', it made regular appearances at the French shows until 1954, when it was sold to a UK owner, and then on to South Africa and the Netherlands before arriving in 1964 at the London showroom of Frank Dale & Stepsons, where it was offered at £3250.

The car later landed in the US, where it was once part of the Blackhawk Museum collection. It has also appeared regularly at Pebble Beach where, in 2008, it won the Lucius Beebe trophy for the Rolls-Royce that best represented Beebe – a former concours judge who was famed as a *bon vivant*.

As for Alfred John Gaul, he died in 1989 – 13 years after having his wife murdered to prevent her exposing his shady dealings as a high-class pimp who, among other nefarious activities, was involved in the Profumo Affair and a further sex scandal relating to another Tory politician, Antony Lambton. Which is no less than one might expect of a man with a copper-plated Spirit of Ecstasy... **barrett-jackson.com** 





### ALSO LOOK OUT FOR...

For a marque as revered as any other in the world of motorcycling, Indian has had a troubled life. The rights to the name were bought and sold several times after its post-war decline, and among the temporary custodians was Floyd Clymer.

Clymer, born in Indianapolis in 1895, was a tall tale come to life. He learned to drive a Curved Dash Oldsmobile at the age of seven, and by 11 he was selling Maxwells, REOs and Cadillacs from a room in his father's medical practice. He would go on to win the first Pikes Peak Hill Climb, join Harley-Davidson's factory racing team and become a central figure in the popularisation of motorcycling, as well as an influential publisher of motoring-related books and a leading light in the classic car and bike movement.

He made time to resurrect Indian, too, finding success with the Italjetbuilt Papoose, named for the Native American word for 'child'. Bigger bikes followed, but Clymer's death in 1970 did for the project, too.

This 1968 Papoose Electric, set to be sold by Mecum in Las Vegas in January, offers some idea of what Clymer might have done next. Fitted with a two-speed, 12-volt engine, it is likely a one-off prototype. It looks to be in good, rideable shape, but usefulness is not its selling point; it is notable for being a small machine with a big story to tell.



#### X MARKS THE SPOT Mecum, Las Vegas, USA 23-27 January

Reviving old motorcycle marques is all the rage, three examples being Norton, Matchless and Brough Superior. It was tried with Excelsior-Henderson in the '90s, to no avail. Now the name and intellectual property rights are up for grabs, with 18 expired patents, frame and engine designs and 10 trademarks. The Matchless name sold for £45,500 in 2006. mecum.com



#### UNLIKELY FORMULA 1 CAR Bonhams, Scottsdale, USA 18 January

This remarkably original Porsche 550A Spyder has an extensive race history, including a second in class and fifth overall at the 1958 Le Mans 24 Hours. It achieved class wins that year at the Nürburgring 1000km and the Goodwood TT – and took part in the Dutch Grand Prix, making it the only 550A to have competed in a Formula 1 race. Bonhams values it at \$4.5-5.5m. **bonhams.com** 



#### ANTEDILUVIAN ALFA RM Sotheby's, Phoenix, USA 18 January

If you like pre-war sports cars, you'll love this Alfa Romeo G1 from 1921. The oldest running and driving Alfa Romeo in existence, and the only complete G1, it has been a familiar sight at the Mille Miglia, Pebble Beach concours and Goodwood Members' Meeting and is offered in beautifully patinated, turnkey condition. This could be the best \$1m-plus you'll ever spend. **rmsothebys.com** 

# A DB, but not as we know it

## Gooding & Co, Scottsdale, USA 19-20 January

THE INITIALS 'DB' are usually associated with the Aston Martin marque, but they also refer to the Deutsch-Bonnet company that built small-capacity sports cars in the Paris suburb of Champigny-sur-Marne between 1938 and 1962. Formed by Charles Deutsch and René Bonnet, the firm was established after Bonnet's promised works drive for Amilcar in 1936 failed to materialise, prompting the pair to design and build a racing car of their own.

DB soon established a reputation for making useful competition cars through a series of outings at high-profile events, including Le Mans. The most commercially successful design, however, was the nifty HBR5 road car, of which around 600 were built. With a glassfibre body, an 848cc Panhard flattwin engine and front-wheel drive, the ultra-light cars proved swift (over 110mph) and nimble.

This restored and now nicely patinated example, chassis 852, was once owned by famous industrial designer Brooks Stevens, whose creations ranged from Allis-Chalmers tractors to Harley-Davidson motorcycles and Evinrude speedboats. It has race history at the Sebring 12 Hours in 1957 (it retired) and Watkins Glen. Ready to race, it's expected to fetch \$100,000-130,000. goodingco.com



## **AUCTION DATES**

29 December Oldtimer Galerie Gstaad, Switzerland

5-14 January Mecum, Kissimmee, USA

13 January Coys, Birmingham, UK

13 January Coys, Maastricht, Netherlands

13-21 January Barrett-Jackson Scottsdale, USA

17 January Worldwide Auctioneers Scottsdale, USA

**17-21 January** Russo & Steele Scottsdale, USA

18 January Bonhams, Scottsdale, USA

18-19 January RM Sotheby's, Phoenix, USA

19-20 January Gooding & Co, Scottsdale, USA

20 January Osenat, Fontainebleau, France

23-27 January Mecum, Las Vegas, USA

25 January Bonhams, Las Vegas, USA

26 January SWVA, Poole, UK 27 January

Anglia Car Auctions King's Lynn, UK

**3 February** Stanislas Machoïr Valence, France

4 February Charterhouse Shepton Mallet, UK

7 February RM Sotheby's, Paris, France

8 February Bonhams, Paris, France 9 February Artcurial, Paris, France 10 February Mathewsons Thornton-le-Dale, UK

11 February Charterhouse Shepton Mallet, UK

16-17 February

Mecum, Los Angeles, USA 16-17 February Mecum, Kansas City, USA 17 February

Coys, London, UK 17 February

Morris Leslie, Errol, UK 19 February

Shannons, Melbourne, Australia

# 1964 Alfa Romeo 2600 Spider

£135,000. Southwood Car Company, Bletchingley, UK

WHEN I SAW photographs of this superb Alfa Romeo 2600 Spider I felt a sense of déjà vu – brought on not so much by the car itself as by its number plate. The reason became clear on reading Southwood's description. The Alfa had been among the lots at one of Sotheby's erstwhile monthly auctions held at the RAF Museum in Hendon.

It flashed into my mind because, as a Sotheby's employee during the '90s, I worked on the sale – on 11 April 1994 – and clearly remember lusting after the Alfa, which was then in original, unrestored condition with a tiny mileage. If memory serves me right (I can't find the catalogue) it was in its factory colour of silver and estimated at less than £10,000. And I couldn't afford to bid.

Now, 23 years later, all is revealed about one of the best-preserved examples of the model in existence, and almost certainly the lowest-mileage of the 103 right-hand-drive 2600 Spiders built.

Imported new into the UK in 1964, it is believed

to have been bought by a racing driver as a gift for his wife who, finding it too 'heavy' to drive, simply didn't. So it stayed almost dormant until it was sold in 1980 with only 98 miles on the odometer.

The buyer kept it until 1994 when it was sold at Sotheby's to rally driver John Rondeau. He ran it for five years before selling it to an Alfa enthusiast who set about restoring the cracked and faded paintwork. This led to a degree of dismantling, followed by the car's sale as an 'unfinished project'.

The new owner treated it to a quality repaint in the gorgeous Blue Sera metallic it wears today, plus a re-trim in tan leather. Ill-health forced a sale to Southwood (southwoodcarcompany.co.uk), which completed the restoration with a full rebuild of the engine, which on being stripped showed virtually no wear. Still with fewer than 23,000 miles on the clock, this is probably one of the best and leastused Alfa 2600 Spiders on the planet.

Simon de Burton









#### 1974 BMW 2002 Turbo €109,500

Nostalgic for turbo lag? Here's the answer, with excitement guaranteed as the full 170bhp suddenly arrives. This original car still has the mirror-written Turbo decal on its front spoiler. gallery-aaldering.com (NL)



1977 Bitter CD. €85,000 With Hellbeige paintwork and brown interior, it's everything ironically cool about 1970s motoring. Useful hatchback, 327ci Chevrolet V8, only 395 built... a left-field Maserati alternative, perhaps? speed8classics.com (BE)



1952 Nash-Healey. \$79,500 This Pininfarina re-working of the Nash-Healey, which moved the headlamps inboard to make it less attractive, is one of just 150 cabriolet versions. It's had Jaguar 3.8 engine, suspension and disc brakes since 1963. gullwingmotorcars.com (USA)



1960 Austin Mini Mk1 850 Van. £22,950 Possibly the oldest Mini van left and one of 50 in Marigold orange. Meticulously restored while retaining rare, original parts, it has the 'deluxe' heater. Christmas deliveries beckon... dukeoflondon.co.uk

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1973 FERRARI 365 GTB/4 DAYTONA 38,000 MILES - £POA



1997 AC COBRA LIGHTWEIGHT 11,000 MILES - £135,000

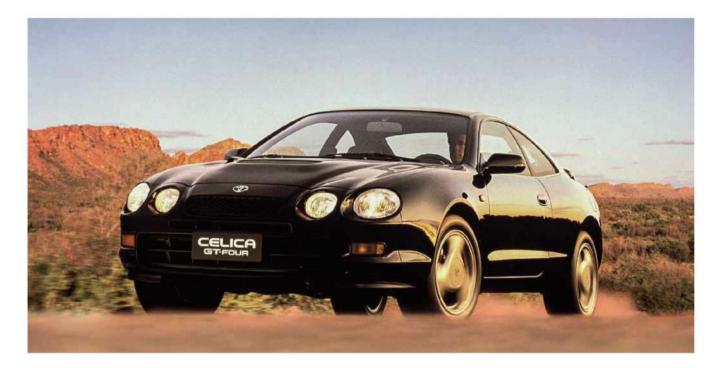


1967 FERRARI 275 GTB/4 £POA

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# **Toyota Celica GT-Four**

Rare Group A rally weapon, tamed just enough for the road

**LIKE MANY** Group A rally cars, Toyota's Celica GT-Four lives in the shadow of the Delta Integrale. Considering that Carlos Sainz, Juha Kankkunen and Didier Auriol took WRC drivers' titles in a Celica, and Toyota won two championships in 1993 and 1994, that's unfair. And with 185bhp, the ST165 GT-Four was the most powerful 2.0-litre Japanese car available when it was launched in 1986. UK sales began in 1988, and limited supplies of the mandatory unleaded fuel harmed initial sales. It sold in the USA as the Celica All-Trac.

A year later came the updated ST185 GT-Four. Its swooping bodywork was accompanied by a boost to 225bhp, plus a torque-sensing limited-slip diff. An improved 'Rally Competition' version came in 1991 to homologate the WRC car. It was known as the Carlos Sainz edition in the UK and included wider wheelarches, a new water-to-air intercooler and a snorkel on the bonnet to help keep timing belt temperatures down. Toyota took the Manufacturers' title in 1993 with Juha Kankkunen and in 1994 with Didier Auriol.

The third and final incarnation – launched in 1994 – is by far the best-developed and most effective roadgoing Celica. Honed in the wind tunnel, its tall rear wing added 50kg of downforce at 60mph, though the optional riser blocks could be removed to reinstate visual subtlety. Pop-up headlights made way for four round units too, and power increased to 255bhp. Some 2500 WRC homologation cars were produced, with everything needed for the WRC team to activate an anti-lag system, water injection and other competition tweaks. It found an impressive turn of speed during the 1995 season. Perhaps a little too impressive – the FIA got wise to a hidden device that circumvented the mandatory air intake restrictor, giving a power advantage. Cue stripped points and a year's ban.

It was expensive in the UK, which limited sales, and increasingly tough competition from the Ford Escort RS Cosworth and the more practical Subaru Impreza Turbo meant most were sold in Japan. UK sales stopped in 1996, but the GT-Four continued in its homeland until 1999.

It still impresses with serious cross-country performance. Firm suspension, precise steering and strong brakes all work well, while the boosty power is exhilarating – even if the soundtrack isn't particularly great. The five-speed 'box offers wellspaced gearing while the four-wheel drive system means traction and grip are never an issue.

The question isn't why should you buy a Celica GT-Four but, rather, why shouldn't you? It's maturing into its styling, and can still be bought for sensible money. More importantly, it's a genuine Group A homologated rally machine. Not only did it put in some seriously impressive results, but it bested the Integrale at the very thing that made it such a legend. **Matthew Hayward** 

#### THE LOWDOWN

#### WHAT TO PAY

Around £4000 should find an excellent car; some dealers ask around £6500-7000. Later Japanese imports carry a premium: pay around £3500-8500 depending on mileage, spec and condition.

The wide-bodied Carlos Sainz edition ST185 has seen a spike in interest, with good cars routinely selling for more than  $\pounds 10,000$ .

#### LOOK OUT FOR ...

Rust is the enemy, so check sills, jacking points, doorbottoms, rear wheelarches.

The 3S-GTE engine is longlived, but regular oil changes are a must. Knocking can signify worn bottom-end bearings. Turbos can fail, especially if not left to cool after hard driving.

The complex multi-link front suspension provides fantastic handling, but if worn out expect a wayward front end. Earlier cars use a more basic (and robust) MacPherson strut. Clonking from the rear suggests a worn diff mount.

Gearboxes are strong, but the syncros wear. Clutches fail if abused, so check for slipping.

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JAGUAR XK 120 DHC 3.4, RHD, 1953 Battleship Grey with Ox Red hide Restored, matching numbers



FERRARI 512 BB, LHD, 1980 Rosso Chiaro with Beige hide, black inserts Ferrari Classiche certified. 13,900 miles believed genuine



ASTON MARTIN DB6 Mk II VANTAGE 1970. Verde Aqua Metallic with Pigskin VM hide. 1 of just 46 cars



BENTLEY R-TYPE DROP HEAD COUPE BY PARK WARD, 1955. Royal Blue with Grey Vaumol hide Massive history file



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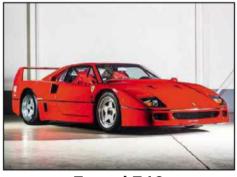
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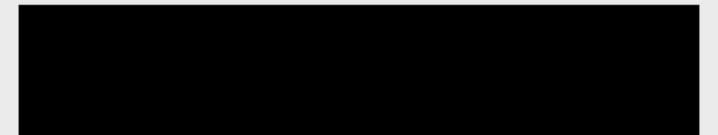


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66	991 GT3 RS 4.0 LHD Lava Orange/Orange Alcantara & Black Leather, Silky Black Alloys, PCCB, Front Axel Lift, 918 Bucket Seats, Sports Exhaust, Michelin Decals On Tyres, Sports Exhaust, 8,000m.	
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67	McLAREN 570S SPIDER Ventura Orange/Black & Orange Alcantara, Front Lift, Super-Lightweight Alloys In Stealth, R'Camera, Luxury Pk, Orange Brake Calipers, As New, 200m	
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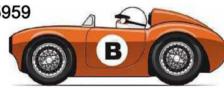
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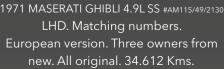
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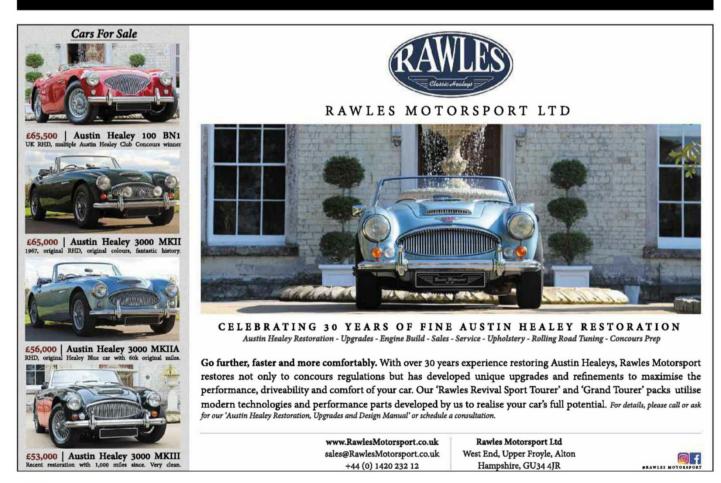
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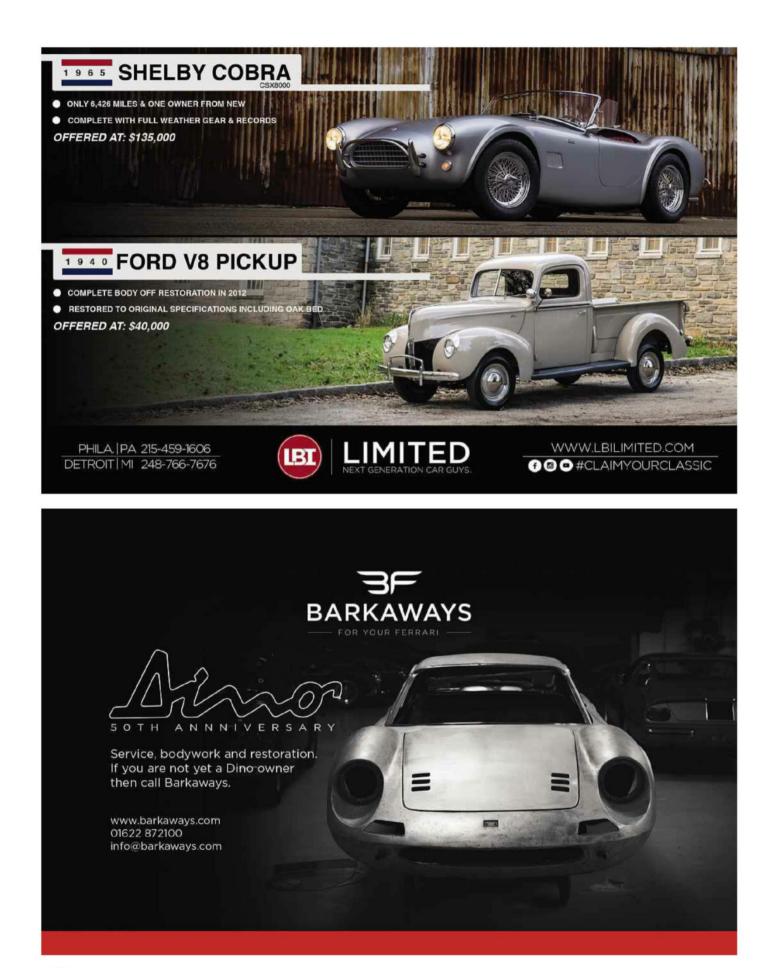


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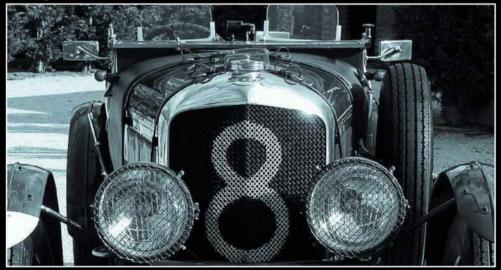
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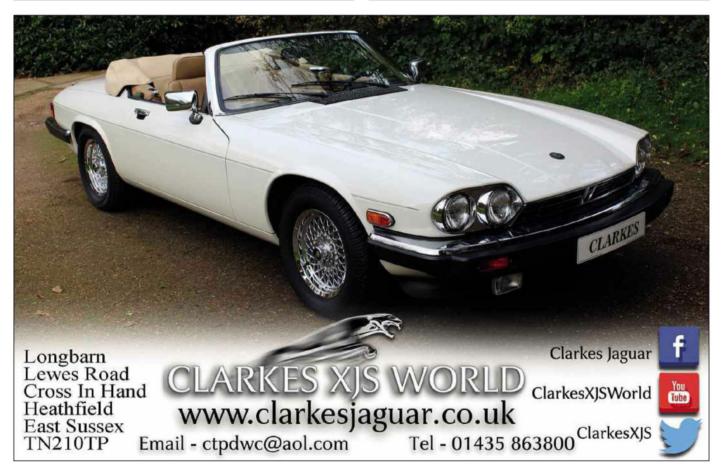




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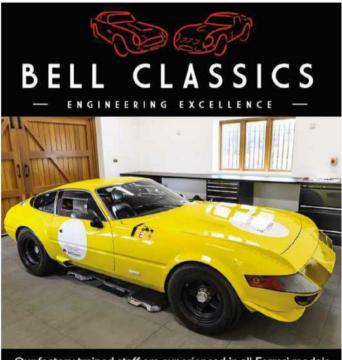
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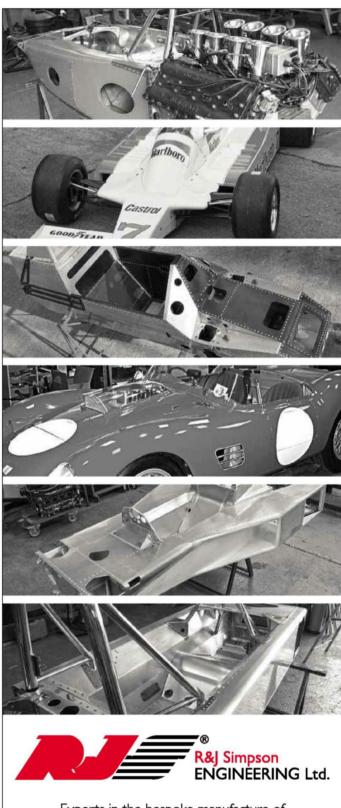


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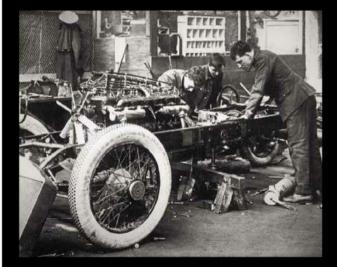


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### Day in the life

INTERVIEW CHRIS BIETZK PORTRAIT SANDRA KEATING



# **RUPERT WHYTE**

The owner of the Historic Car Art gallery left behind a career as a pharmacist to indulge his passion

**I'VE JUST ABOUT** recovered from the *Art of Motoring* exhibition, which I co-curate every year with Andrew Marriott as part of London Motor Week. It's a big undertaking, but well worth the effort. The show has grown to the point that it was moved to the Mall Galleries this year.

It would be nice to think that I've played some small part in encouraging interest in motoring art in the UK. Since I set up shop in 2004, I've worked hard to demonstrate to people that a picture of a car can be more than 'just a picture of a car', and I spend a great deal of my time looking for exciting new artists – people whose work offers some fresh way of looking at things with four wheels and an engine.

Sometimes that involves travelling, in particular to Europe, where I'd say people

have historically been slightly more open to the idea of motoring as a subject worthy of 'serious' artists. My gallery, which is based in rural Derbyshire, is approached by artists pretty frequently, too, but to be honest 95% of the stuff we're shown doesn't make the grade.

I run the business with a small team that includes my wife Kerry and my sister Lucy, and generally get cracking around 8am each morning, subject to the demands of my two children and the dog, and depending on whether I've snuck in a run or a bike ride. It's good bicycling country, Derbyshire, with the Cannock Chase trails not far from home.

I'm still the first point of contact for all our artists and customers, and these days it seems that there are only ever busy periods and even busier ones – but you won't catch

### 'INTERESTING VINTAGE POSTERS ARE HARD TO COME BY NOW, BUT I LOVE SNIFFING OUT THE GOOD STUFF'

me complaining. Before I started Historic Car Art I worked as a pharmacist. It was a good job but I'm acutely aware of how lucky I am to have managed to turn my interests into a career.

Unsurprisingly the passion for cars came first: my dad and my uncle would take me to Donington after it reopened in the late 1970s, and as soon as I finished university and started earning, I bought a Caterham and went racing. The Caterham was eventually replaced by a Lotus Eleven (a brilliant car), and the Eleven in turn by a 23B (less brilliant), but I hung up my boots when the kids came along.

By then I'd accumulated a collection of art and motor sport memorabilia – mainly old posters – and had started producing my own mixed-media pieces. In 2004 I displayed some of my work at a show and got chatting to the great painter John Ketchell. It transpired that his publisher had just gone out of business so I offered my services, such as they were at that stage, and John became Historic Car Art's very first artist.

My enthusiasm for vintage posters has never waned, and I love sniffing out the good stuff for the gallery. That's become a much harder task, though: the days of picking up perfect examples for pennies are long gone. You also have to be very careful not to be taken in by later reprints, some of which date from only a few years after the originals.

Over in France recently I acquired not one but two 1951 Le Mans posters, of which there are only a handful in the world. A tip from a friend led me to a house where they were sitting, unloved, in clip frames. One was in good shape; the other was tatty, but was snapped up by a buyer who loved it exactly as it was and didn't want it restored. I was pleased about that. Some posters should be allowed to wear their history.

My own collection has shrunk over the years. I try to knock off at 6pm, and when I get home in the evening the only evidence of my obsession is a single Le Mans poster and a single Porsche 917 factory poster. Oh, there's a big painting of a Lotus Eleven by John Ketchell, too; as it was commissioned for me by my family, I think its place on the wall is probably safe!



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