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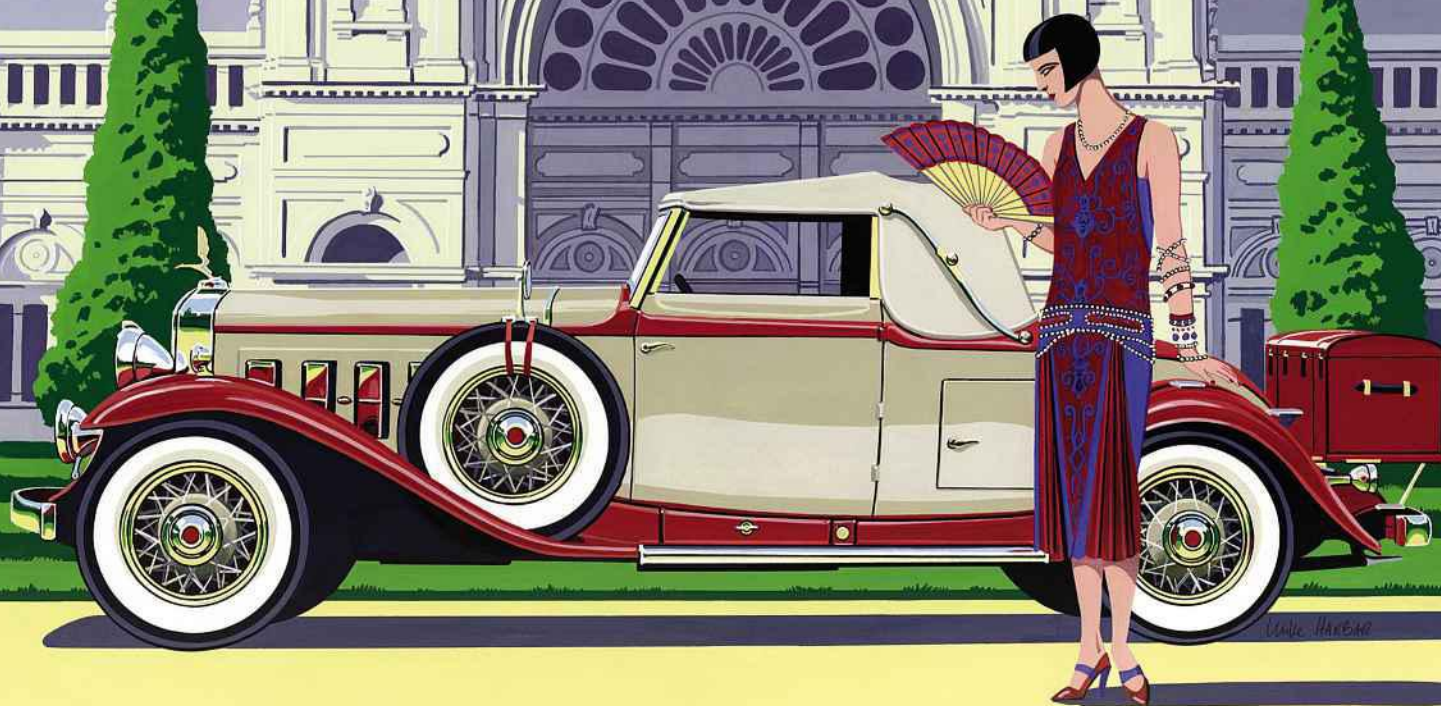
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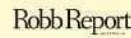
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IN WHICH IT WAS CREATED'

ALFA ROMEO TIPO 33/TT12
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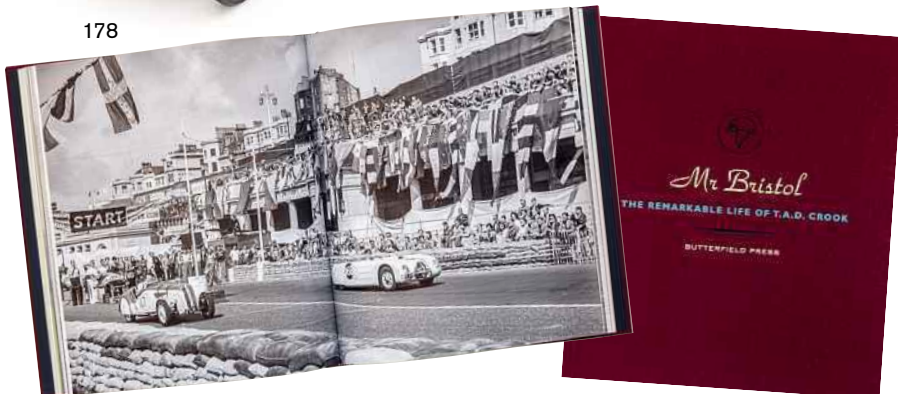
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EDITOR'S WELCOME

Even better than we remember it

SOME CARS BECOME so much a part of the furniture that we take them for granted. Worse than that, we remember hugely significant vehicles more for their frailties than their achievements. The Jaguar XJ6 is a perfect example: people so often focus on the tragi-comic Leyland years instead of its watershed debut. Wade through ads for down-at-heel S3s and XJ40s and you'd be forgiven for thinking it was always thus. But we should never forget that the XJ6 was a genre-creating stroke of genius, a truly groundbreaking car that was dubbed 'the best sedan in the world' (see **pages 72 to 82**).

Such greatness didn't happen by accident. This was the last car styled by Sir William Lyons and he knew exactly what he wanted, as he later wrote: 'In 1964 we decided we would produce a completely new car, superior in all respect to the existing models, which would be so advanced that it could remain in production for a minimum of seven years after its introduction.' Well, it certainly achieved that, and then some.

Don't forget either that the XJ6 was Car of the Year. The man who made that call, Doug Blain – then editor of *Car* magazine – has fond memories of his team piling into one

and wafting to the Geneva Salon. 'It made a very good impression on me, it made a very good impression on all of us,' he recalls with a cheeky smile. 'It was the first British car we'd ever had any experience of that came with suspension!'

On the personal front, an XJ6 is often the answer when I play that game of hypothetically reorganising my life around owning a single classic car. A car that fulfils a wealth of criteria, but is primarily a cognoscenti motor at a popular price. When I last played the game the winner was not a coupé – 'bit predictable', according to the pal I was discussing it with – nor a V12: 'too complicated and a bit too lazy'.

No, it should be a manual Series 1 4.2.



James Elliott
editor in chief

FEATURING



SAM HANCOCK

'Imagine Fernando Alonso hopped out of his Le Mans-winning Toyota TS050 and tossed you the keys. That's what testing an Alfa Romeo T33/TT12 in the presence of Arturo Merzario and Derek Bell felt like: the premier sports prototype of its era, and the men who made it so. A real "pinch yourself" moment.' Read Sam's track test on **pages 148-156**.



PAUL FEARNLEY

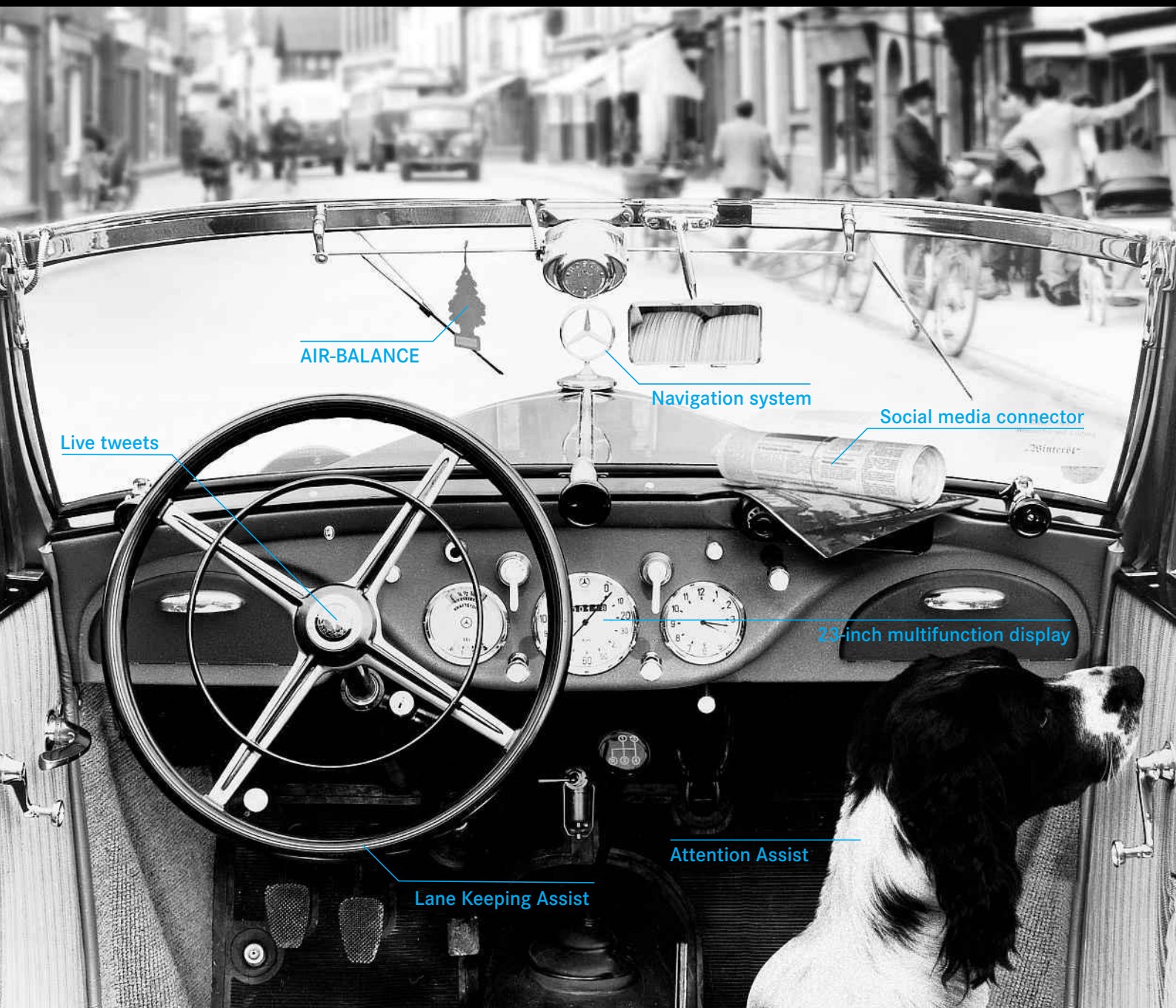
'A motorsport journalist I greatly respect told me of a racing driver who gave up the sport for the love of a good woman. That driver has intrigued me ever since. Robin Widdows prefers not to wobble on and so we broke up our chat into 20-minute quick-fire rounds.

Now I'm thinking of conducting all future interviews this way.' See **pages 126 to 130**.



PETER BAKER

'I headed out to Georgia (the one bordered by Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and politically overshadowed by Russia) to report back on its first ever classic rally – and found a driver's paradise.' Of course, *Octane* didn't want to make the event too luxurious, so we insisted he take part in a GAZ Volga... Turn to **pages 142 to 146**.



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Stephen Bayley on the
'greed is good' era

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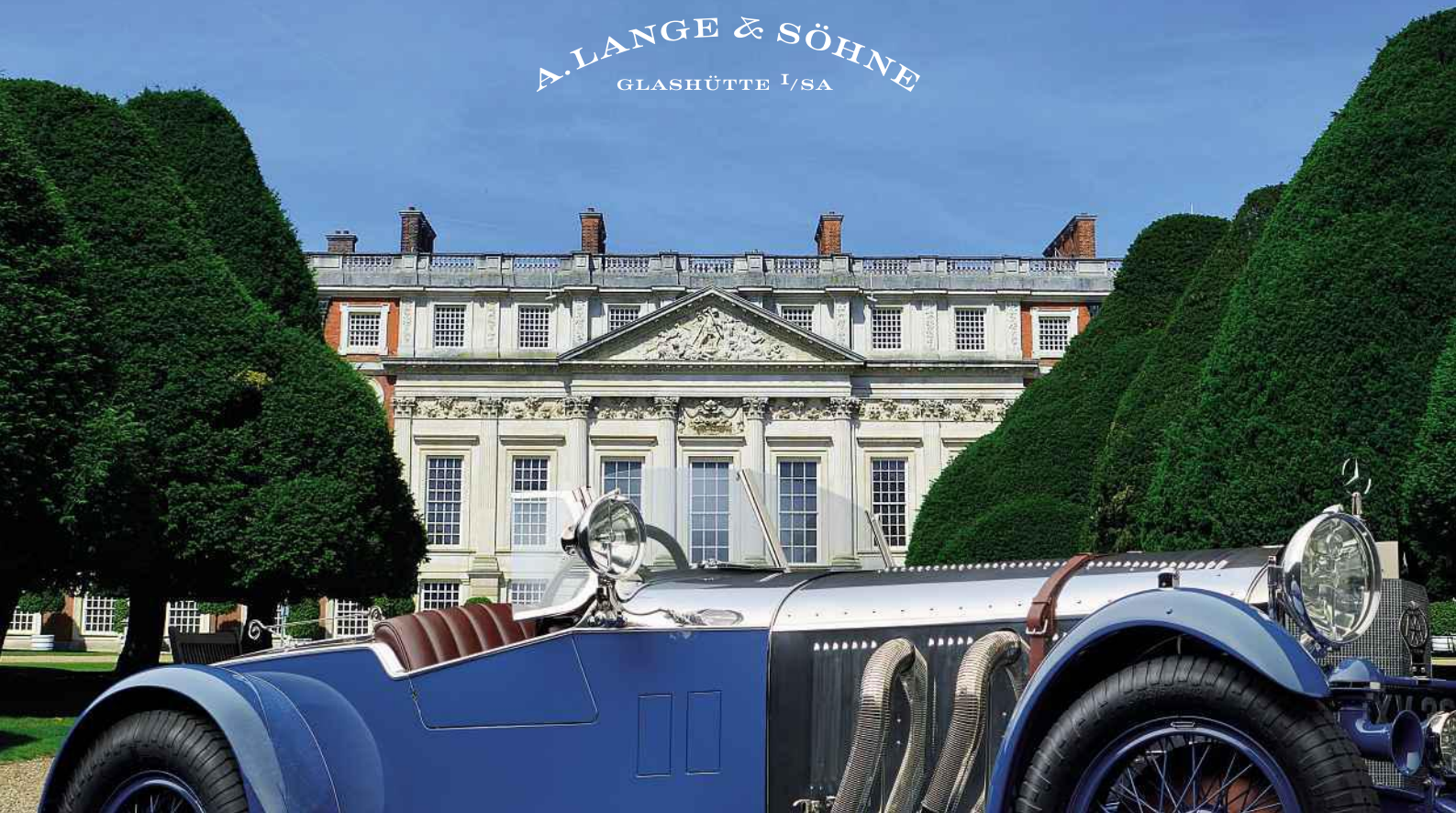
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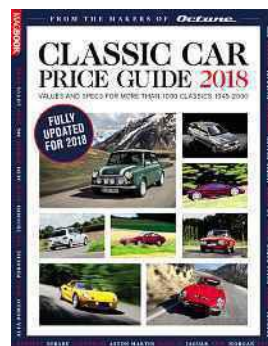
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Rod Stewart's girlfriend poses with his Lamborghini
Miuras outside his home in Southgate in 1970.
Courtesy of the Avalon Photoshoot Collection

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IGNITION

NEWS + EVENTS + OPINION

Record repatriated

Nearly a thousand Land Rovers gather in the UK to smash a world record

Words Patrick Cruywagen Photography Nick Dimbleby

HOW DO YOU GET hundreds of Land Rovers to attend a Land Rover show? Free beer? A promise to show them the new Defender? Or else you could just tell them that you want to beat the world record for the 'most Land Rovers on parade', which was very recently upped to 632 in Germany. Not bad for the country that gave us the rather capable Mercedes-Benz Geländewagen.

So organisers of this year's Billing Off Road Show decided it was time to bring the record home. This event has achieved cult status among fans of the green oval thanks to its impressive off-road tracks, which include a drive through a deep lake and a lengthy mud run. The world record attempt, however, would take place over gentle grass and gravel tracks.

The Guinness World Record rule-makers have very specific guidelines. The event must be held over a minimum course of two miles, there must be no significant gaps in the flow of the parade, unbroken footage of the start and finish line must be submitted as evidence, and any broken-down vehicles must be subtracted from the final total... and there are always breakdowns at Land Rover events.

The weather gods played along and Land Rovers turned up in their hundreds. But would there be enough? Organisers Sarah and Richard Arrowsmith left no stone unturned and from midday the marshalls started lining up the Landies while handing out specially numbered rally plaques to each driver. At 5pm the hooter sounded.

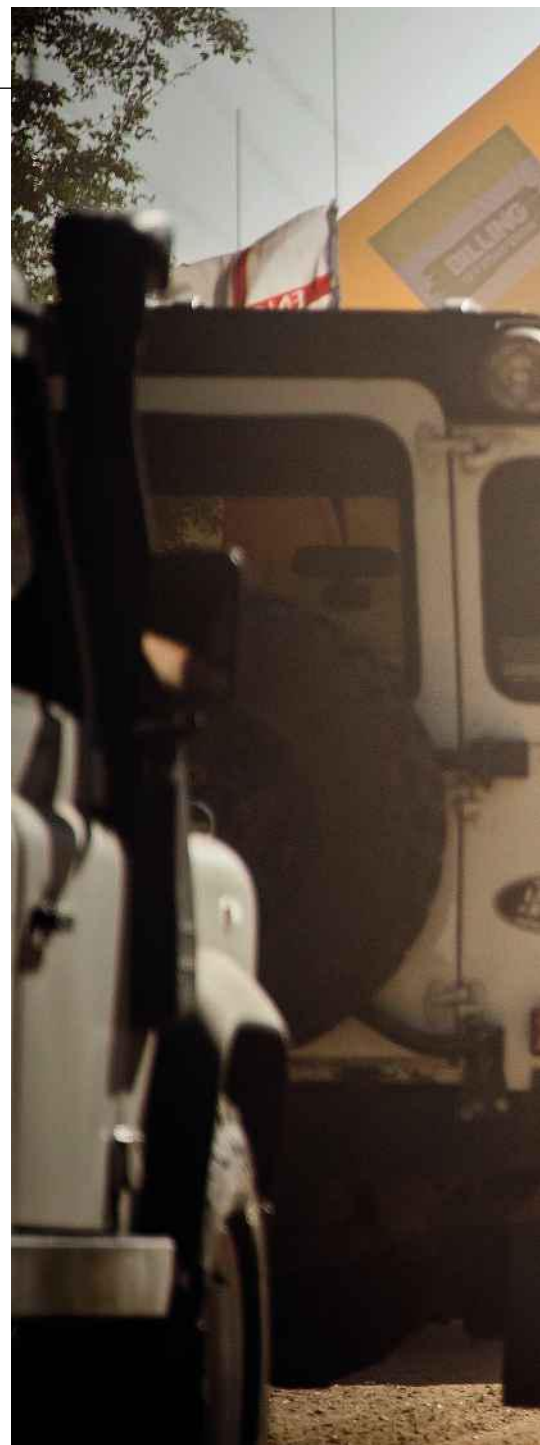
At the front of the convoy was John Taylor's very special Royal Review Series I, which was fitted with a Rolls-Royce B40

engine. Incredibly, it had been used by King George VI, the Queen Mother and HM Queen Elizabeth II. Now it was at Billing and part of a world record attempt. Third vehicle across the line was 'Oxford', the Series I of First Overland fame, which drove from London to Singapore in the 1950s.

Land Rovers travelled at around 4mph once they went under the start banner to ensure that they were not more than two vehicle lengths part, another one of the strict Guinness World Record requirements. A remarkable 910 examples crossed the start-line and 908 of those made it to the end. It took well over two hours to get all of the vehicles across the finish-line – but who said Land Rovers were not reliable? Drivers honked horns, passengers cheered wildly and dogs howled their approval as everyone realised the enormity of what had been achieved.

Once off the course, the drivers were directed onto a nearby field for a team photo. Evidence has now been submitted to Guinness and, if it's approved, the Germans will have held the record only for one month. Football may not be coming home just yet, but the Land Rover record is.

**'910 LAND ROVERS
CROSSED THE RECORD
ATTEMPT START-LINE
AND 908 OF THEM
MADE IT TO THE END'**





NEWS FEED

Octane's anniversary awards, grants, Quail celebrations, Mediterranean fun, Vauxhall reassurance and the King of Cool



Anniversary awards

Three special *Octane* awards have been handed out to mark the first 15 years of the magazine. Awarded during the *Auto Express* New Car Awards on 3 July, the trophies were part of a triple celebration, with sister titles *Evo* and *Auto Express* also marking significant birthdays (20 and 30 years).

Octane's company of the past 15 years was Classic Motor Cars of Bridgnorth, Shropshire, pictured receiving the award (above) from editor James Elliott. It was honoured for its standing as one of the world's finest restoration companies, for its apprenticeship programme and for its status as an employee-owned trust.

The most significant car to emerge since 2003 was the ex-Alain Delon Ferrari 250 GT California Spyder owned by the Vassilopoulos family. Tony and Athena Vassilopoulos flew in from South Africa to pick up the award. Lord March took home the trophy for the most significant person of the past 15 years, for his continued development of events at Goodwood – including the wonderful Members' Meeting.



Grant for archive

The Archive of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust, housed at the British Motor Museum in Gaydon, has received a £30,000 grant to fund a project called 'The Art of Selling'. It focuses on a unique collection of sales and press material from British Leyland. Work will get underway in the autumn, and at the end of the project, in October 2019, the catalogue will be put online.

RM branches out

Leading classic and performance car auction house RM Sotheby's has launched a sales operation headed up by Shelby Myers, son of company founder Rob. It launches with an impressive inventory including an LM-spec McLaren F1, 1928 Mercedes-Benz 680 S Torpedo-Sport Avant-Garde, and 1930 Bentley 6½ Litre 'Speed Six' Sportsman's Saloon.

Malta meet expands

A range of events is being organised for the Malta Classic, which takes place on the Mediterranean isle during 11-14 October. The event kicks off with a hillclimb, then there's the Mdina Concours the following day. The Classic rounds off with the two-day Classic Grand Prix. See maltaclassic.com.

Vauxhall staying put

Vauxhall Heritage has poured cold water on fears that it could be disbanded following the sale of its site for development. A spokesman reassured marque enthusiasts that the workshops and collection would be relocated within Luton.

McQueen's mount

The '62 Triumph TR6R ridden by Steve McQueen (and Bud Ekins for the scary bits) in *The Great Escape* is to go on public display for the first time since the 1963 film was shot. The 650cc bike will be at the Chubb Insurance Concours d'Élégance at Salon Privé, to be held at Blenheim Palace from 30 August to 1 September. See salonpriveconcours.com.



Quail reveals its stars

The Quail, a Motorsports Gathering, will have four special classes on 24 August: Great Lancias, 50th Anniversary of the Espada & Islero, 70 Years of the Iconic Porsche 356 and The Alois Ruf Reunion. See signatureevents.peninsula.com.

Octane presents...

All the latest on events organised or supported by Octane



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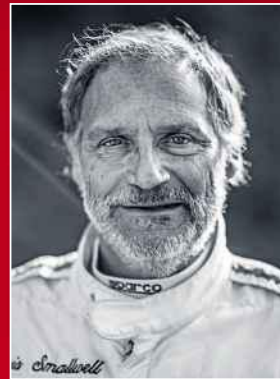
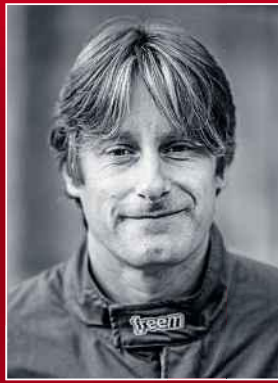
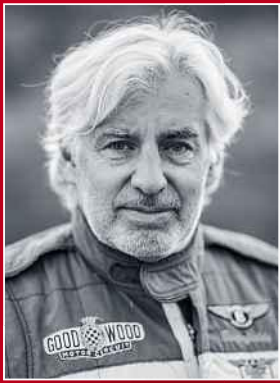
For the seventh successive year, *Octane* is to run a tour for its readers to the Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court Palace. Entrants on 2 September will enjoy a breakfast at Cliveden House before following the roadbook through Berkshire and Surrey to the royal palace. The 90-mile tour will take about two hours and, on arrival at Hampton Court, participants will drive through the gates into the Palace gardens. Guests can then head for the Concours of Elegance hospitality enclosure for a three-course lunch, followed by a leisurely walk around the Concours before returning for a cream tea. The price per head is £185 including the tour and meals, concours admission, window sticker, guest badge and souvenir programme. Contact ian@thoroughevents.co.uk.

Nominate now!

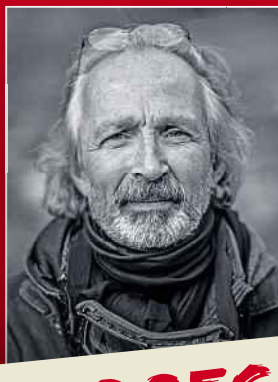
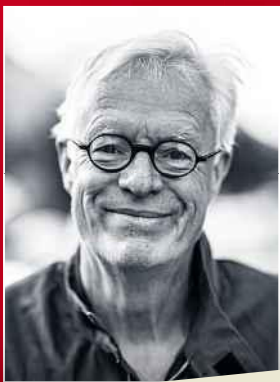
You have until 31 July to nominate your favourites for the 2018 Historic Motoring Awards. There is a wide range of categories, with the winners to be revealed at a ceremony hosted by Steve Rider at the Sheraton Grand London on 25 October. historicmotoringawards.co.uk.

On track with Octane

Don't miss out on the 2018 *Octane* Track Day at Goodwood Motor Circuit on 31 August, just before the Revival Meeting. The event costs £299 per person and car (additional drivers are £150) and includes breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea. Book at octanetrackdays.co.uk.



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Rare Astons at the Palace

Hampton Court marks seven decades of DBs

ON THE 70TH anniversary of the first Aston Martin DB-badged models, the Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court Palace is set to host a huge display of fine Astons. The event, which will run from 31 August to 2 September, will include four Aston Martins in the main Concours. Three are DB-themed: a 1967 Aston Martin DBSC by Touring – the only road-going version in existence; an Aston Martin DB2 drophead coupé bought by Prince Bertil of Sweden in 1952; and a DB5 convertible. The fourth is a 1937 Aston Martin 15/98 Long Chassis Tourer by Bertelli.

The concours cars will be joined by around 100 DB-badged cars gathered with the help of the Aston Martin Owners Club, featuring every model from 'DB1' through to DB11.

Other classes and celebrations at the concours will be Classics of the Future –



Clockwise from top left
Aston Martin 15/98 represents the marque's pre-war creations but the day will belong to the DB cars, including this Touring-bodied DBSC.

featuring modern bespoke cars, one-offs and limited editions – and a line-up of famous Lotus models from the past seven decades, including a number of ex-Jim Clark cars.

A format change for 2018 means that organisers will be awarding trophies for each decade of car on display in the Concours as well as the usual Best in Show, as selected by the owners of the cars themselves. As *Octane* went to press, the oldest car due to appear at the Concours was a 1903 Panhard 15hp and the newest a current Ferrari GTC4

Lusso. Other early stand-out entries include a 1969 Porsche 917K, a 1958 Maserati 300S and a brace of Fiat 8Vs.

Away from the motoring action, the concours is the venue for the public reveal of a new watch from luxury brand Lange & Söhne. It will launch a 100-off limited-edition tribute to its 1815 Tourbillon.

The Concours has also partnered with Tom's Kitchen – founded by Tom Aikens – to offer new deli picnics for visitors.

See concourseofelegance.co.uk.



WHY WE LOVE...

The trafficator

People loved the trafficator when it was invented in the first half of the last century. It meant they could use both arms for driving the car rather than sticking one out of the window to tell other drivers where they were going.

Then flashing indicators arrived, far more attention-grabbing than the diffident pop-up, flop-down demeanour of the gently glowing orange semaphore. That's when turn signals

changed from 'I would like to' to 'I am going to'. So now everyone knew where they were – except when people left their indicators merrily blinking right as they turned off a roundabout – and old cars with trafficators found themselves converted to the modern way. Fair enough; the semaphores weren't very reliable anyway.

But they signalled a gentler, less-hurried world in which more slack was cut. Today, when we see an old car that should have trafficators, but instead it's got aftermarket indicators flashing, we can understand the practical reasons why. But we also feel a pang of sadness for the trampling of a turn-signal tradition. **John Simister**

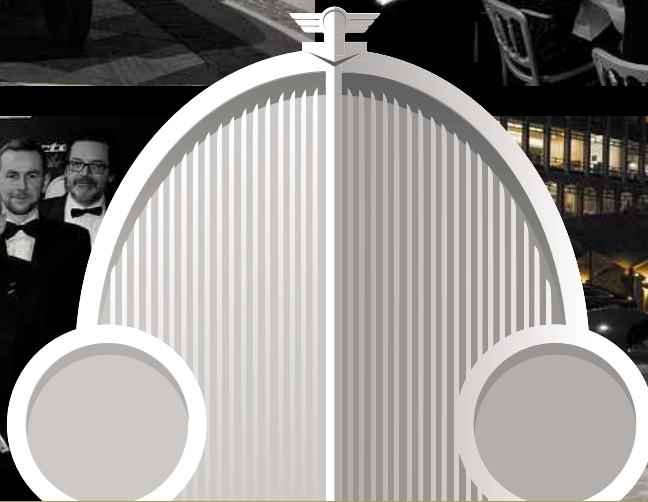
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Social hillclimbing

More than a century of cars to star at Shelsley Walsh

IT MAY NOT be the roundest-figure anniversary, but Shelsley Walsh is going great guns to celebrate the 113th birthday of the oldest motorsport venue (still using its original course) in the world on the glorious 12th of August. And *Octane* will be part of the celebrations, by supporting a Youngtimer concours for post-1985 cars, with prizes including MHD Design watches, magazine subscriptions and Autoglym goodies.

There will be plenty to keep visitors entertained, not least the small matter of a feast of action on the famous hill including the fastest drivers from the British Hill Climb Championship duelling for FTD. There will also be the UK debut of the Panasonic Jaguar Formula E car with works pilot Mitch Evans at the wheel, and Sunday's runs will be streamed live by GKN Driveline.

Specially organised car parades will acknowledge 12 decades of Shelsley Walsh, and are set to include the 1905 Daimler that set Fastest Time of the Day at the very first meeting, plus Shelsley Specials, the bonkers Nic Mann Morris Minor, and the rather more expected contingent of Pilbeams and Goulds. On static display only will be the 1929 record-holding Vauxhall Villiers.

Tickets range from a special £5 post-3pm Saturday entry to the £22 weekend ticket, while kids under 16 are admitted free. Camping is £10 per night for a tent, caravan or motorhome. For more tickets and ticket information, see shelsleywalsh.com.

Clockwise from above

Raymond Mays started a trend by fitting twin rear wheels to the Vauxhall Villiers and scored a record in 1929; historic start-line; Nic Mann Morris Minor.



HOW TO...

Stay friends with your restorer

Your tired old car needs to be brought back to life. It might involve minor metalwork, a repaint, mechanical refreshment, or it might be a major dismantle, reconstruct, refurbish, refinish and re-assembly job. Either way, you'll probably entrust the bulk of it to a specialist. The nub of the job is going to happen in the specialist's bodyshop.

So, how do you manage the relationship you're about to have? You may well have asked for an estimate beforehand, or even a firm quotation, but insisting on the latter instantly sows the seed of discord. Any work on a classic car nearly always turns out to be more complex, and therefore more costly, than anyone expects – even the experienced restorer's X-ray vision of hidden inner rot is no better than yours.

Talk it through, and keep tabs on your project's progress. Visit it regularly and show an interest. Few things are more demoralising for a professional restorer than working feedback-free with only a guaranteed argument to look forward to when eventually the job is done. If the client does not bother to see the work in progress, other, more rewarding jobs might usurp it. The restorer is only human and has a business to run, after all.

So be part of the process, be there to make decisions, such as weighing-up between expensive repairs to a rotten panel or splashing out on a complete repro – factory originals having long been extinct – and all the detail fettling it will need. That way you'll see what the restorer is up against, and you'll realise that menu pricing has no part in this world. You'll also be able to stop the restorer running away with the costs, as might have happened should the instructions have been no more specific than 'Do whatever it needs.'

If it all goes well, you appreciate the restorer's hard work and he feels thus appreciated, you'll have gained yourself a valuable friend and ally. You'll also have a car to be proud of – which was the object in the first place. **John Simister**



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1971 Lamborghini Miura P400 SV (European specification) • 1975 Ferrari 365 GT4/BB • 1976 Lamborghini Countach LP400
Please note that to respect client confidentiality not all motor cars available may be shown

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MAN AND MACHINE

Third or fourth of two

Martin Brewer's DP214 recreation has its own history

Words and photography Paul Hardiman

WITH THE SALE at Bonhams' Festival of Speed auction of 2 VEV, interest in any DP-numbered Aston Martin is high. The four Project cars – DP212, two DP214s and a final DP215 – followed the Zagatos, based like them on DB4 GTs but more slippery due to a streamlined nose and Kamm tail.

Aston Martin raced them in 1963 and 1964. They never won at Le Mans but 215 was timed at 198.6mph on the Mulsanne straight. Their swansong as works cars was Roy Salvadori's win at Monza in September 1963, after which they were sold off to privateers. Only one original DP214 remains and is rarely seen since its crash at the Goodwood Revival in 2012. So if you want one, you have to build it.

This is one of two DP214 recreations built in the '80s, but it remained unfinished for nearly 20 years. The other was completed by a German enthusiast and is a well-known car that races today. Martin Brewer, who started the Aston-centric Runnymede Motor Company in 1978, acquired this one in 2005, completed it and has raced it ever since.

'I saw the Project car at Post-Vintage Engineers in 2005, based on a DB4 like the originals. They were building it for road use but I had other ideas. The first thing I did to improve it was to have a rollcage installed, which had the bonus of stiffening the chassis and making the car feel much firmer on the road. It's powered by a correct 3.8-litre DB4 GT engine with a 12-plug cylinder head and

triple 50DCOE Weber carburettors. We've just had it rebuilt by James Hipwell at Warren Heath Engineering, with a steel crankshaft, a lightened flywheel with fluid damper, new pistons and Carillo 'rods.

'They've improved the cylinder head's gas flow and added a torque plate to the bottom of the block for extra rigidity. It's now making around 385bhp at 6000rpm with plenty of torque. With the rebuilt engine, we won first time out in 2018 at Silverstone in the Equipe GTS pre-63 GT series. It's a very user-friendly race car but a bit more demanding to drive than the E-type Lightweight I have campaigned for the past three years.'

Side-window stickers include Le Mans Legends and the Vernasca Silver Flag Hillclimb, plus Historic races at Portimao and Barcelona. 'I first raced it in the 2007 Le Mans Legends; we were first Aston home, about 19th overall. Best result was winning two races at Laguna Seca in 2011; worst was cracking the sump on the rumble strips exiting wide out of the chicane at the 2015 Goodwood Members' Meeting. We changed the sump in the rain, in an open pit shelter.'

And yes, that's Stirling Moss's signature on the nose, signed at the 2012 Hurlingham Club concours: 'I dislike tatty racing cars and always keep this car in near-perfect condition.

'The teddy bear strapped to the rollcage has been with me in a lot of different race cars. He belongs to my wife and he's there to keep me safe. Thus far he has succeeded.'



IN THIS MONTH: SEPTEMBER 1974

SR-71A Blackbird's trans-Atlantic flight

The world's fastest trans-Atlantic flight was made almost 45 years ago, by one of the weirdest-looking aircraft ever created. The Lockheed SR-71A Blackbird, a long-range reconnaissance spy plane, was designed in the 1960s as a replacement for the ageing U2. It was built under the design leadership of aerospace engineer Clarence 'Kelly' Johnson at the Black Projects department of the Skunk Works in Burbank, California.

As a spy plane fitted with tracking and infra-red cameras but unarmed, it would evade surface-to-air missiles by simply out-accelerating any threat with its high altitude and Mach 3 capability. Along with its 2685mph top speed it had a reduced cross-section to avoid radar detection, giving rise to the aircraft's unusual and dramatic profile.

The trans-Atlantic dash was the idea of US Senator Barry Goldwater, who had flown a Blackbird in the Air Force Reserves. On leaving the forces as a Major-General he had much influence, convincing then-president Gerald Ford that a record-breaking flight would showcase American technology. This ranged from panels that expanded at temperature, through triethylborane (TEB) pre-ignition fuel, which ignites with air and burns green, to specialised build techniques and tools that wouldn't damage the composites used.

A Blackbird and crew were selected, the route and timing for refuelling calculated. With its prodigious thirst of JP-7 fuel from its pair of Pratt & Whitney J58 engines, the aircraft would need refuelling halfway through its 3461-mile trip from New York to London, via a KC-135Q Stratotanker.

The flight took 1hr 54min at an average speed of 1807mph, crewed by Majors James V Sullivan and Noel F Widdifield. The same aircraft broke another record on its return flight from London to Los Angeles. Clarence 'Kelly' Johnson said of the achievement: 'It has exceeded all my expectations.'

Neil Godwin-Stubbart





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THE MONTH IN PICTURES

From Porsches towering over Goodwood to hot rods and Le Mans, it's difficult to think of a busier motoring month. Ever



**GOODWOOD FESTIVAL
OF SPEED, 12-15 JULY**
Fireworks mark the unveiling
of Gerry Judah's stunning
52m-high Porsche sculpture in
West Sussex. More next month.

LEFT-HAND PAGE: DAN BATHIE / PORSCHE GB. RIGHT-HAND PAGE: ASTON PARROTT



PENDINE SANDS HOT ROD RACES, 30 JUNE – 1 JULY
The Vintage Hot Rod Association returned to South Wales for the sixth year in succession for its *Octane* Award-winning meet.

FERRARI DINO ANNIVERSARY, MARANELLO, 30 JUNE

This superb line-up of Dinos was the highlight of a huge gathering of the model in Italy to mark its 50th birthday.



RODEO DRIVE CONCOURS, 19 JUNE

A McLaren Senna is hoisted into place for the 25th running of the Beverly Hills event.

TRANS-AMERICA CHALLENGE, 27 MAY – 17 JUNE

Some 35 crews tackled this 22-day, 9360km epic from Charleston to Seattle. It was won by David and Jo Roberts' 1968 Triumph TR250, and pictured is Mike and Lorna Harrison's Volvo PV544.



SPA CLASSIC, 18-20 MAY

Squint at the rear wing and you might see that Charles Arton's Gunston Capri Perana has a fine sponsor. (Hint: it's *Octane*.)





CHATEAU IMPNEY HILL CLIMB, 6-7 JULY
Entrants at this year's Droitwich festival included Chris Williams' Napier Bentley (top) and John Harrison's Dodge Coronet.



LE MANS CLASSIC, 6-8 JULY

Record crowds of 135,000 flocked to La Sarthe for the sundrenched Peter Auto event.



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: CHRISTOPHE JOUNIAUX; PIERRE-YVES RIOM; MATHIEU BONNEVIE; PIERRE-YVES RIOM; PIERRE-YVES RIOM



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COUPE DES ALPES, 14-16 JUNE

The 1968 Alpine A110 of Jean Vinatier and Jean-François Jacob en route to a Prix Alpine win after five stages, 19 summits and 870km.



1000 MILHAS HISTÓRICAS BRASILEIRAS, 19-23 JUNE

Some 42 classics and sports cars took part in a rally from the Brazilian city of São Paulo to close to the border with Uruguay.



FORMULA VINTAGE FESTIVAL, 24 JUNE

A moment of tranquility in the paddock as Donington Park is overrun by the Vintage Sports-Car Club's annual jamboree.



LIGHT CAR RALLY, 17-18 JUNE

1915 Rover 12 passing through the ford in the village of Clee St Margaret, Salop.



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: RALLYSTORY; PETER McFADYEN; MICHAEL HOLDEN; ALVARO ANDRÉS PINZÓN

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Clockwise from left
Birdcage Maserati fronts
classics and supercars on
the terrace; the Mullins'
Delage; Nick Mason's
famous Ferrari 250 GTO.



GTO, while super-rarities included the only Pegaso in the UK, an Aston Martin Jet and a McLaren F1 GTR.

There was also a separate McLaren Formula 1 exhibition on the lawn in front of the motorsport concours, starring ex-Hunt and Senna cars as well as the MP4-23 that carried Lewis Hamilton to his first Grand Prix championship in 2008.

'Our third concours has attracted record crowds to see our best-ever line-up yet,' declared Max Hunt, chairman of the judging panel. 'A huge thank-you to all the owners and visitors for making this year's concours such a success.'

The cars were not alone in being judged, however. The aviation judges – Sir Tim Boughton, Lee Proudfoot and Vic Norman – awarded the Hanna Aviation Trophy to the 1952 Morane-Saulnier 315 out of a selection of aircraft dating back to 1936.

Most remarkably, every penny raised by these superb events is given to charity.

Heveningham Hall Concours

Suffolk, UK 30 June-1 July

Words and photography James Elliott

UNLIKE THE REST of the 5000-acre Heveningham Hall estate, the terraced lawn stretching up from the rear of the Grade One-listed Palladian mansion was not the work of landscape architect Lancelot Capability Brown. Instead it was dreamed up by Lois Hunt and brought to fruition by Kim Wilkie as the the perfect setting in which to show off 54 sublime and exotic motor cars. It is a rare modification that Lois and husband Jon have made since taking over the Hall in 1994, the bulk of their efforts dedicated to restoring the house and Brown's 1711 vision for the surrounding estate.

This was the third year that the Hunts, aided by motorsport-mad sons Max and Harry, have used the steps at the Georgian manor house to host a sensational selection of cars ranging from trikes to track-day super-weapons. The tranquility of this Suffolk concours provides a stark counterpoint to the bustling Country Fair that takes place simultaneously on the other side of the Hall, spotlighting such rural delights as Shetland pony-racing and herding ducks. Even in the fair there was plenty to entertain enthusiasts, with classic car displays, tractors, diggers and agricultural machinery, plus a Wall of Death and powerboats on the lake. Highlights outside the concours, however, were the display of 60 classic aircraft including wingwalkers, dogfights and other aerial

displays, and the new-for 2018 Horsepower Hill, a sprint over in the blink of an eye but encouraging some enthusiastic showboating.

Highlights were plentiful in the concours, with the three major categories won by Peter and Merle Mullin's 1939 Delage D8-120 Cabriolet (pre-war), Nick Mason's 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO (post-war) and Henry Pearman's 1987 Porsche 962 (supercar).

The two-day event was preceded by a tour in which many of the concours entrants participated, the lawns consequently graced by everything from 1903 Clément to Aston Martin Vulcan. Nick Mason supplied two cars, his Birdcage Maserati and that 250



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Hope Classic Rally

Brooklands, Surrey 15-16 June

Words Sanjay Seetanah Photography Hope Classic

THE HOPE Classic Rally might, at first sight, seem no more than a group of people enjoying themselves by driving expensive cars around Southern England for a day, but there's more to it than that. This charity event has raised more than £1 million in four years.

Entrants are welcome to take along their own classics (as did *Octane* group advertising director Sanjay Seetanah and account director Sam Snow in their Aston Martin DB7 Volante), but for many it is a rare opportunity to get into something truly exotic. Thanks to the generosity of collectors who support the cause and make their fleet available for the event, guests could find themselves driving a Gullwing Mercedes, a Ferrari 250 Pininfarina Cabriolet or GT SWB, an Aston Martin DB5 or something else of that ilk.

The 2018 event started at Brooklands – the hotel and Mercedes-Benz World – with a

fundraising and welcome dinner, followed by a road run through the Surrey Hills and the South Downs on the day of the rally.

So, what is the charity? Event organiser Phil Wall channels the revenue gained to WeSeeHope, which operates in Africa. It was set up to provide a future for children with HIV, and now it introduces self-funding savings and loans to southern and eastern African communities through its Village Investors Programme. The intention is to help adults and young people learn skills and start businesses which will sustain their communities and support the vulnerable.

A spokesman told us: 'This event is driven by people who are passionate classic car enthusiasts; people who would enjoy something like this anyway but who think it better to do some good while they're at it.'

The first three Hope Rallies raised a total of £800,000 but this year's event set a new benchmark of £330,000, gained via entry fees, sponsorship and a charity auction.

From top

Ferrari 250GT SWB leaves Brooklands start; covetable cars on display during dinner; classics of all ages are welcome, as Sunbeam Alpine demonstrates.





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Belgravia Classic Car Show

Belgrave Square, London 24 June

Words Robert Coucher Photography Graham Glen

THE NORMALLY hidden and discreet five-acre Belgrave Square in central London became a motoring Garden of Eden on Sunday 24 June. Lurking behind the sturdy railings, usually closed, and the lush vegetation of the garden, 150 vintage and classic cars were admired by a genteel crowd of 2500 visitors, an increase of at least 500 over 2017. Yet, thanks to the use of the West Lawn, it didn't feel any more crowded.

Organised by the Belgrave Square Events Committee and Michael Scott's 96 Club, the show treated visitors to a Lancaster bomber flypast as well as a glamorous and eclectic display of diverse motor cars. Pop-up bars, barbecue lunches, ice cream, cigars and live jazz added to the garden party atmosphere among the rose bushes.

There were nearly 150 cars on the 'field', up from under 100 last year, but with the road closed to traffic this time there were another 60 to 80 cars in front of the garden, which was a big increase on previous outings.

Best of Show, awarded by Sotheby's, went to Peter Blond's immaculate 1933 Rolls-Royce Phantom II Continental which he has owned for 50 years. It was presented by the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Lindsey Hall, who clearly appreciates classic cars. She and her husband talked much about their need to buy their own dream classic car, a Big Healey.

Ash Chalak's Maserati GT was considered the Most Original by the judges, one of

whom was the CEO of the Grosvenor estate and property group. His pre-war Sunbeam was a beautiful beast.

The Inner Circle included a time-warp Lotus Esprit with just 2000 miles on the clock, one of only 53 Jaguar XJR15s and the Aston Martin DBS from *The Persuaders!* Simon Khachadourian of the Pullman Gallery showed his beautiful Embiricos Bentley, Hugh James brought along his sonorous Bizzarrini and Ivan Dutton's 1914 Peugeot impressed all with its 10-litre, four-cylinder aero engine.

Grosvenor approached Michael Scott, who has vast experience arranging concours in London, in March 2017 to stage the first

event. Just three months later he launched a 'prototype' intended for 50 cars but which soon swelled to twice that. The event's size caused issues with traffic, so for this year's show Westminster Council agreed, at the last minute, to close the square.

One of the organisers, Darren Sullivan, said: 'I really enjoyed seeing all the families and friends enjoying the cars, the garden, the music and the food. Petrolheads and non-car fans enjoyed themselves equally.'

'For an organiser, it's important for the day to be inclusive and welcoming, with good people in a beautiful environment. It's equally important that among the cars on display are ones you can relate to or have owned and cars you hope to afford some day, as well as rare and unobtainable cars.'

Clockwise from top

Ferrari 250 and Bizzarrini front the marquee; Maserati won Most Original Car; DKW van; E-type and Corvette flank Alfa Montreal.



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Highway Earth

Beverly Hills, California, USA 27 June

Words & photography Evan Klein

LOCATED JUST NORTH of Sunset Boulevard in the heart of Beverly Hills is Franklin Cyn Lake. It's home to some of America's most iconic TV shows, and once a year it hosts the Highway Earth car show, which I organise. This year we had 236 cars on the 1.2-mile loop around the lake.

'You must register before the show,' we tell people, 'and when we're full, we're full.' The lake will only hold so many cars, and they're not specifically chosen for the show. There's no favouritism.

It usually starts with the Alfa guys. They start registering, then the Citroëns want in, quickly followed by MGs, Triumphs and Austin-Healeys. The Morgans follow suit, the Antique Automobile club; we even have Tatras, Corvairs and Lotuses. This year I added a special area called The Porsche Corral. It was at the entrance to the show, on a bluff surrounded by a wooden fence and accessed by a small wooden bridge. Before I knew it, 23 Porsches were corralled there.

At around 8am a giant hot-rodded school bus showed up. You didn't register, did you? 'No, but I just heard about the show.' OK, I think I've got a spot for you, come on in.

This year our special guest was Shelby race driver Allen Grant, who brought his Cobra

from the 1960s. That led to Superformance deciding to come, and the LA Shelby club joined right in.

Everyone who registers is guaranteed a spot around the lake and gets a copy of *Highway* magazine, published just for the show. As people register I pick special cars, and the car clubs can nominate cars to be featured. There's free water (it gets hot out in the open), free stuff from Mothers Polish and a raffle ticket. The cars arrive from 7am and

Clockwise from top

Rat-look Model T arrives to join Citroëns and a well-used camper van; British sports cars enjoy some welcome shade under the trees.

we open to the public at 9am. Soon it's a giant walking show around the lake.

At noon everyone gathered for our 'Giant Group Photo' and the raffle. *Petrolicious* offered hats and shirts, *Automobile* magazine presented a Best in Show trophy and a fancy leather wallet, Hagerty Insurance donated a car-care kit, and Mothers Polish surprised us all with two amazing electric buffing kits. Then, as a bonus, I raffled a few photo portraits that I had lit and shot.

This was the event's fifth year. It came about because, as I was jogging around the lake one morning, it dawned on me that it was the perfect place for a show. I knew everyone there from doing photoshoots, so I went to the office with the proposal. To my surprise the Ranger said: 'My husband and I have hot rods. What a great idea; no one has ever asked before. Let's do it!'

Five years later, I reckon we have the best car show in Los Angeles.





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26TH SEPTEMBER 2018

Itinerary subject to change. Photography by Christopher Scholey at christopherscholey.com





Historic Grand Prix Zandvoort, 30 August – 1 September
Image: Circuit Park Zandvoort

COMING UP

It'll be autumn before you know it, so make the most of this summer's events

27-29 July Concours d'Elegance of America

Three days of events at the Inn at St John's in Plymouth, including a 'cars and coffee' morning, culminating in the concours itself.
concoursusa.org

27-29 July CarFest North

The ever-popular charity event returns to the 6500-acre estate of Bolesworth Castle in Cheshire. The music this year will be provided by the legendary Burt Bacharach and The Proclaimers among others.
carfest.org

28-29 July Atomic Festival

A weekend of 1950s-themed entertainment, including drag racing, at Sywell Aerodrome. It has a US flavour, but all sorts

of pre-1967 cars, 'bikes and commercials will be there.
atomicfestival.co.uk

28-29 July Classic Nostalgia

Group A, Group B, WRC and F1 cars will all be tested by the historic hillclimb at Shelsley Walsh, where they will share space in the paddock with all the more usual four- and two-wheeled suspects. There will be an *Octane* concours, too, for pre-1985 cars.
shelsleywalsh.com

4-5 August Vintage Prescott

The quintessential English vintage car meet in Gloucestershire sees 250 pre-war sports and racing cars charge up the 880-yard course established by the VSCC all the way back in 1938.
vsc.co.uk

4-5 August Copenhagen Historic Grand Prix

Flat-out fun in the Danish capital on an unusual 2.6km street circuit, with a good variety of cars and some famous faces; the pro-am race pairs enthusiast drivers with the likes of Tom Kristensen.
chgp.dk

4-6 August Classic Days Schloss Dyck

The 'German Goodwood' is held at the picture-perfect castle Schloss Dyck, north-west of Cologne, and makes room for 'youngtimers' as well as first-rate classics.
classic-days.de

10-12 August AvD Oldtimer Grand Prix

The forbidding Nürburgring provides a tough challenge to machinery spanning seven decades of motorsport history.
avd-ogp.de

11-12 August Shelsley Walsh Championship Challenge

The British Hillclimb Championship returns

to the historic Worcestershire motorsport venue, and this year the racing will be complemented by *Octane's* Youngtimer Concours for post-1985 cars.
shelsleywalsh.com

11-17 August Bonneville Speed Week

Speed freaks from around the world bring their hopped-up machines to northwestern Utah and floor it on the famous, sun-baked Bonneville Salt Flats.
scta-bni.org

12 August Brooklands Reunion

Intended to recreate the atmosphere of a pre-World War Two meeting, and featuring the actual cars, motorcycles and bicycles raced at Brooklands between 1907 and 1939.
brooklandsmuseum.com

17-26 August Monterey Car Week

The Car 'Week' is completely overwhelming, in the very best sense of the word: auctions galore and a dozen concours and car shows, including, of course, the prestigious gathering on the golf course at Pebble Beach that started it all. And at nearby Laguna Seca there's first-rate Historic racing in the form of the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion.
whatsupmonterey.com

18-19 August Classic Car Boot Sale

Always a threat to the wallet, the Classic Car Boot Sale brings pre-1989 cars and sellers of vintage goodies to King's Cross in London.
classiccarbootsale.co.uk



CarFest South 24-26 August,
Image: Will Bailey



Concours of Elegance 31 August – 2 September
Image: Fluid Images

24-26 August CarFest South

The venue for the second leg of CarFest 2018 is Laverstoke Park Farm in Hampshire, where Chris Evans, Jody Scheckter and Pudsey Bear will be joined by musical acts including Paloma Faith and Texas.

carfest.org

25-26 August Wings & Wheels

Entertainment on the ground and in the air at Dunsfold Aerodrome in Surrey, and in a good cause, too: money raised will go to charities including Brooklands Museum and Help for Heroes.

wingsandwheels.net

25-27 August Isle of Man Classic TT

Today's motorcycle heroes race the bikes of yesteryear around the island's famous roads. The event incorporates the Festival of Jurby, a huge gathering of classic bikes.

iomtt.com

30 August – 1 September Salon Privé

The Blenheim Palace-based event features two concours fields this year, one featuring classics of all stripes, and the other reserved exclusively for Porsche machinery of all ages in celebration of the marque's 70th anniversary.

salonpriveconcours.com

30 August – 2 September Historic Grand Prix Zandvoort

The usual suspects – F1 cars, pre-66 GTs, Le Mans prototypes – will share the spotlight this year with Mercedes-Benz 190 Evo 2s, BMW M3s and Alfa 155s as '80s and '90s icons of the DTM series join the party.

historicgrandprix.nl

30 August – 3 September Lime Rock Historic Festival

Bugatti is the featured marque at this year's Festival, so visitors can expect to see plenty of fabulous French exports on the track and in the concours, held on the Sunday.

limerock.com

31 August – 2 September The Concours of Elegance

Sixty of the world's finest historic cars assemble in the grounds of a suitably impressive venue: Hampton Court Palace, the favoured residence of King Henry VIII.

concursofelegance.co.uk

1 September Rømø Motor Festival

You'll need an invitation to take part in the beach races on this Danish island, along with a pre-war car or bike and period attire – but anybody can go along to watch. Around 7000 spectators turned out last year.

romomotorfestival.dk



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Lighter, except on your wallet

Aston's DBS Superleggera tilts at Ferrari's 812 Superfast

Words John Simister

WE'VE HAD THE DB11 and the Vantage, two embodiments of Aston Martin's new generation. Now meet the DBS Superleggera, its deep, open mouth not only more obviously Aston-like than those of its siblings but also better able to pass the huge amount of air devoured by the 5.2-litre, twin-turbo V12, re-mapped to 715bhp.

The new car raids Aston's historic lexicon for its name. The first DBS was the six-cylinder launch version, in 1967, of the William Towns-styled car that soon afterwards became Aston Martin's first V8. The tag was used again in 2007 on a hardcore DB9 derivative. A Superleggera ('super light') script adorned the DB4 and DB5, whose body construction used a system, devised by Touring of Italy, of thin steel tubes under an aluminium skin.

This new Aston Martin, clad in carbonfibre

and aluminium over the regular DB11 platform, has nothing to do with Touring's construction system. But it is (relatively) light, weighing 183kg less than the V12 DB11. This, the power hike and shorter gearing all help towards the DBS's 0-62mph time of 3.4 seconds. The claimed top speed is 211mph, at which 180kg of downforce is generated, while the availability of 664lb ft of torque all the way from 2800 to 5000rpm should make the pace of Aston's fastest-ever production car effortlessly easy to exploit.

All of this sounds like a car which we might have expected to be called Vanquish, but that name is now likely to appear on a future mid-engined Aston Martin.

Pricing for the new DBS, described by CEO Andy Palmer as signalling 'our return to the very pinnacle of the Super GT sector', starts at £225,000.



Range extender

McLaren 600LT is longer, quicker and lighter

McLaren's ability to tease out new variations of the same architecture notches up another success with the new 600LT. It's a more powerful, slightly-aft extended and trackday-focused development of everyone's favourite real-world McLaren, the 570S. The new car is the fourth McLaren with an elongated rump, in this case a 74mm extension (less than 3in); it follows closed and open versions of the 675LT and the racing GTR version of the McLaren F1 – whose tail was properly long.

Compared with the 570S the 600LT has lost 96kg, thanks to carbonfibre construction for the rear wing and some lower body panels, plus lightweight interior fittings including carbonfibre race seats. Power rises too, as the name suggests, while 'top-exit' tail pipes make occupants more aware of their aural outpourings.

Extra downforce, firmer engine mounts and quicker responses from throttle, brakes and steering all sharpen the drive, while the brakes and the forged aluminium wishbones are from the 720S. The £185,000 price includes a track day with tuition.

A Spider version will surely follow.

Nissan unwraps a 50th birthday present

'GT-R50 by Italdesign' concept celebrates two significant automobile half-centuries



'This,' says Alfonso Albaisa, Nissan's design vice-president, 'is not the new GT-R.' Its purpose is to mark two 50th anniversaries: the launch of the first Nissan with a GT-R badge and performance to suit, and half a century of Giorgetto Giugiaro's Ital Design company.

It's an unexpected collaboration, given that nowadays Italdesign belongs to the VW group, and equally unexpected is that the design house didn't actually design the GT-R50. Instead it has built a design conceived by Nissan's US and London studios.

The GT-R50 is based on a current GT-R Nismo, from which the design theme is clearly

derived. The roof is lower, the arches are more muscular, the shoulder line tapers around the base of the rear window with each side meeting on the bootlid. Familiar elements are exaggerated with gold detailing, apart from the four round rear lights which are rendered as rings floating out of a tail recessed between the rear wings.

It's a fully-functional prototype, whose 3.8-litre, twin-turbo V6 has been uprated to an estimated 710bhp. With current GT-R production due to end soon, it will be interesting to see how close a new one – if it happens – is to this one-off GT-R50.



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Jeep and no longer nasty

The latest visual descendant of the wartime original proves to be surprisingly civilised

Words James Batchelor

WHILE JOURNALISTS scurried under the awning to escape torrential rain, Jeff Hines walked onto the soaking stage with confidence. You could even call it a swagger. Jeep's new European boss was here to launch the latest Wrangler, and wasn't about to be stopped by Austrian mountain mizzle.

The Wrangler leads Jeep's revival, along with a new Compass mid-sized SUV, revised Renegade and Grand Cherokee. With a signed cheque from outgoing Fiat Chrysler Automobiles CEO Sergio Marchionne to improve sales, its entire range is being renewed. By 2022 there will be a new baby Jeep below a second-gen Renegade, a refreshed Compass, new Cherokee and Grand Cherokee, a pick-up, and a new Range Rover rival that revives the Grand Wagoneer epithet. All diesels will be replaced by plug-in hybrids, and a range of electric cars will sweep in. No wonder Hines was swaggering.

Out with the old, then. Yet the new JL Wrangler's body looks uncannily similar to the outgoing one, though it's longer and

wider – rather like the new Mercedes-Benz G-class. A ladder-frame chassis and live axles remain, yet it's 90kg lighter than of old. Circular headlights and a seven-slot grille mean the new car still draws inspiration from the '45 CJ, the windscreen can be folded flat, the doors are easily removed and there are three types of roof available – an electric fabric roll-back, a soft zipperless option, and 'Freedom' panels that unclip and put you straight into California surf mode.

The dashboard mimics the 1986 Wrangler YJ's in design but not in quality, because the new JL is easily the best-built Wrangler

yet. There are soft-touch plastics, which seem well screwed together, and a large touchscreen infotainment system. The range starts with a Sport and peaks, via a posh Sahara, with a ridiculously rugged (if slightly camp) Rubicon model.

The Yanks get the JL with a throaty 3.6-litre Pentastar V6. Over here we get either a 268bhp, 2.0-litre petrol turbo with four cylinders or one of FCA's ubiquitous 197bhp 2.2-litre diesels (a PHEV is coming); an eight-speed auto is the only gearbox choice. Fire up the diesel, ease the lever into 'D' and the biggest improvement is how civilised it feels. Yes, the steering is still slow and vague and the bluff shape means it's pretty rowdy, but the ride is a lot more supple than before. Indeed the whole car is far more comfortable, and it's easier to drive, too.

The Rubicon undoes a lot of the new Wrangler's on-road improvements. Its off-road tyres and paraphernalia (a 4.0:1 low-range gear ratio, heavy-duty axles, front and rear differential locks and the ability to disconnect the front anti-roll bar) introduce a pattery ride, yet more road noise and vaguer steering – but it redeems itself in the rough stuff. For now, at least, the Wrangler Rubicon is the king of climbing.

Despite its easier-to-live-with character, the hardcore, old-fashioned Wrangler will confuse SUV buyers and delight Jeepsters in equal measure. Prices, yet to be confirmed, are expected to kick off at £44,000 and rise past £55,000. Hardcore is costly.



Clockwise from top

Rubicon model monsters mountains; dashboard's retro look matches exterior; DIY low range and diff locks; Freedom panels unclip for open-air exploring.

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JAY LENO

The Collector

It's hard for me to believe I've owned my McLaren F1 for over 20 years. What's even harder to believe is that I almost didn't buy it.

There had been a number of other supercars on the market that turned out to be disappointing. There was the Jaguar XJ220, meant to have a V12 engine but later changed to a twin-turbo V6. There was also the Vector, an American supercar using a large twin-turbo V8 and also not quite what was promised.

So when the F1 finally came out, with the price tag more than double that of some other supercars, a lot of people thought, well, how good could it be? I was one of those sceptical people. Back in 1992, \$810,000 for a car seemed crazy.

You could get a Rolls-Royce, a Ferrari and a Lamborghini for that much money. McLaren hoped to sell 300 cars but that scepticism, plus a worldwide recession, forced them to shut down after just 64 road cars, 28 race cars and a handful of prototypes. Just 106 cars in total.

Another reason I didn't pursue the F1 was because, at the time, it couldn't be sold in America. The driving position was not legal, it hadn't been Federalised and it didn't pass California smog tests.

In a classic case of not knowing what you've got till it's gone, stories started appearing about the greatest car that nobody bought. Then a white knight appeared in the form of billionaire Bill Gates. After having trouble registering his Porsche 959, he helped introduce a law called Show And Display. What this law said was, any vehicle no longer in production, and considered to be of historical or technical interest, could be privately imported and driven in America no more than 2500 miles a year.

That's when I started looking. I called McLaren and spoke to a gentleman called Harold Dermott.

'Any F1s for sale?' I asked.

He said: 'Yes, we have a very nice one here; black with black interior, and it's \$800,000.'

'But that's what it is new! It's a second-hand car!'

'Well, there aren't any new ones,' Harold said. 'And we think they'll hold their value.'

I knew the car had been at McLaren about a month, with no takers. So I said to Harold, 'Look, I'll call you back in two weeks,' secretly hoping the car would be

sold by then and I would be stopped from making the biggest financial mistake of my life. Which was buying a car I'd never seen, let alone driven, in a foreign country with no guarantee I could bring it into the US.

After two weeks I called Harold back. He said they still had it, although they'd had an enquiry that day. Sensing that this was the oldest car-salesman trick in the book, I quickly fell for it. 'I'll take it,' I said. I then naively asked Harold if the car had air-conditioning. 'It does', Harold replied, before adding in that classic understated English way, 'but if you want the good air-conditioning, it's \$25,000 extra.'

I don't need to tell you that it was the most brilliant financial decision I ever made. When I purchased the F1 it seemed like the most complicated thing in the world. Imagine a car you hooked up to a computer, and a guy in England could look at a screen and tell you what's wrong! Now, compared with modern supercars it seems almost simple, and in some ways it is. It even has a tool kit.

On my website, Jay Leno's Garage, you might have seen us removing the engine from the F1 to replace the fuel cell. We did it in 2013 and we did it again a week ago. It made me fall in love with the car all over again.

Fixing even the simplest things on the F1, like replacing the battery, makes you feel like the mouse who took the thorn out of the lion's paw. Is working on an F1 intimidating? Of course it is. But when you see it laid out on the garage floor, you realise it's still a car and should be used as such.

There may be modern supercars that are faster, but none is more seductive and intoxicating. The induction noise, the manual gearbox, the lack of driver aids such as ABS and stability control, really make it the ultimate driving experience. I'm proud of the 12,000 miles I've put on my F1, and I like to think I'll put a lot more than that on it in the next 20 years. Investment be damned!

The downside is they've become incredibly valuable and a lot of people are afraid to drive them. The upside is they're so valuable they can almost never be totalled. If the only piece you have left after a horrible accident is the chassis plate, just take it to Woking and they'll repair it. And, just like your Mustang or your MG, it even seems to run better right after you wash it.



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).

**'I ASKED IF THE
F1 HAD AIR-CON.
"IT DOES," HAROLD
REPLIED, "BUT THE
GOOD AIR-CON IS
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DEREK BELL

The Legend

This column is being lovingly crafted en route to the Le Mans Classic. It seems as though only two minutes has passed since I was hotfooting it over for the 24 Hour race, this year's running having been a Toyota benefit as it entered the only hybrid LMP1 cars in the field. Nevertheless, I was delighted that it won, having come tantalisingly close over the years.

I was also particularly pleased that Fernando Alonso scored on his debut in endurance racing alongside F1 refugees Kazuki Nakajima and Sébastien Buemi. I don't mind admitting that I am an Alonso fan, not least because he and Kimi Räikkönen are perhaps the only current Grand Prix stars who are aware that there are other categories of motor sport. I hope that Fernando realises his ambition of also bagging the Indy 500, having led during his maiden outing at The Brickyard last year. If he does, he will become the only man other than Graham Hill to have won the oval classic, Le Mans and the Formula 1 World Championship.

Rumour has it that Alonso will switch to IndyCar full-time in 2019. I can't say I blame him. He has many more years left in him as a driver, so why waste another F1 season in an uncompetitive car when he could win elsewhere?

Between visits to France, I participated in the Flywheel Festival at Bicester Heritage. What a wonderful event! I didn't really know what to expect, but I loved the laid-back atmosphere. I enjoyed seeing the eclectic mix of cars and aircraft, and even managed a brief run of the airfield circuit in James Turner's 1965 Porsche 911 race car. It was also a pleasure to have time to interact with festival-goers, rather than hearing my name blasted over the Tannoy every two minutes. Seriously, the words 'Will Mr Derek Bell please make his way to the...' haunt my dreams.

Speaking of Porsches on track, I have been asked more than once what I think about the marque's recent record-shattering run at the Nürburgring with the mighty 919 Hybrid, or rather a de-restricted evolutionary version packing 1160bhp. I have great respect for Timo Bernhard who drove the car to beat Stefan Bellof's record from May 1983, not least because his time of 5m 19sec was otherworldly. Timo is a five-

time winner of the Nürburgring 24 Hours, so he knows his way around the Nordschleife, but it was one hell of a lap. It looked like the footage had been speeded up, but no. It really was insanely fast.

While it may have been a publicity stunt, I salute Porsche for putting so much effort into breaking its own record. It didn't have to, and the car could easily have been rolled into a ball as there's little room for error at 'The Green Hell', as Sir Jackie Stewart famously called it. I do have a couple of reservations, though.

For starters, Stefan claimed his record in a Porsche 956, the car we shared in that year's World Sportscar Championship. It was packing maybe 630bhp on a circuit that back then was seriously bumpy in places. His time of 6min 11sec was set in qualifying for the 1000km race, so it wasn't a case of preparing for days and waiting for conditions to be just right. He had traffic to contend with.

It was also the first-ever 200km/h lap, let's not forget, and a remarkable achievement for a kid who just wanted to drive balls to the wall each time, every time. What never gets mentioned, however, is that building work on the new 'Nürburgring-lite' track nearby meant the old pit straight and return road at the South and North Turns had to be skirted, making for a shorter lap. That isn't a loaded comment; I merely point

it out for the sake of historic accuracy.

The fact that Stefan's record stood for 35 years says it all, even if he demolished the car in the race and cost me my first world title! Stefan never could hold anything back. Was his record lap more impressive than Timo's? I will sit on the fence on that one.

Back in 1971, in my first season of sports-car racing, I drove the old nine-mile Spa road circuit in a Gulf Porsche 917K. There were trees, houses and heaven knows what else lining the track. If you went off at speed, chances are you would end up in hospital, or worse. I put it on pole for the 1000km race with a time of 3m 16sec. Even now, the hairs on the back of my neck stand up just thinking about it.

The point is, I know what it's like to drive on the ragged edge. It's a rush like no other. I'm just glad that in this day and age, guys like Timo are still willing to push the envelope. He has balls of steel, that's for sure.



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).

**'IT LOOKED LIKE
THE 'RING RECORD
FOOTAGE HAD BEEN
SPEEDED UP, BUT NO.
IT REALLY WAS
INSANELY FAST'**

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STEPHEN BAYLEY

The Aesthete

Much like department stores, car showrooms will soon be things of the past. In 2018 the bricks 'n' mortar version of retail looks as quaint as a pony-and-trap did when they discovered oil in Humboldt County. A Tesla, for example, can only be ordered on-line.

And long ago, some Japanese manufacturers had the salesmen make home visits, obviating the expense of occupying expensive, empty premises and toying with their honourable bento boxes while waiting solemnly for a Corolla customer to amble in.

Some of my own finest moments came in car showrooms. The bookends were these. First, I was very small in 1959 when my father took me to see the original Mini. It was in a part of Liverpool known as The Rocket, after Stephenson's steam engine that won the 1829 trials held at nearby Rainhill. Even a toddler could see that, like the puffing and hissing *Rocket*, the Mini was a marvel.

Fifty years later I was at a Tokyo party in an impossibly lush Lexus showroom (probably by then a 'brand awareness centre') when I assumed my slight trembling and blurred vision could be explained by the very many bamboo leaf martinis I had drunk, only to be told there was a *jishin* of about three on the Richter scale going on.

Somewhere in between I learnt that, in the 1960s, Bernie Ecclestone operated a showroom in Bexleyheath where he sold MGBs to Lulu and Cilla Black. It used modernist glazing, white tiles and dazzling spotlights. One has thought many things of Bernie Ecclestone, but rarely has he been appreciated as a pioneer of feminist consumerism and minimalist architecture.

That image always makes me think how very little attention is given to how cars are accommodated when they are not moving. Given that the car is the most designed object we consume, it is remarkable how impoverished is the history of car-related architecture.

Of course, there are notable exceptions. The *locus classicus* of the showroom will forever be the Park Avenue and 56th Street premises that Frank Lloyd Wright designed in 1954 for Max Hoffman, the entrepreneur who introduced Jaguar and Porsche to the US. Here, Wright essayed the astonishing helical

ramp design that later formed the basis of his Guggenheim Museum. It was an inspired resolution of the conflicting demands of Dan Dare and the Bauhaus.

And then there are parking garages, celebrated to great effect in Simon Henley's *The Architecture of Parking* (2007). In 1994, the Winterthur architect Peter Kunz began work on his *Ateliergaragen* in Herdern, Switzerland: five concrete cubes whose front elevation is all glass are set into a gentle, grassy hillside. For a client who wanted to show off his collection, Kunz built something that beautifully equivocates between garage and site-specific installation.

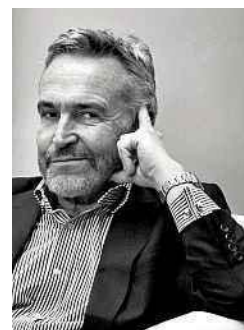
The larger issue here is that, as cars become ever more difficult to enjoy on public roads, people will enjoy them more for their aesthetic content than their dynamic potential. Thus, 'sky garages' are becoming quite the thing where HNWI's cluster at altitude. At the Hamilton Scotts condominium in Singapore, residents are offered an 'ensuite sky garage' as they once might have been offered a second loo or a fitted kitchen.

A helpful video from the developer explains the concept. You arrive at ground-floor level in a Ferrari or a Lamborghini. A glass-walled lift takes your car up to your 40th-floor apartment and, when it comes to rest, you contemplate your 599 against a hazy backdrop of the Singapore Straits. You shout 'Honey, I'm home,' and the two of you share a quad decaff espresso hot chai with micro-foamed almond milk while admiring late Pininfarina.

Driving a car is one of the last meaningful analogue experiences available to individuals: proceeding down the road by means of a more-or-less controlled sequence of explosions within a heavy metal object. Everything else is being sucked down electronic tubes, digitalised, made virtual and fed in big, ugly data-sets to the horrible and voracious social media oligarchs.

When driving is itself outlawed, or becomes as redundant as a pony and trap or a department store, the last analogue experience will be to admire the aesthetics of an interesting car that is stationary: the evocative stance, fine details, sensuous radii, beautiful proportions, admirable finish. And you may dream elegiac dreams of escape as its designer once did.

But you will need a showroom of your own to do so.



STEPHEN BAYLEY

SB is the individual for whom the term 'design guru' could have been coined. He was the founding director of London's Design Museum and his best-selling books include *Sex, Drink and Fast Cars* and *Taste: the Secret Meaning of Things*.

'SKY GARAGES ARE BECOMING QUITE THE THING IN PLACES WHERE HIGH-NET-WORTH INDIVIDUALS CLUSTER AT ALTITUDE'

ROBERT COUCHER

The Driver

The Best Sedan in the World. That's how *Road & Track* magazine rated the XJ6 after its launch in 1968. 'The finest Jaguar ever,' said boss Sir William Lyons. He would say that, of course, but it turns out he was right. The XJ6 was the best and most successful Jaguar of the lot.

Jaguar has had a long history of revealing stunning-looking cars since its inception in 1922 as the Swallow Sidecar Company. William Lyons had a real eye for styling and the first Jaguar, the SS 2½-litre, looked like a svelte Bentley but cost one-third as much. This was followed by the curvaceous SS100 sports car, then the XK120 and E-type, all of them incredibly beautiful and attention-grabbing machines at affordable prices.

A four-door saloon was never going to be as overtly stylish as the self-indulgent sporting Jaguars, but the XJ6 was a masterpiece of understatement. It continued Jaguar's feline look by being low, curvy and smooth when most saloons of the time were boring, stodgy boxes. Jaguar had invented the sporting saloon with its Mk1 and Mk2 models, but the XJ6 made them look prehistoric.

'Grace, space and pace' was Jaguar's slogan at the time and the XJ6 lived up to it. Although it was less obviously sporting than its predecessors, the XJ6's level of engineering sophistication meant that even the quickest Mk2 would battle to keep up with the XJ on a challenging road. Styling aside, the XJ's real genius was its suspension, the rear being essentially that of an E-type. Here was an affordable luxury saloon that combined Rolls-Royce refinement with Jaguar pace. The venerable double-overhead-cam straight-six produced just enough grunt in 4.2-litre guise to keep things interesting, and the chassis ironed out any unforgiving tarmac.

The XJ6 I really want is an early Series 1 with a manual overdrive gearbox: steel wheels and hubcaps, deep grille, slimline bumpers and that attractively simple interior. The rear legroom is compromised, rectified with the Series 2 in 1973, but who can resist the short-wheelbase look? I missed an immaculate example some years ago, in dove grey with red interior and MOD. The XJ engine never mustered much more than 160 real bhp but these days specialist engine builders can extract a reliable 220bhp from a road-

friendly engine. Mated to a manual gearbox, that would make a fine Q-car.

As with the previous Mk 2 3.8, Jaguar could not resist hot-rodding the XJ6. So in 1972 it shoehorned in the 250bhp V12 engine and created the XJ12. That said, 'hot rod' is a misnomer because the mighty 5.3-litre motor is as smooth and refined as you can get. *Octane* once tested an XJ12 against a Mercedes-Benz 300SEL 6.3; the Jaguar felt every bit as accelerative, but proved more hushed and relaxed while getting on with it. For 1976, though, Ralph Broad produced a proper hot rod, the 550bhp Broadspeed XJ12C coupé for our own Derek Bell and co-driver David Hobbs to race in the European Touring Car Championship. Derek enjoyed the car's balance and handling, but it was just too heavy and kept breaking things.

I never really liked the XJ coupé because the car was better as a practical four-door. If you wanted a sporting Jaguar, there were the E-type Series 3 and, later, the XJ-S, which were proper two-door designs. The XJC suffered from wind noise, and was so cobbled-together that the roof had to be covered in vinyl because the pillarless body would flex enough to crack the paint.

We had an XJ6 Series 2 in the family and my father ran it for years in Cape Town. It was a CKD (Completely Knocked Down) kit assembled by Leyland South Africa. It looked elegant in light metallic blue, especially as father fitted the later pepper-pot alloys from the Series 3. The Series 2 had a bad reputation for build quality and reliability, as with all BL products of the time, but our car was pretty reliable and the body lasted well, even if the interior was embarrassingly cheap and shoddy. Maybe the manufacturing process in SA was slightly better than in the UK. I can't imagine it being any worse.

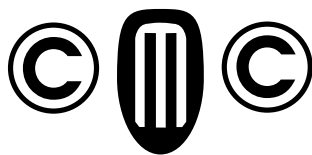
Our car's standard 4.2-litre engine always felt asthmatic. Tuning it beyond 200bhp would have been expensive, but there was a solution in South Africa also popular in the US: squeeze a small-block Chevy under the bonnet and enjoy 280bhp all day long. That's much what Jaguar itself did in 1997 a few XJ generations later, inserting a 4.0-litre V8 and even offering a supercharged XJR model pounding out a decent 370bhp. The Jaguar XJ hot rod had finally arrived.



ROBERT COUCHER

Robert grew up with classic cars, and has owned a Lancia Aurelia B20 GT, 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*.

**'THE XJ COUPÉ'S
ROOF HAD TO BE
COVERED IN VINYL,
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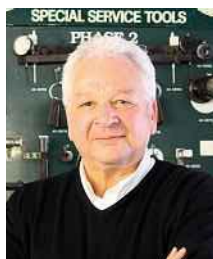
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DESMOND J SMAIL

The celebrated Aston Martin specialist still operates from the workshop behind his house where he started his business in 1984

Interview and photography James Elliott



1. I've done so many rallies, two Montes in DB6s (one we prepped from scratch in a week) and all sorts of others, that recalibrating Haldas just became a huge pain, so I got a box of gears and for ages I took them everywhere with me. The best rally car we built was a DB5 for the Peking to Paris in 1997 – it came 11th and the owner gave me a silver model of the car.

2. My favourite race in the world is the St Mary's Trophy at the Goodwood Revival and I have taken part eight or nine times. There was a terrible BMW 700 and I shared a DKW with Johnny Herbert, but when Rob Huff and I drove the Austin A40 it was totally on song and we were leading until the last lap, when another A40 took a lunge on me going into the Chicane, burst a tyre and I had to do the last lap on three tyres. We still came second on aggregate.

3. A mobile phone is the most important tool I have and this is the best of them. I've had it 10-12 years and started using it again three years ago. I was in the States and my smartphone broke. I just put the sim card into the Nokia and off it went again. I've never put it down since.

4. My favourite model is of Concorde, a truly wonderful piece of engineering. When I was a cub scout we went down to Bristol in the late 1960s and we used to see it early every morning test-flying. It was like a spaceship; a bunch of eight- and nine-year-old boys were amazed by it.

5. I'm not a watch collector, but I do like them. I have five or six Heuers from the 1960s and my everyday watch is a Patek Philippe because I consider that to be the Aston Martin of watches.

6. I've been using Moleskine notebooks for 20 years and before that it was a Filofax. It has to be Moleskine: it's got a bit of class, it's waterproof, it's leather, and it's got an envelope in the back that I can keep all sorts of junk in. A nice pen is also essential. Montblanc made this one for me and personalised it with my signature.

7. I have the spinners that were on the Bond DB5 in *Goldfinger*, the ones that came out and sliced down the side of the Mustang. They came from Aston Martin's parts man who got them when the factory went bust in the 1970s. He was a girlfriend's uncle and later came to work for me and gave them to me as a present.

8. I've loved game shooting since I was a kid, so a bespoke guncase is a necessity as well as an indulgence. I shoot with 20-bore Beretta shotguns and our model-maker and silversmith recently made me bespoke cases for them. I take them everywhere with me when I have a gun.



THE ENGINE SPECIALISTS

GTO Engineering are renowned devotees to Colombo and Lampredi engines as well as Ferrari Dino V6 and V8 units. These, along with examples from Maserati (A6GCS and 250F), Aston Martin (DB2 to DB5) and Alfa Romeo (158/159, 8C and 12C) give us a breadth of experience in period engine-building.

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Letter
of the
month

JUSTIN LEIGHTON



ALEX TAPLEY



ALVARO ANDRES PINZON, ANDRESPINZON.COM

Mad dogs and Englishmen – and Africans

I'VE NEVER WRITTEN to a magazine before, but 'Never say *Aikona*', as they say in Mashonaland East.

Reading Robert Coucher's guest editorial and his column in *Octane* 181 reminded me of a couple of things, so forgive me for the rambling but I hope it might strike a chord with a fellow Southern African.

First, congratulations – to create something like *Octane* that never existed before and have it still alive 15 years later is no mean feat. Everybody talks a good book about what they might do, but few go on to actually do something about it.

Magazines carry no end of articles about trillion-dollar shiny machines that, however glamorous, are way beyond the grasp of the everyday man. So your recent features on a £4k Roller driving to the Northern Lights, the loon who restored a basketcase 1930s BSA with hessian sacks, and the bloke who circled the globe in a TVR [all pictured above], bring these fabulous human stories to life.

I am biased, of course, for keeping any car alive north

of the Limpopo, back in the day, required huge ingenuity, bloody-mindedness and sheer blind faith – plus coathangers, sticky tape, chickenwire and your girlfriend's tights.

But Coucher's column about the Renault 4 he owned in Africa ... *jislaaik*, he catalysed some memories. My first prang aged 13 was in an R4 'borrowed' from an unknowing mother, which I ploughed into the back of a truck outside Meikles Hotel. Imagine my embarrassment as they all came away from their teas on the verandah to offer assistance.

I rolled a Peugeot 404 outside Marandellas a little later and it all went downhill after that. The next R4 met its demise in Chiswick but a few years on, after much lager and currywurst in the car park at Essen, I bought an incredibly delightful one-owner 4TL with 25,000 clicks on the clock. They may be basic but they never fail to put a smile on your face, and the only taxis in Salisbury in the 1970s were Rixi Taxis' R4s.

The R5 was a rite of passage for any young man. On one trip

back to Harare the accelerator cable snapped; two attached coathangers, one end baupered to the carb, the other end punched through a hole in the bulkhead and fashioned into a handle, and voilà ... a hand-throttle! Then there was the fun of learning to co-ordinate the timing of your left foot and your left hand, all the way to Harare.

As for the Renault 8 – my little brother is driving a pimped-up version at 3am, decides he's Jody Scheckter and tries to navigate the little bridge at Shalford on three wheels. He nearly makes it but not quite, instead clipping the

bridge and rolling the little Renault with a good degree of theatre, and his mate in the passenger seat (a guy called Rupert with a huge Afro – remember, it was the '70s) goes straight through the windscreen. Little brother, lying semi-conscious in the wreckage, assumes Rupert has had his chips, but no. Suddenly, in an ethereal scene, Rupert rises from the tarmac and he has a huge glistening halo – but as it turns out, he's standing under a streetlight and there are a million bits of glass from the windscreen stuck in his Afro. *Charlie Porter, Rome, Italy*

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 calf leather 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





Mustang silly?

Thank you to James Turnbull for identifying the 'mystery Jaguar' photographed by my father in 1950 [*Letters*, issue 181]. Now, does anyone know anything about the Ford Mustang apparently bodied by Zagato [above]?

Alexis Callier, Belgium

We emailed Alexis's picture to *Octane's* Italian correspondent, Massimo Delbò, who writes: 'Zagato bodied this Mustang for a private customer, and it still survives in excellent condition in Italy, where it has spent all its life. It is currently painted white, but will be resprayed in the correct dark green for 2019, in time for Zagato's 100th anniversary.'

Mark Dixon



Fair play to Derek

I totally agree with Derek Bell's decision not to race a Porsche 917 at the Le Mans Classic, as recounted in his column in *Octane* 180. When we get older, we are not as sharp as we used to be, and him not being comfortable in it is also a good reason not to race it.

I was at Silverstone when he raced a 917 in 1981, and the

picture [below left] shows him leaving the pits. If my memory serves me correctly, I heard him say before the race that he did not have first or second gear, and would be slow off the start. But I seem to remember he was in the lead by the second lap and he pulled away from the field with ease after that.

Gary Huggins, Cayman Islands

A belting question

My faith in your magazine's accuracy has been shaken by the John Simister report on driving the DB4 GT Zagato featured on the cover of *Octane* 181. He describes the cockpit and states that there are no seatbelts. However, the picture on page 78 clearly shows seatbelts. Did he really drive the car?

Malcolm Harrower, Northampton

Well, blow me down. Belts are indeed visible in the photograph, but I failed to find them when I tested it. I wonder if they might have been removed ahead of the Bonhams sale, on grounds of authenticity, as the belts visible in the studio photo have modern webbing. And of course I drove it, as the pictures on pages 71 and 72-73 clearly show. John Simister

Bye bye, Bluebird

Your news story concerning the discovery of the *Bluebird* drawings was most interesting, especially the nature of their attempted disposal. I live very near to where Sir Malcolm

Campbell lived in Surrey and have visited his house several times on village business. However, since good friends of ours left the property a number of years ago, I had not met the new occupiers until last year.

My grandfather, a naval architect, knew Sir Malcolm quite well and told me of an occasion when Sir Malcolm visited him at Povey Cross. They were in the garden and Sir Malcolm was surprised and angry that he had buried quite a number of gold sovereigns in the lawn and told the children they could keep each one they found, but they had been singularly unsuccessful.

When, last year, I told the owners of the property this story, and the fact that Sir Malcolm Campbell was a previous owner, they seemed little concerned. I believe the property has now been sold again. And it is extremely good news that someone recognised the value of the *Bluebird* documents.

Tony Brookes, Surrey



When a Tiger roared

I read with interest the article about 'Shelsley Specials' in *Octane* 181. I have been at Shelsley Walsh many times in the past, and seen the V-twin JAP-engined GN cars and many other Specials going up the hill.

The only time I've seen a Sunbeam GP or Record car on the hill was TA 'Bob' Roberts with his supercharged 4.0-litre V12 Sunbeam *Tiger* in 1987. My brother's son Paul took a number of photos of *Tiger* in the paddock at Shelsley [above], and the sound of the V12 at full power, reverberating through the trees and producing 350bhp, was simply glorious.

Peter Morrey, Aberdeenshire

Tough old Triumph

James Elliott's stories in *Octane Cars* about his Triumph 2000/2.5 amuse me, having myself owned 2000 and 2.5PI Mark 1s and a dozen Mark 2s.

The 2.5PI [below] was a revelation. I love driving long distances and I like my cars to be quiet, so applied two coats of sound deadener underneath and three layers of felt under the carpet. Fitting a narrow strip of rubber inside the door seals made the car quiet as a tomb at 100mph. I also had the rims widened an inch, which gave it a much better stance.

I once drove the PI from Brisbane to Melbourne (1200 miles solo) in 16.5 hours, and another time covered 180 miles in two hours. At one point I was doing two miles every 61sec: 119.5mph is not bad for a 1969 bread-and-butter sedan.

Later in the day, I had to brake very heavily to avoid a kangaroo, and didn't realise the engine had moved forward on its mountings and taken out the radiator core until there was a burning smell. I had the car towed to the next town, the radiator repaired and the oil and sparkplugs changed, and went on to own the car another four years with no problems.

Jeff Williams, Victoria, Australia



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THE BEST SALOON EVER?

*As the XJ6 reaches 50 years of age,
Glen Waddington celebrates a car that is
arguably not only the finest Jaguar but
also the best saloon ever made*

Photography Matthew Howell









Just a mile or so is all it takes for the driver to realise that the early XJ6 demonstrates all of Jaguar's finest marque-defining qualities. There's grace in the way it moves, slurring over imperfections in the road surface yet never leaving you feeling out of touch, and cornering keenly, with great balance, yet unafraid to lean on its supple, long-travel coil springs.

There's grace in the styling too – indeed, so much grace. Is it only me who aches while drinking in the XJ6's slender shape, dainty proportions and delicate detailing? It's an all-time great, yet maybe over-familiarity had dulled our responses to it. This was a full-size luxury saloon – if one of a different stripe, importantly, and we'll come back to that shortly – yet today it appears so compact, so lean and so low.

Even so, there is space aplenty. Not the bikes-on-roof, tents-in-boot, blended-family-inside kind of space that's such a *requirement* these days, but the more civilised type of parents-and-kids-plus-luggage arrangement that used to suit most.

And there's pace, of course. Forget the grindings of your typical late-1960s rep saloon as it struggles to attain the legal limit; here you've got seemingly endless soaring revs, with a redline set at 6000rpm, accompanied by the cultured snarling of Jaguar's pure-bred and race-proven XK twin-cam straight-six.

It's the kind of recipe that humbles such adversaries as... well, what? The Maserati Quattroporte? A touch rare-groove in comparison to this mass-produced masterpiece. Lagonda Rapide? Hardly. Rolls Shadow? Another great car, a rung or two up, certainly in price.

No, in 1968, you might have bought a Mercedes-Benz 280SE, though it would have been far, far pricier, in the UK at least. More in line with that Rolls. There was no BMW 7-series back then; the 'New Six' saloon arrived at a similar time to the XJ6 but didn't cause nearly so many ripples in the saloon-car pond, and was nothing like as refined. And Audi? Didn't they build funny two-stroke things? It took several generations of 'the teacher's Mercedes' before luxury-car buyers accepted the V8 and subsequent A8. The XJ6 didn't only define Jaguar. It invented a whole class of car: the sporting luxury saloon.

The car in our pictures is a 1970 XJ6 2.8. We might call it a 'short-wheelbase', only the slightly stretched version (4in let into the wheelbase to increase rear legroom to adult proportions) didn't arrive until 1972. With its manual-plus-overdrive transmission, this is an early XJ6 in almost its purest form.

Why almost? Well, being a 1970 model it differs from the 1968 launch version in detail changes, such as relocated tail-light reflectors and black instrument bezels, which replaced the original chrome ones that proved distracting in sunlight.



And it looks gorgeous. In a world replete with exotic names for paint colours, Jaguar was remarkably restrained in naming this one Pale Blue. It seems to glow from within and couldn't be more 'period'. The contrasting interior (with Dark Blue leather seats) feels intimate yet enormously stylish.

As we cast out along the North York Moors, it feels entirely at ease on these sinuous roads, as if we've wound back the clock to suit the car. The view from behind that veneered dash, with its generous array of instruments and bank of rocker switches, puts you in mind of a warplane, while the swages and curves in the bonnet give you a sightline via which to concentrate. Combine the aesthetic with the snarling backing track and the whole effect is enormously evocative. This car oozes the kind of charisma that generates an emotional response from driver and passengers alike.

We need a destination in mind, and our plan is a fairly circular route that takes in some of Britain's finest roads and scenery, via the North York Moors out to the coast that faces across the North Sea towards Europe, and back to base via the kind of dual-carriageway trunk roads that were the pre-eminent means of cross-

country travel in the XJ's early years. Quite a few miles to put on the odometer of this 2.8, and plenty of time (it's the end of June) before the sun goes down so that we can truly understand its measure.

I ease the lever – plastic-topped, with a sliding switch for overdrive on third and top – into first gear, grow the revs and let out the smooth if slightly stiff clutch. For town duties you might prefer the slushy Borg-Warner auto. Building speed up onto the moors, the sweet and revvy nature of the short-stroke straight-six strikes you: it feels more modern than the numberplate would suggest and is wholly different in character from the torquier, long-stroke 4.2 that was the alternative.

In fact, had Jaguar had its way, the XJ would have been launched with a choice of two less-closely related engines: this 2.8 (possibly uprated to a 3.0-litre) and the 5.3-litre V12. The latter would ultimately make the XJ a truly world-class car on its introduction in 1972, while the smaller straight-six was good for the tax breaks offered in Europe. In the end, just weeks before the XJ6's launch in 1968, Jaguar had to concede that the V12 wouldn't be ready. And so the car went on sale

'It feels entirely at ease on these sinuous roads, as



with the straight-six in two sizes, the larger being the 4.2 familiar from the E-type and the XJ's luxurious saloon car forebears, though not in triple-carb S-spec.

And what of those forebears? The XJ6 (actually developed under the XJ4 code name) was all about rationalisation. Jaguar founder Sir William Lyons was keenly aware of the market pressures building around him and, while cars such as the E-type had been a huge success, Jaguar was reliant on a diverse range that shared too few common parts.

The Mk2 saloon dated back to 1959 (and even, as the retrospectively named Mk1 from which it developed, to 1955). The Daimler 250 featured the Mk2 body with Daimler's compact V8, while the S-type and 420 were developed from the Mk2, with E-type-style independent rear suspension and revised styling. There was also the vast and luxurious Mk10, revised to become the 420G, yet these were all cars that had their origins in the decade before the Swinging Sixties. Sales were in freefall. Jaguar needed something modern, something more exportable, something cheaper to produce.

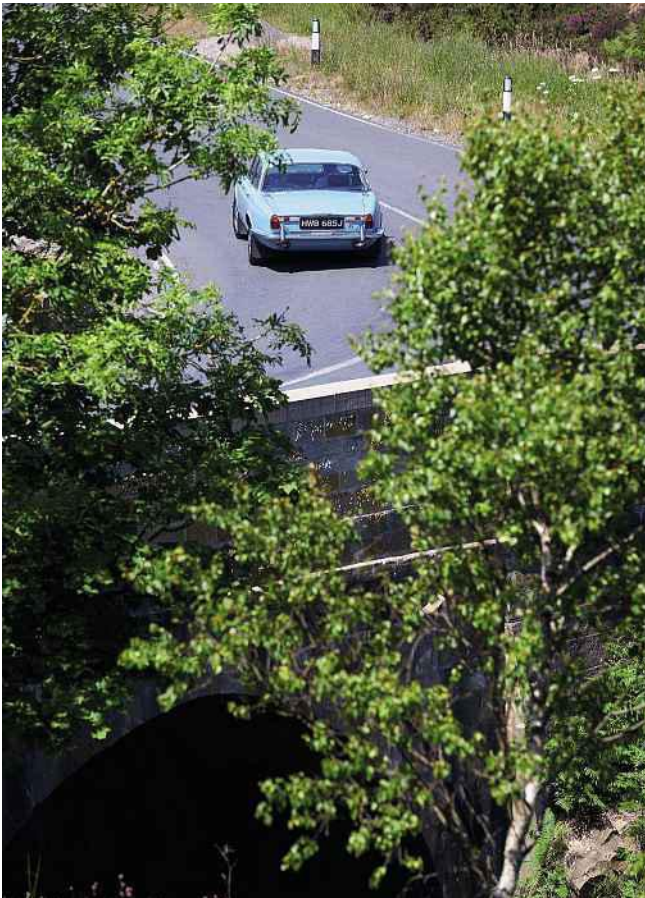
Below

For a large saloon, the XJ6 is remarkably agile – even after you've filled the twin tanks ahead of venturing onto the moors.

By 1968, even the E-type – Jaguar's newest car – was already seven years old, and enthusiasts of the marque were ready for something new, and possibly something radical. Radical? There's little about the XJ6 that hadn't been done before. But what was so astonishing was its combination of talents and the price that was charged for it. The XJ6 arrived with a tag from £1797 for the 2.8 to £2398 for the range-topping 4.2 automatic. Even the Rover P5B – launched only the year before – cost £2174, while German competitors weighed in at £3324 for the Mercedes-Benz 280SE and £3245 for the BMW 2800.

Sir William Lyons once said: 'If you really want to credit me with anything I'm proud of, it's that we've never fallen below a 50% export ratio.' He was a modest man: Jaguar is a legendary marque for lots of reasons, yet he had steered it through challenging times. And those times were changing. In 1966, Jaguar had merged with BMC and Pressed Steel, in a move that would guarantee production tooling and greater investment, and by May 1968 there was a further merger that resulted in British Leyland. →

if we've wound back the clock to suit the car'



Right

Interior is one rung down from a Rolls-Royce's and every bit the trad Jag. Today's rivals still emulate this look in many ways.

Those other saloons gradually dropped away, and Jaguar began to formulate an E-type replacement based on the new XJ. Range rationalisation, platform-sharing and merger: Lyons was certainly a prescient thinker.

And his latest product arrived to a rapturous reception, whether or not it had done so with the range-topping engine intended for it. As *Autocar* wrote: 'If Jaguar were to double the price of the XJ6 and bill it as the best car in the world, we would be right behind them. Dynamically, it has no equal regardless of price.' And LJK Setright, writing for *Car*, said: 'To my mind the Jaguar is not merely remarkable for what it is, but also because it makes redundant all cars that cost more.'

There was an instant 12-month waiting list and sales figures were back to where they had been at the beginning of the decade. If it hadn't been for the industrial action that blighted the British motor industry during the 1970s (ultimately hobbling it for good), the tale would have been rosy for all the years that followed.

Still, none of that can take away Jaguar's achievement with the XJ6. The best car in the world? In so many measurable and objective ways, yes. It rode with a comfort and silence that were alien to other cars of the day, save perhaps the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow, yet it also handled with the kind of balance that normally came only with a smaller, harsher sports car.

Jonathan Heynes, son of Jaguar's technical director Bill Heynes, was an apprentice development engineer on the XJ6 project. 'I worked MWK 28G up into a press car, and it was probably the best of them. In June or July 1968, just a few weeks before the XJ6 was launched, I drove the still-camouflaged 28G out to Le Mans to meet the journalist Michael Sedgwick, who was borrowing it for a magazine feature. A weld on the exhaust downpipe fractured and we had to get it brazed-up locally – it wasn't a big deal but typical of the problems we had to deal with on the hoof. We were such a small team, it's amazing how well the car worked out! It really didn't give a lot of trouble.'

So much effort had gone into getting the XJ6 right from the off. Yes, the independent suspension was, in concept, the same that had been in operation for years with the E-type, S-type and Mk10, and the XK twin-cams were well-proven since their introduction in 1948. Bob Knight, Jaguar's chief engineer, led a team that painstakingly worked through every aspect of the XJ6's running gear that could cause noise or permit vibration and eliminated every single possible source. Suspension mounts, engine mounts, the thickness of anti-roll bars, tyre size (on radials, rather than comfort-orientated crossplies), the route of the exhaust pipe, all came under scrutiny during a development programme →





'The best car in the world? In so many measurable and objective ways, yes'

that was granted grace of a year or two as production tooling couldn't be made available any sooner.

And boy, did it work. Those words written by road-testers in the late 1960s still hold true. The XJ6 is a breathtakingly refined car. It rides with an uncommon suppleness, not merely softness, as every movement of wheels and body is kept in deft control by exquisitely judged damping. The steering, often criticised for being over-light, is also quick, accurate and perhaps less unusual in its weighting in today's world of dead-feeling electric systems. And the engine, capable of a claimed 180bhp, feels so zingy and surprisingly potent in such a large car. Its 0-60mph time of 11 seconds and 117mph potential don't tell the whole tale: no hot rod but I'm sure Rolls-Royce would describe its performance as 'adequate'.

These days, it's quite a clever choice. The 4.2 was far more numerous (only 22,555 of the 98,227 Series 1s of all types made were 2.8s; there were just 4113 XJ12s) yet many of the better survivors seem to be of the 2.8, possibly because they've been overlooked in the past by people who sought greater performance and gradually wore out the supply of original 4.2s.

Values have certainly risen, too. This 2.8 is for sale at a smidge below £20,000, which is towards the top end of straight-six Series 1 values. You might pay, say, £5000 more for an XJ12, and there's happy hunting for less among the subsequent (1973-79) Series 2, or the final-flurry (1979-92) Series 3. It was a remarkable career that survived even the replacement XJ40 in 1986, as it hadn't been engineered for the V12 so there was still a trickle of XJ12s and Daimler Double Sixes leaving Browns Lane.

Mind you, there were problems with early 2.8s. 'I was in Bob Knight's experimental department and we started hearing about problems with 2.8 pistons on the Continent,' says Jonathan Heynes. 'I was sent to the Jaguar dealer in Lisbon in July 1969 with a set of new pistons in my luggage, and I brought a failed set back to [XK engine designer] Walter Hassan. From memory, we had not had piston failure on the experimental test cars nor on the press cars, which were driven hard.'

The investigation took priority, as development engineer Frank Philpott recalls. 'The 1969 2.8 cylinder heads had a locating dowel deleted in error during assembly, which resulted in slight misalignment with the bores. This resulted in piston tolerances closing and

some piston noise. Production pistons were modified by reducing the top wedge angle. This slight modification, which was not bench-tested, in turn compounded a very high exhaust valve temperature, which deposited a fine-grain magnetic chrome ferritic particle on the piston surface. During combustion, this could cause pre-ignition and excessive localised heat spots, which would melt the ferritic deposits and could blow a hole in the piston. We did not have this problem on the larger engines as the extra swept area allowed increased piston cooling.'

The problem took time to replicate and control. Says Heynes: 'We were a small team but we were the people who'd developed the car, so who better to fix it!'

You can leave those thoughts behind, these days, however. We roll down the coast road, with enough power in command to overtake the buses that would impede our progress as they struggle on the uphill stretches. An extension of the right foot and a quick flick out of overdrive is all it takes. The road surface passes unnoticed beneath and wind noise is well-controlled, the XJ slipping along without the fussiness you'd expect of a 1960s saloon – German opposition always seemed so much less refined by comparison. If Jaguar has definitive brand values, they were all exhibited to perfection here: strong performance, quietness, sporting handling and a comfortable ride.

It's not an easy combination to manage, and it has taken rivals such as Mercedes-Benz, Audi and BMW most of the intervening time to get right. It could be argued that they have always traded more heavily on build quality, and it's fair to say that much went wrong here for Jaguar in the 1970s. Yet there seem no such issues with this early car. It feels solidly hewn, suffers no rattles or vibrations, pulls up straight, and all the switchgear works as intended.

It has ambience on its side too, though it's little more than a veneer. Leather faces the seats but what looks like hide elsewhere is artificial. There are slim wooden cappings along the doors, and what *looks* like a slab of wood across the fascia (at least it isn't plastic). What was important was that you felt as though you were just one rung below a Rolls-Royce when, on price, you were merely a step-up from a top-end Ford. And it still gives you a warm feeling. Clever, that Lyons chap.

We glimpse the sea and head back to base via a last odyssey over the moors. The light is changing as the →

Clockwise from bottom left XJ6 feels equally at home in urban chic or on open moors; 2.8-litre XK engine is good for 180bhp and revs freely.





1970 Jaguar XJ6 2.8

Engine 2792cc straight-six, DOHC, twin SU carburettors **Power** 180bhp @ 6000rpm **Torque** 182lb ft @ 3750rpm

Transmission Four-speed manual plus overdrive, rear-wheel drive **Suspension** Front: double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar. Rear: fixed-length driveshafts, lower links, radius arms, paired coil springs and telescopic dampers **Brakes** Discs **Weight** 1537kg **Top speed** 117mph **0-60mph** 11sec

day fades, yet the Jag's spirit remains as strong as when we'd set off. And it has instilled confidence. Well over 100 miles have passed beneath its wheels and it has never been less than comfortable or brisk. Even tight parking manoeuvres are a doddle, thanks to that power steering. Only my clutch foot feels like it's had a workout, though that's mainly due to the stop/start nature of carrying out a photo shoot.

One final blast into the sunset, and it's here the 2.8 makes most sense. It might be the baby of the XJ6 range but it's also the most sporting. Not because it's the fastest but because it engages you in a particular way. It isn't heavy by today's standards and, possibly because of that, it reminds me of the Mk2, a car you could grab by the neck and thrash along the right road.

You can really wind out that junior twin-cam, the sizzle of its combustion and the burble of its exhaust overcoming any mechanical thresh, and in doing so you'll enjoy the way it hauls against the gears: power peaks on the redline at 6000rpm; torque reaches its

Above

The success of the E-type did much to influence the character of the XJ6, even in its long, low styling.

crescendo at a high-ish 3750rpm, both of which are rather modern characteristics. If you thought XJ6s were all about wafting along, try one of these. It really suits its manual transmission.

It feels neat and compact through tight corners too, where you can exploit its slender dimensions and enjoy the balance of its chassis. Suspension that works hard to shield you from road shock does an equally splendid job of keeping everything neat. Many a time Colin Chapman has been lauded for his genius when it comes to designing suspension. Similar praise is earned here.

A car that entertains like a Mk2? Must be a sports saloon. Yet it soothes in a way only the absolute best limos manage. That really is unusual. But it's all in a day's work for the best car Jaguar ever made. Possibly the best car Britain ever made. And it's certainly a contender for best car in the world. Always was. **End**

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THREE WISE MEN

*Designer, engineer and specialist
tell us why the XJ6 – in every
generation – is so important*



THE DESIGNER IAN CALLUM

The Jaguar design director has spent years trying to recapture what made the XJ6 great

Words James Elliott Photography Paul Harmer

THANKS TO HIS lifelong obsession with Jaguar, Ian Callum has strong views on the importance of the XJ and its design. What it is and what it should be. Plus there's more than one reason why Jaguar's design director remembers the launch of the XJ6 in 1968. It came shortly after a young lad from Dumfries decided on the career path he wanted to follow and took steps to make it happen.

He explains: 'When I was 13 I wrote to Bill Heynes, sent him some drawings and said, "How do I get to be a car designer?" Because in those days nobody had a clue how to become a car designer. He wrote back, which was something in itself, and he said I needed to come and be an apprentice and study engineering. I said I didn't really want to do that, I wanted to actually style a car's shape. But people didn't do that, it was Sir William Lyons' job. He wrote back on 1 March 1968.'

The first-series XJ6 was launched following a welter of anticipation, and the youthful Callum was all over it. He wasn't disappointed. 'I was smitten. Even in those days I could see that the proportions of the car were extremely exciting. Lyons was trying to build a car that reached across both the sports-car and saloon markets.

'Although the Mk10 was already quite a low car, it was a very big car, but the XJ6 was a wonderful rationalisation of sportiness and luxury and it became the epitome of what Jaguar stood for. Compare it with a contemporary Mercedes and you'll see how radical it was – it's a completely new type of shape with that low bonnet. The fact that they managed to get a V12 under a bonnet this low is just incredible. It's really an evolution of the Mk10, but the proportions are just spectacular and completely different.'

Callum is one of those who credit the XJ with creating a new market sector. 'It sold very well, especially in the US and especially to women in the US. Other luxury cars were getting bigger, but this was a nice size to drive. The fact that it was genuinely sporting and luxurious, but not huge, appealed to a lot of people. The driveability of this car was

among the best in the world, and, when they put the V12 in, it was *the* best in the world.'

So many details enthral Callum, the grille set into the body rather than in the traditional (MkVII excepted) picture frame, the big and small headlamps, the large 'church window' rear lights, the 'perfect fuselage', the 'lithe roof' overlapping the door's shutline to create a light C-pillar and increase glass area, the Coke-bottle sweeping haunches at the rear. But what inspires him most is the delicacy of the bodywork over what were, in those days, huge wheels 'like no-one had seen before'. As in other Lyons cars, the seats were not permitted to rise above the waistline and impede the view through the glasshouse.

On the S2 that purity of sightline is gone, but overall the car was pretty unmolested. Unlike the S3. Ignore its properly federalised elephantine bumpers; the controversy is all about the new Pininfarina roofline. Callum is unimpressed. 'I don't think the new roof is an improvement. I preferred the original. But,' he adds with a recalcitrant sigh, 'I suppose it does give you more space inside.'

If the S3 sparked controversy, Jaguar had no inkling of what was to follow with the squared-off XJ40, the all-new replacement introduced in the mid-1980s to the chagrin of *Daily Telegraph* readers everywhere. Callum pauses a good while before speaking, mulling it over, striking a very designery pose with fingers cradling chin. Here comes the barrage of abuse... but no, not a bit of it.

'This isn't going to be a popular view, but I think it works quite well. It's quite a handsome car and was very in keeping with the time. This is the era of Giugiaro, origami styling and stuff like that, and so simpler, flatter surfaces were very much in vogue. Before you dismiss it, remember that at its peak it was selling 40,000 units a year.'

The saddest thing about the traditionalists' reaction to the XJ40 was the retro influence it had on the late Geoff Lawson's next-generation XJ, the 1995 X300. 'I am sorry it was necessary to go retro, but it's actually very clever,' says Callum. 'This is just an XJ40 →

that has been topped and tailed, but I think that overall it's a very beautiful car. After the criticism of the XJ40, Geoff felt it was necessary to get form and curvaceousness back into the XJ. They changed all the front-end panels, but I bet if you took them off they would be almost interchangeable. It's actually one of my favourites, especially when you get to the X308 and the R versions. Geoff and his team were clearly enamoured with all these sculpted shapes, rather than geometric ones.'

The 63-year-old is less forgiving of the next generation, the X350 launched in 2003. It made its debut under his tenure, but he is quick to distance himself. 'When I walked into Jaguar in 1999 there was a clay model there, a *fait accompli*. They said it was the new XJ. I looked at it and I thought, "Is it?"

'I said to the chief engineer: "Why have you taken the one thing away that is most beautiful?" He said "What's that?" and I said "The proportions". He said they went to the customers and asked them what they would like, and they said more of the same, but more space. So they took the shape and the design and grew it into something taller.

'It's on the cusp of becoming a pastiche, but Jaguar was under Ford ownership then. So all the attributes and metric boys were saying you must have headroom like this, you must have legroom like this, and that sets up the car for you. That's what happens nowadays: the metrics set the car up and the designer's job is to try to challenge that, to make sure you don't lose the spirit of the car.

'As with the S-type that sat alongside it, the people in the US obviously had a picture in their heads of what a Jaguar should look like. But that's a case of the influence coming

My reference was always the S1, because that car was a revolution in its time'

from the wrong place. I said "I'm sorry, but you don't understand what a Jaguar should be about." And they said "But it's got all the Jaguar bits and cues." Jaguars are not about cues, they're about the big picture. If you took all the cars previous to the S1, they are all very different but their ethos is the same. What Lyons did was to exaggerate things, a common trait in all the cars. The Mk10 had the widest, lowest cabin, the E-type and SS1 the longest bonnet. He did these things really well, and the S1 XJ had the biggest wheels.'

Having been refused permission to start again on the X350, and despairing that the pioneering aluminium body technology was overshadowed by the more traditional look of the car, Callum started planning its replacement. 'From day one in the job I was thinking about what a really modern Jaguar should look and feel like, so it would be ready to go at the end of the seven-year cycle. It had to be sporty, but the attributes boys wouldn't let it get any lower so the profile became very important. My reference was the S1, because that was the car that was a revolution in its time. It would have cues, but more important were the proportions, a sense of excitement and Lyons' mastery of exaggeration.

'The profile had to be sleek, so that's where we started. Hence the black C-pillar, giving the impression of a floating cantilevered roof and of speed, and the window graphic which is the strongest in its class. The smaller side-glass line helps the car look stealthier and more aggressive. The big grille came straight off the S1. I kept asking, if Lyons had carried on through the '90s, where would he be now? It wouldn't be a retro-looking car, so I had to make a big jump to get to this one.'

How has the X351 aged? 'It's evolved. It's nine years old but still turns heads. I'm proud of that.' And the biggest challenge? 'Doing anything new or interesting when you are given a set of dimensions compiled by measuring everyone else's cars.

'This has a lot of shape in the back, and lights-wise I wanted something different. We decided to go with traditionally British vertical lamps, then wrapped them over to instil some speed. They're controversial, but I don't regret it. I also wanted to reinstate Jaguar's understated elegance. The rear boot panel may look plain, but it took months to get it right.' For the second generation there were new graphics and tail-lamps (known as the J-blade) as well as a fractionally bigger grille, yet again the skill of exaggeration.

So, which would Callum have for himself? 'I have an XJ 4.2C that I bought four years ago. It's a beautiful shape when the windows are down, clean and pure. I'd have loved a Series 1 version, but they never made it.' →

Below

Callum, such a big fan of the range that he owns an XJ C, talks Elliott through its evolution over eight generations, the last few of them being his own definition of the XJ.



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THE ENGINEER

JONATHAN HEYNES

This member of the original XJ6 development team was intimately involved from the start

Words and portrait Mark Dixon

JONATHAN HEYNES is fuming. He's in the middle of having a petrol tank replaced in his 1969 XJ6, and the brand-new tank doesn't fit – the outlet connections aren't correct, it seems. 'I used to know literally every nut and bolt of these cars,' he complains. 'I lived and breathed the XJ6.'

He's not exaggerating, because Jonathan is one of very few survivors from the original XJ6 development team. He started his apprenticeship under fabled Jaguar engine designer Wally Hassan, in the toolroom at Coventry Climax, which Jaguar had recently acquired. 'I began work in January 1964 and the very first thing I witnessed was the first cut of the new V12 block,' he recalls.

You may recognise Jonathan's surname: his father was William 'Bill' Heynes, chief engineer at Jaguar from the very beginning until his retirement as vice-chairman in 1969. It was always clear that Jonathan would follow in dad's footsteps but he says he never encountered any resentment from his co-workers as a result. 'I worked very hard and I mucked in,' he says. 'They did refer to me as "the lad", though!'

'It's hard to believe, now, the amount of responsibility that apprentices were given in those days,' Heynes continues. 'In about February '68, a dozen pre-production XJ6 bodies arrived from Pressed Steel Fisher, half of which were allocated to be built as press cars, and half for development testing. I was then towards the end of my apprenticeship and was tasked with setting-up a workshop with a dummy assembly line in which we could trial-fit components on the development cars and work out the build plan for production. Then, at the last minute, the V12 engine was dropped...'

As recounted in our cover feature, the XJ6 was originally intended to be launched with 2.8 straight-six and 5.3 V12 engines; there was no 4.2 'six' in the original plan. Pointing at the bonnet of PVC 444G, Heynes says:

'The bonnet pressing had to be hurriedly changed because, while the 2.8 and the V12 both fitted under the original bonnet, the 4.2 needed a larger bulge.'

'This particular car was built in May 1969 and is, as far as I know, the only XJ6 to have been fitted with wire wheels by the factory. It was used to test loadings on wires for the forthcoming V12 E-type, and the XJ6 had the necessary weight and grip. PVC 444G was built to press-car standard, which means it has lots of extra soundproofing and one of the best 4.2 engines ever assembled. It was also one of the first cars to be fitted with the Borg Warner Model 12 gearbox, which was much better-suited to the engine and was soon specified for production.'

This car has remained in his family ever since, and remains in excellent condition. 'My parents used 444G a couple of times for holidays to Portugal,' adds Heynes. 'On one occasion I was driving it home, when the engine developed an alarming shake. On my return, I told Mr Knight ["Bob" Knight, Jaguar's chief development engineer] and he quickly deduced that it was heat soak affecting the rubber engine mounts. He specified that an asbestos gasket should be fitted on top of each rubber to cure the problem, and it did.'

'That's a good example of how the engineers used to spot potential problems by actually driving the cars. Yes, Norman Dewis was the chief test driver, but he mainly did all the high-mileage work. Engineers such as David Fielden and Bob Knight really did their own testing. Bob was a very skilful driver, and so was my father, and they developed their own test routes on local roads. For example, a section of dual-carriageway from the A45 towards Coleshill was used to benchmark propshaft heterodyne and tyre shake, and a switchback road from Balsall Common to Fen End – where Jaguar Land Rover now has a brand new test centre

– was where we sorted out the XJ6's steering. Getting the steering rack absolutely level in the car was critical to making it work properly.'

Heynes himself was part of a team of three people who built the first XJ12 in 1967, and he has particularly fond memories of it. 'Sir William Lyons used to wander around the factory to keep tabs on us from time to time, and one evening in late 1967, probably during November, he came upon me doing some cooling testing on the V12. 'How's it going?' he asked. 'Oh, not so bad, sir.' 'When will it be ready?' I thought quickly and said, confidently: 'Christmas, sir!' And on Christmas Eve 1967 I did a couple of laps in the factory in the first V12. I was extremely proud of that.'

Although the launch of the V12 was, in the end, delayed until 1972, Jonathan's father almost let the cat out of the bag several years earlier, as Jonathan recalls with a chuckle: 'There used to be a journalists' test day at Silverstone, and in October 1968 my dad drove the prototype V12 to it and parked it up. The only way you could spot the difference from a straight-six XJ was that it had slightly larger tail-pipes. Fortunately, none of the journalists noticed that and no-one twigged. My dad was dying to rev-up the engine but he managed to resist!'

In the workshop near the Heynes' family home, PVC 444G is surrounded by many other classic Jaguars, most of them with a factory connection and all of them with a story to tell. In one corner, for example, is an E-type 2+2 bodyshell that was used as a test mule for the XJ6's wheels, tyres and brakes, and its Adwest power-steering rack. The future of these cars is assured, because eldest son William is continuing the family's engineering tradition with a hugely impressive and brand-new Jaguar restoration facility called Barbary Hill, based in Lincolnshire. You've definitely not heard the last of the Heynes name. →





Left and above

Hughes with one of his current 'keepers', though he keeps upgrading them for better examples; the *Telegraph* article that sparked a run on XJ6s.

THE SPECIALIST

ROBERT HUGHES

This Jaguar specialist was championing the XJ6 even when it was deeply unfashionable

Words and photography James Elliott

THE NUMBERS ARE coming too quickly for you to tot them up mentally, but, give or take a couple of hundred, Jaguar specialist Robert Hughes has sold about 1000 secondhand Jaguar XJs of all types over 35 years. He has always been an outspoken advocate of the model, even when it was down-and-out banger-racing fodder, and no-one has experienced so many of the dips and turns of the market first-hand.

If you include the eight his father owned, then Hughes has been involved with them since their inception, but it got personal in the early 1980s when he would buy part-ex'd stock from BL dealerships and sell it on. He found there was always a healthy niche demand for good low-mileage cars from would-be captains of industry whose aspirations were beyond their means.

That market morphed into the 'switch-sell' business in the mid-80s, when the classic car scene was taking off but people would be disappointed by the Mk2s and S-types they came to test. 'That was the time to put them into an early XJ6,' says Hughes. 'It would be

so much more sophisticated and easy that they'd want it every time. That kind of sums-up what a great leap forward this car was.'

The Far East was a major market for a while, until a change in emissions laws killed it overnight, but a new company car tax rule in the UK proved a gamechanger. Hughes explains: 'Norman Lamont altered company car tax so it was calculated on the windscreen price when it was new, without allowing for inflation. That was a massive incentive for people to buy older, more luxurious cars. *The Daily Telegraph* picked up on it and I had 200 enquiries overnight. Then *The Times* did a piece and it was the same again.' But it was also a stressful time and people driving older cars as if they were new ones revealed their frailties, especially in the Leyland 4.2 engine.

Things were later made worse by the uncertainty over leaded fuel and people shunning the XJ40: 'I wiped £20k off my stocklist and still couldn't sell them.'

Hughes discovered a replacement market when he decamped to Ireland to write his marque history in the mid-1990s. Such was

the interest shown in the Jaguar that he took over there that he opened a dealership and sold scores of cars a year for a decade.

Right up until that point, which coincided with Jaguar main dealers no longer selling into the trade, the vast majority of XJ series cars were still being bought as old cars rather than classic cars. Today the market is in a new phase, fuelled by enthusiast and collector demand for the now-rare early cars and buoyed by finally shaking off an albatross of a stereotype. 'For a long time the XJ was blighted by the Arthur Daley association, but I never sold one to anyone like that. I was selling them to African chiefs and Mongolian embassy workers who drove them back to Ulaanbaatar. In all the years I've dealt in them, I have never encountered someone in a sheepskin coat with a cigar and a trilby.

'That misperception goes deep: even on TV – and I have supplied cars for loads of filming – they are always driven by either ruthless businessmen or dubious chancers!'

Hughes currently has six in stock and a pair of 'keepers': a manual S1 4.2 and a 1974 Daimler S2 auto. Not that ownership is plain sailing: 'I did rather foolishly fall in love with one that I bought from friends. It was an S2 Daimler and I ran it every day for 14 years. It just fell to bits and ended up in a scrapyards, even though I spent a fortune on it.'

Hughes's buying tips are straightforward: the coupés carry a healthy premium, the jewel is the S1 V12 Vanden Plas – but don't get involved in any early V12 unless you have healthy funds, the XJ40 has had a curious upturn in demand in the last couple of years, the 2.8 is the sweetest-sounding engine of all, and the current bargain is the X300: 'Plenty of curves, a nice interior, and generally reliable, if slightly dull, at £5k for a good one.'

Are people restoring the earlier cars? 'They are, even though costs are prohibitive and it is simply not viable, but that is the sign of a true enthusiast's car.' **End**

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MASERATI GHIBLI SSS



NO GHIBLI BLOWS

Words Marc Sonnery Photography Rémi Dargegen



HARDER

The sole Ghibli SSS – as Maserati's SS with more power was dubbed – was built for a Parisian playboy. This is the car even the marque experts didn't know existed

MASERATI GHIBLI SSS



**'AS A VORACIOUS DRIVER AND AMATEUR RACER, HE WANTED
THE FASTEST SPECIAL-ORDER CAR POSSIBLE, BAR NONE'**



The opening of the Autostrada del Sole in 1964 began a new era for Italy's makers of fast, prestigious cars. These new motorways, with little traffic and no speed limits, radically changed the way the well-heeled travelled across Europe. People wanted ever-faster GTs, and Maserati embraced this with its Ghibli at the 1966 Turin show, closely following Lamborghini's landmark Miura, but preceding Ferrari's 365 GTB/4 Daytona.

The statement the Ghibli made was as bold as its lines, a new aristocrat of the motorway by which the factory at Modena's Viale Ciro Menotti could stamp its authority upon a new era. Dramatically low and taut compared with preceding Trident-badged offerings – thanks to its styling by the Ghia studio's Giorgetto Giugiaro – it fulfilled the brief perfectly. Its 4.7-litre V8 offered plenty of torque, it sounded like Barolo on wheels and its 310bhp, channelled through a ZF five-speed manual or a three-speed automatic, could propel it at up to 155mph. The underpinnings, leaf-sprung live rear axle included, were conservative but efficient.

Three years later, those who wanted yet more pace could buy a Ghibli SS, whose 4930cc version of the V8 gave 330bhp and the promise of 174mph. It was enough for most. Total Ghibli production was 1170 Berlinettas and 125 Spyders, which included, according to Maserati Classiche, 470 SS versions, of which 425 were Berlinettas and 45 were Spyders.

But what if you wanted to play the one-upmanship game? What if you were, for example, a polo-playing heir to a family fortune, an avid tennis competitor and an amateur racer? Plus you had close connections to an importer, and you wanted the ultimate Ghibli. If an SS just wouldn't do, you asked for a bespoke Ghibli SSS.

Philippe Cornet Epinat was a young Paris-based investor in Thepenier, France's Maserati importer based in St Cloud just west of Paris. Jean Thepenier had lost his backer, the American Colonel John Simone, in a road accident in a Maserati Mistral in 1967, so this enthusiastic, well-to-do young man's arrival was very welcome. Epinat often visited the Maserati factory, and so close was his rapport with Thepenier that if, in those pre-credit card days, he needed cash while in Modena, he would receive it from the factory at Thepenier's request. Several years after the events of our tale he would finance the stillborn Bora Group 4 project.

This insider relationship made it possible for him to order the Ghibli Speciale you see here. The factory's historian, Ermanno Cozza, believes that Epinat, who had briefly owned a 4.7 Ghibli, first spoke with Giulio Alfieri and Guerrino Bertocchi after testing an SS during the Paris motor show. As a voracious driver and amateur racer, he wanted the fastest special-order car →

Left

Ghibli SSS has quicker steering than the regular SS, which transforms the way it attacks a mountain bend.

possible, bar none, so he could set record travel times. He initially asked Maserati, via Thepenier, for an engine with four valves per cylinder, knowing that at least one had been made and tested in an Italian client's car to verify durability. 'A four-valve engine was fitted to the car of Mr Paini of Verona for extended testing,' Cozza confirms, 'but it went no further than that and remained a one-off. Michelin also asked for a Ghibli with the longest differential ratio to test its tyres at 300km/h [186mph] and about five clients had asked for a faster-specification Ghibli SS.'

A letter from the factory to Thepenier dated 17 November 1969 quoted a price increase of two million *lire* to cover Epinat's special requests, a hefty 40% above the standard SS list price. Epinat was denied the 32-valve engine, but he was promised a few more horsepower. He had initially requested an alloy bonnet and doors, too, but Thepenier convinced him that the weight loss would have been too small to justify the effort and expense.

There is no doubt that Epinat was important to Thepenier, who was struggling to make ends meet. In a letter dated 22 May 1970, along with various unrelated complaints Thepenier urged the factory to finish the job: 'Monsieur Cornet Epinat is returning from the USA on 29 May and expects to have his car ready. In this instance, once again, we will have serious trouble because this car was ordered on 6 November last year.

Despite this you ask for another three-week delay. Expect to have him show up at the factory on 1 June.'

The pressure bore fruit. As the young man arrived in Emilia Romagna straight from the US on 29 May 1970, *macchina* 115-49-1726 was ready, doubtless after some all-nighters. Its eager owner took delivery of a car in 'fly' yellow (*Giallo Salchi* 20Y305) with a black leather interior (*Pelle Nera Connolly* PAC 1560), plus a L6,936,000 invoice from the factory to Thepenier.

The yellow road shark was quite a sight 48 years ago, and would soon cause alarm in myriad rear-view mirrors. Cozza confirms that different pistons and camshafts, and stronger head gaskets with brass rings, formed the heart of the modifications, along with more time-consuming assembly, higher compression and greater ignition advance. The Burman steering box got a more direct ratio, more on which later.

Weeks later, however, Epinat was not happy with his initial engine, even before his hard charging caused a piston to seize. Another engine was fitted by the factory in one of the Ghibli's many return visits. For this one, as noted in a service department task list dated 15 June 1970, the work order stated: '20km/h top speed missing, fit 5000 *speciale* engine, free-up the exhaust, delete the rear silencer, fit trumpets with mesh atop the carburettors as well as Indy-type wheel lug nuts around the fake hub. Delete the power steering [the pump had malfunctioned]. The brakes fade, mount a non-return →





Above and below

SSS's wide, well-stocked, suede-topped dashboard is fronted by a bespoke leather-rim steering wheel; bare-metal restoration involved new handmade wheelarches and new nose; dashboard with its rows of small gauges and rocker switches was refurbished; seats were re-trimmed in original-spec black leather.





'IT SOON ENDED UP IN A USED SPORTS-CAR DEALERSHIP NEAR THE MONTLHÉRY CIRCUIT'

valve. The wipers lift at high speed [basic winglets were fashioned out of tin]. Fit an additional – mechanical – oil pressure gauge [though there is no tell-tale sign that this was ever done]. Fit long-distance headlights in the nose grille.' The sound-insulation material normally glued to the underside of the bonnet was deleted as it interfered with the trumpets. The task list stated 'All work under warranty.'

As was typical of most owners in that era, Epinat did not use the SSS much despite its bespoke nature. After a couple of years and a slight 'off', he lost interest and sold it in Eure-et-Loir, west of Paris.

The car soon ended up in a used sports-car dealership usefully located on a *route nationale* near the Montlhéry circuit, 18 miles south of Paris, a strip where many used

sports and GT cars ended up in the late 1960s when the autodrome often hosted races. The Ghibli had some damage but a young French enthusiast, Maurice Schambacher, liked what he saw and bought it cheaply, intending to repair it... and a bit more besides.

'The car was four or five years old and sat in that Montlhéry dealership, slightly damaged at the right front. I think it had been used up at the circuit. I wanted a big-engined GT so I took it. It had been owned after Epinat by a student, but only briefly until the mishap. It had 40,000 or 45,000km and was still in its original yellow with black interior. So then I modified it.'

Health warning: any concours zealots among you should now take a Prozac, before covering your eyes, ears and mouth, firmly. 'I was young. I modified





everything. I could not find Ghibli bodywork to repair the nose, so I fitted a nose from a Bitter CD [the design of which was heavily inspired by the Indy and Ghibli]. I fitted a hood bulge because I wanted to imitate the Pontiac Trans Am, as those were fashionable and I was young. I fitted wheel spacers and had bulged wheelarches made, as it was the “in” thing to do. The engine ran very strong, very well. I took it up to 250km/h once [that’s 155mph], but that was it.’ He also fitted SS chrome letters sourced from a muscle car.

We need to remember at this point that it was a very different era, with different attitudes towards cars that were worth very little and considered throwaways.

Maurice hardly used it, covering fewer than 10,000km in 40 years. He never showed it at events;

all the time in his ownership the Ghibli was tucked away in the French countryside minutes from the Swiss border and Geneva airport. That, and the fact that it was a private special-order car, caused some incredulity when its next owner mentioned it to other Maserati connoisseurs. It had simply never been discussed in the public domain.

Enter an enthusiast from the Aix-en-Provence area who has owned, enjoyed and restored many sports and GT cars mostly from the Modena area, whom we shall call Pascal D. Enter also his engineer friend, Marc G. Both are relentless perfectionists; cue countless vivid, *commedia dell’arte* discussions about minute restoration details, some of which your reporter has witnessed. In 2013 Pascal saw an advertisement for the car, but →

Clockwise from above
Correct Ghibli nose has ousted mid-life Bitter CD metalwork; crisp edges and slender pillars are typical of a Giugiaro design; triple tailpipes aren’t what you’d expect with a V8 engine.

MASERATI GHIBLI SSS



'THE REGULAR GIBLI SHOW-DOG HAS MORPHED HERE INTO AN EAGER BACK-ROAD ROTTWEILER'

Maurice told him that someone else in Provence had bought it right away. Pascal figured out who it was, to that buyer's great surprise, and convinced him that he – Pascal – absolutely had to have the Ghibli in less time than it takes to whip out a chequebook.

Pascal is the living definition of the intensely passionate enthusiast. He'll go on and on if you let him; if you don't end that conversation you'll still be right there in that car park at dawn. With this energy and experience the next stage was obvious: an all-out, totally bare chassis and body restoration. To describe the process as merely fastidious doesn't remotely do it justice, given how every single part of the car was painstakingly restored – even those hidden away unless you take the car to pieces.

The chassis and mechanicals were in very good condition but the bodywork had to be completely refurbished with a proper Ghibli front end plus new, standard wheelarches, handmade by a *battilastra* (craftsman) to replace the enlarged ones. One surprise was that the differential casing, stamped as containing a longer (numerically lower) ratio, turned out to house a standard one when opened. Had it been replaced after a past failure?

Everything was completely and thoroughly restored to the highest standards, including all-new interior upholstery with rebuilt seat hinges. Bearings, joints and seals for the engine, gearbox, rear axle and body were all replaced; brake calipers were rebuilt; bushings, hoses, pipes and cables (apart from the spark-plug leads) were renewed.

The engine was entirely rebuilt, having apparently never been opened since leaving the factory. Something had been ingested by one of the cylinders, causing both damage and water ingress which then caused further damage. The flywheel is smaller and lighter than standard, while the exhaust with its three rear tips is thought by Pascal to be the original, bespoke fitment.

Once ensconced behind the three-spoke steering wheel with its large centre boss and Epinat-ordered leather covering, you face the simple, horizontally themed dashboard that is standard Ghibli fare. The only modification by Pascal is the addition of a period-correct warning light.

Veritable 'Rivas of the road' with their plush interiors and comfortably reclined seating position, all Ghiblis give their drivers a mix of ego-boost and metaphorical red carpet. As soon as you start this one, though, it tells

you that it means business. The sound is much more dramatic, with a metallic edge thanks to the open carburettor trumpets, the absence of underbonnet insulation and the free-flowing exhaust.

Pascal reckoned the engine was not in perfect tune for our drive, the restoration having been completed mere weeks before and with barely more than 1200km of running-in since. A rolling road test the following day confirmed it needed further tuning. The extra ignition advance over a standard SS makes it fussier to tune, too. That said, having driven dozens of Ghiblis (and Khamsins that have Ghibli SS engines), I can report that it felt particularly healthy to me, its bellow markedly more aggressive even if not quite in full voice.

The clutch is hefty to disengage, as is typical in a powerful Italian car of ageing design, but the fact that reverse is always easy to obtain suggests it isn't dragging and making the very notchy gearchange any notchier. Shifting ratios becomes easy with practice.

The steering is the next big shock, because its much more direct ratio transforms the car. It's quite heavy at slow speeds, making you feel – and look – very clumsy during car-park manoeuvres. But then it comes together and the SSS morphs from reluctant tractor to obliging point-and-squirt sprinter.

At speed the greater reactivity through that leather-clad steering wheel is very rewarding, the regular Ghibli show-dog morphed here into an eager back-road Rottweiler. This eagerness goes well with the sort of friendly handling balance that encourages you to play with the power on roundabouts, just for fun.

The suspension is standard but, contrary to its repute and much aided by the transformative steering, this Ghibli is never reluctant to turn-in when pressing on. You do need to give it advance warning, though, and an early turn-in is better. Do that and instantly it collaborates, with none of the reluctant, understeering attitude you might expect from a long, heavy chassis.


It seems to revel in these third-and-fourth-gear kinks high up in the crests, flying past the Mediterranean pine trees above Étang de Berre, reminiscent of the scene with Alain Delon and Maurice Ronet with a Ghibli in *La Piscine*. It wants to play, surefooted and reassuring on its Michelin XWxs. We are here experiencing the zenith of leaf-sprung, live-axled handling, reminding us vividly that things were actually not so bad before fashionable but less practical mid-engined machinery arrived.

Opposite

It's the perfect car for the corniches of the Côte d'Azur; SSS lost its air filters but gained meshed trumpets, plus winglets on the wipers.



That said, after a first generation of such cars, which handled as if they had a contract on you, it was Maserati's Bora that proved to be one of the first usable mid-engined GTs thanks its thoroughly civilised handling characteristics. Something of that ethos flowed into the SSS, helped by Epinat's request for a more direct steering ratio. It makes this particular Ghibli the Daytona-beater that the model always should have been, combining handling and comfort and never feeling heavy on the road, contrary to some people's perception of Maranello's proposition. Its torque advantage is very useful on real roads, too.

So picture yourself in a timewarp back to 1970, in the lucky shoes of Philippe Cornet Epinat after a polo match in Deauville. If you had to drive across France down to Cannes, combining flowing *routes nationales*, autoroutes and some twisting roads up Côte d'Azur corniches to a majestic villa, there would have been no *grande routière* able to do the job in a more efficient and enjoyable way. The chrome-lettered SSS name may not be official, but the way this car delivers its performance makes it absolutely deserved. 

1970 Maserati Ghibli SSS

Engine 4930cc V8, DOHC

per bank, four Weber

42DCNF carburettors

Power 380bhp @ 6000rpm (est)

Transmission Five-speed

ZF manual, rear-wheel drive

Steering Burman recirculating-ball

Suspension Front: double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar.

Rear: live axle, leaf springs, longitudinal torque arm, anti-roll bar, telescopic dampers

Brakes Vented discs

Weight 1540kg

Top speed 180mph (est, based on optimistic 174mph claim for SS)

0-60mph 6.2sec (est)



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THE Summer OF '64

That's when hot-rodder, painting genius and creative maverick Dean Jeffries revealed his Mantaray. Who would have guessed that a famous Maserati Grand Prix car lay beneath?

Words Tony Thacker Photography Dean Jeffries Collection

TIME WAS WHEN I just couldn't drive up the Hollywood freeway in Los Angeles without pulling off onto Barham Boulevard to visit my all-time favourite car, the Mantaray. It was built in only 120 days during 1964 by legendary custom painter Dean 'Jeff' Jeffries, and I'd never seen anything quite so sexual that had four wheels rather than two legs. Its sensual contours, like those of its ocean-going namesake, were further stamped into our psyche later that year when it appeared in the movie *Bikini Beach* starring Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello. To us car guys, however, the cars were the stars, not those pesky Mouseketeers.

So who was Jeff, and how did he create something so cool? And is it true that, far from being based on the usual US chassis, the Mantaray has traces of pre-war Maserati Grand Prix car beneath?

First, the man. Jeff grew up in the Los Angeles suburb of Lynwood, a hotbed of hot-rodding in the 1950s. He spent his teenage years learning to pinstripe with mentor Kenneth 'Von Dutch' Howard, then landed a job at George Cerny's Auto Paint

& Body Shop. His first job was striping a boat. At that time, striping was all the rage in the booming custom-car business because paints such as candies, pearls and Metalflake weren't yet readily available.

Soon Jeff was renting space from George Barris, 'King of the Kustomizers'. Business boomed. Barris nicknamed him 'The Kid' and his name was added to the front of the building. As if that wasn't enough, he dated a beautiful blonde called Carol Lewis, who owned a '56 Chevy that Jeff had flamed 'n' striped extensively. Famously, he even striped her legs. He also numbered and lettered James Dean's Porsche 550 Spyder just weeks before Dean was killed in it.

Despite all the good it did him, Jeff found Barris's business confining and, after a devastating fire in 1957, when an uninsured Barris lost many customers' cars, Jeff quit and moved uptown to Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood – just right for attracting movie magnates for whom he would later build the Monkeemobile, the Black Beauty for *The Green Hornet* and many others. Meanwhile, Jeff was also

painting racecars. He became involved in midget racing through his dad Edward and his neighbour Troy Ruttman; he'd gone to his first Indy 500 in 1952 with Ruttman, who won that year when he was just 22. From that day onward, Jeff would invariably spend May at the Brickyard striping and numbering the race cars.

The odd job at the track turned into a steady flow of full paint jobs when Mobil Oil contracted Jeff to paint cars right through the Indy month, for \$200 per car. He managed two per day for the likes of AJ Foyt, Parnelli Jones and Jim Rathman, initiating an era of coolly painted, full-custom race cars in candies and pearls. One year he painted more than 20 of the 33-car field.

It was the demise of the front-engined Indy 'roadster' that gave impetus to Jeff's big project, the Mantaray. In 1959 Jeff had married Judy Maxson, daughter of manufacturer and racing enthusiast Darwin Maxson. Jeff and his father-in-law campaigned an ex-AJ Foyt/AJ Watson sprint car with a 220ci Offenhauser engine. Maxson provided the cash, Jeff the sweat equity. →

'JEFF LOVED TO SAY THAT HE PAINTED THAT COBRA OVER AND OVER AGAIN TO MAKE IT LOOK AS THOUGH SHELBY HAD MORE THAN JUST ONE CAR'

Maxson also owned a couple of post-war Maserati 4CLT-48 Grand Prix cars. They were not very successful in Maxson's ownership, so he'd left them parked in his garage. Soon they would be put to another use, as Jeff got busy on his dream car. His goal was to win the Tournament of Fame at the 1964 Oakland Roadster Show, at the time the most prestigious event on the indoor car show calendar. The prize was a two-week trip to Europe.

Jeffries might not have been the first customiser to incorporate a bubble top and asymmetrical styling into his creation. He was, though, the first to incorporate these elements into a cohesive whole, which he 'hoped would appeal to sports car enthusiasts, customisers and rodders'.

TODAY, IF WE STUDY the only two images that Jeff left of the chassis, we can see that the frame is not pre-war but that of an early post-war 4CLT. It's simply constructed from two lengths of 100mm round tube, with a same-size straight crossmember to support the front suspension uprights and a rear assembly to support the axle. It lacks some of the diagonals seen on later frames, but Jeff clearly retained the complete Maserati front and rear suspension, including the rear axle, although the torque tube was later re-engineered to mate with a Ford T10 four-speed gearbox. Also retained was the Maserati's cast-aluminum steering box, a worm-and-sector unit with drag links on both sides. It was originally mounted centrally, but Jeff pushed it to the right side of the engine.

Unfortunately, nobody remembers what engines, if any, were with the two Maserati chassis. None is shown in any of Jeff's photographs until the body mock-up stage, when the Ford V8 he used can be seen. That Ford V8, a 289ci Fairlane unit, was chosen for no other reason than that Carroll Shelby gave it to him. This piece of good fortune arose because Shelby had been invited to display his new, as-yet-unnamed Cobra at the 1962 New York Auto Show and he needed

the bare aluminium prototype painted. Shelby consulted his media friends, who suggested Dean Jeffries paint it yellow. Years later, Jeff loved to say that he painted that Cobra over and over again to make it look as though Shelby had more than just one car.

Now that he had a complete chassis, rolling on 15in Halibrand pin-drive wheels, Jeff constructed the wire cage over which the body was formed. This was the point at which the Mantaray began to take on the organic, flowing form of its marine inspiration. This was no modified T-bucket.

The fenders swooped up over the Goodyears, but not to the same height on both sides. Instead, the right front fender swept up high while the left front was lower and narrower, not covering the tyre at all. At the rear, the fenders were more similar to each other but the cockpit – indeed the whole body – was offset to the right despite the central positioning of the engine.

Sculpted into the body depressions front and rear, also offset, were 1962 Pontiac Grand Prix driving lights. Behind the front light was a tow hook. The front depressions contained hand-formed aluminium strakes cross-drilled to match the holes in the brake scoop shields and the ribs on the side-pipes.

Jeff constructed the skeleton under the panelwork using hand-bent steel rod, then had California Metal Shaping form the individual aluminium panels, all 86 of them, before he trimmed and gas-welded them prior to hammer-finishing the seams. He did all this work at night, completing it in only three months with the help of his friend Jim Burrell, because he had to paint other people's cars during the day to earn a living.

Packaging is always a problem on cars like this and the Maserati chassis, shortened from the 4CLT's 98.5in wheelbase to 91.5in, did not help. The battery had to be tucked down low just ahead of the rear axle, while twin Kenlowe fans were mounted over the near-horizontal radiator to which three rows of forward-facing louvres fed air. The hand-formed, engine-turned fuel tank nestled to the left of the single-seat cockpit. The one

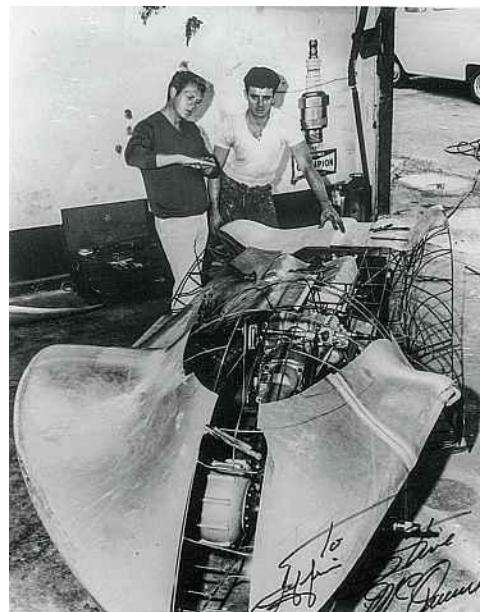
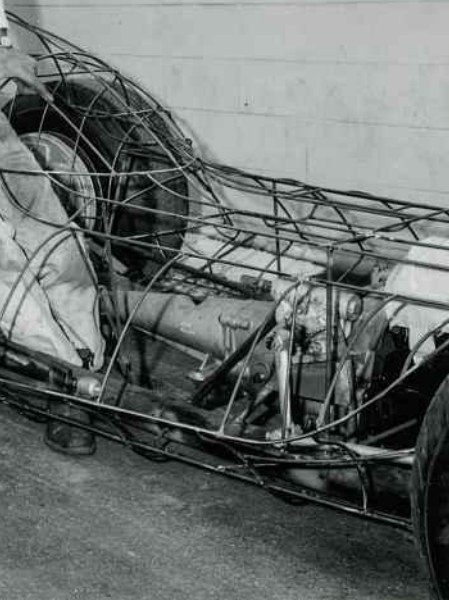


photograph I found of Jeff getting into the car [above] shows him squirming into position, and that was before the body was formed. Another shot, with Jeff finally seated in the Mantaray, shows him canted markedly to one side. No wonder he didn't let anybody else drive it for the filming of *Bikini Beach*.

The seat was handmade in black leather by Roy Gilbert, its hide stretched and shaped over individual blocks of wood, then sewn together to form a snug cocoon. The engine-turned instrument panel, similarly hand-formed, is located alongside the driver's shoulder and contains switches, warning lights and a bank of Stewart-Warner instruments. There's no speedo, only a tachometer and a pair of air vents. The gearlever sits just below and ahead of the instrument panel, while the steering wheel, fabricated in aluminium by Jeff, is in the style of a contemporary dragster's 'butterfly' wheel.

And that bubble top? They were all the rage in the custom-car scene of the early 1960s, and it didn't faze Jeff to make his own by cutting a big hole, the size of the canopy's base, in a sheet of plywood that he then →

Clockwise from this pic Dean Jeffries attempts to fit in the offset cabin; outside the Sunset Boulevard workshop awaiting paint; Jeffries shows panelwork to Steve McQueen; on set for *Bikini Beach* with actor Keenan Wynn and a cast of dragsters; underside of nose section shows louvers.





took to Acry Plastics, Los Angeles, which vacuum-formed the canopy in Plexiglas. That same piece, made more than 50 years ago, still tops the Mantaray today.

Jeff fabricated the canopy's frame from aluminium and modified a radio-controlled model aeroplane's transmitter to open the servo-actuated canopy, start the engine and turn on the lights. It was pure showmanship, which is what the Mantaray was all about: demonstrating Jeff's car-building capabilities. It worked, because the Mantaray won that Tournament of Fame at Oakland and Jeff got his trip for two to Europe. He and Judy visted the Turin motor show and travelled on to Greece and Egypt. The car then won the Body Shop Achievement Award at the ICCA Winternationals Car show, too.

BACK HOME, THE Mantaray appeared on the cover of *Hot Rod* and its editors called it a 'masterpiece in the field of experimental dream creation'. And, of course, there was that call from Hollywood for the car to be used in *Bikini Beach*. After shooting that movie, the Mantaray went on the show circuit and won numerous awards. The show car world, though, is fickle and by 1965 Jeff had accented the original pearlescent white – or very pale pearlescent green, as Judy remembers it – with fogged yellow pearl paint. The car also gained pinstripes

and a cover over the Webers, but soon lost both. It even appeared in a psychedelic array of ribbons, stripes and faded panels; a family story is that somebody other than Jeff did that paint job while the car was on the show circuit. It never went out again.

Repainted pearl white, the Mantaray then sat in Jeffries' North Hollywood shop for 30 years or more until Robert E Petersen built his Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. The Mantaray was put on semi-permanent display there, and I heard from Jeff that they often tried to get him to donate it. But he didn't need a tax break, and he didn't need to sell it 'as long as I have the price of a sandwich'.

As the years passed, though, it did weigh on him that he'd cut up a couple of old Maserati race cars to build the Manatray. He knew that, complete, those two old Masers might have been worth millions of dollars more than his custom car.

Many times, over the years, visitors suggested to Jeff that he build a new chassis for the Mantaray and sell the valuable Maserati chassis. After all, you can't see it and it only really matters to Maseratisti. But, as Jeff always replied and his son Kevin continues to reply: 'Well, it wouldn't be the same then, would it?'

Nowadays the Mantaray mostly sits in a small private museum built by Kevin and



Above

Today, the Mantaray lives in a museum built by Jeffries' son Kevin and his family to recreate the workshop; *Hot Rod* declared the Mantaray 'a masterpiece in the field of experimental dream creation'.

his family. They took photographs of Jeff's shop and faithfully recreated it, right down to his cluttered desk and Post-it-covered notice board. Occasionally, though, the Mantaray ventures out. In 2009, a few years before Jeff passed away in 2013, he took it to the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. In 2017, the Mantaray featured on the lawn at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance along with some of the other wild 'n' wacky 'Dream Cars' of the 1960s. The best of them all? Of course it was.

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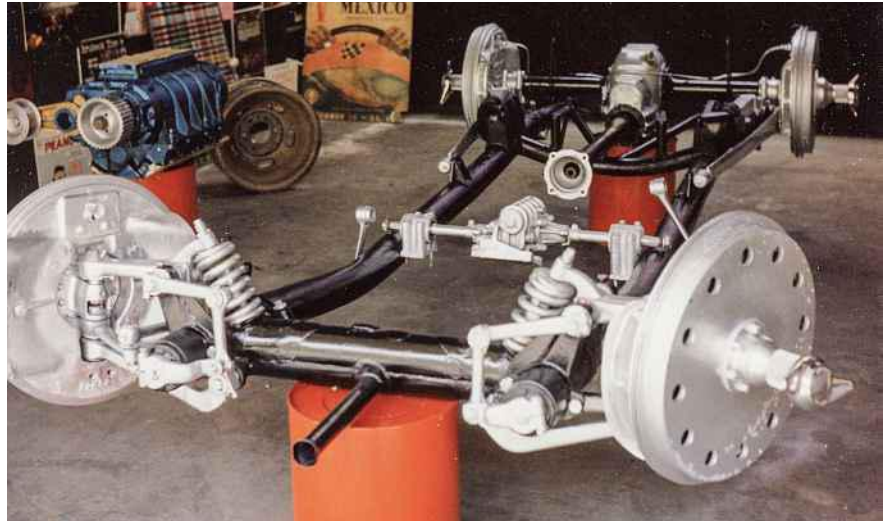
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Clockwise from right

The chassis of one of the two ex-Platé 4CLTs, about to become the Mantaray; one of the Scuderia Enrico Platé Maserati 4CLTs in action; in its movie role as a 'Burano' in *The Racers*.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

It's a Maserati underneath the Mantaray. But which one?

SO, EXACTLY WHAT did Jeff chop up? There's a widespread misapprehension that they were pre-war 8CTF Grand Prix cars, a mistake probably spawned by Jeff himself and perpetuated by *Hot Rod* magazine. However, in the stash of images Jeff gave this author before he passed away were two of the frame, complete with front and rear suspension, brakes and more. There were possibly two frames, and they were clearly post-war 4CLTs with tubular construction – hence the 'T' – rather than the channel-section steel of the pre-war cars.

The 4CLT's first race – where it scored its first victory, too – was the San Remo Grand Prix on 27 June 1948, with Alberto Ascari driving. Maserati's records then show that a 4CLT-48, chassis number 1598, was delivered to Prince Bira on 23 September 1948. He raced it to fifth place at Silverstone's inaugural British Grand Prix on 2 October,

where Luigi Villorelli won in another 4CLT-48 and Ascari came second.

In 1949, Switzerland's Scuderia Enrico Platé took delivery of 4CLT-48 chassis number 1601. It was driven by Swiss racer Emmanuel 'Toulo' de Graffenried who, on 14 May 1949, won the British Grand Prix.

In 1950 and 1951, chassis numbers 1598 and 1601 were raced variously by Bira, de Graffenried and Harry Schell for Platé in the new Formula 1 World Championship, with no great success. So for 1952 Platé rebuilt both cars to the new Formula 2 rules, enlarging the twin-cam, 16-valve engines to 2.0 litres, removing the superchargers, shortening the wheelbase and reshaping the nose. But the cars were outdated, and in '53 it seems Platé sold them to de Graffenried.

Then came an American movie, *Such Men Are Dangerous* (called *The Racers* in the UK), based on a book by Swiss writer and past racing driver Hans Ruesch titled *Le Cercle Infernal*. The movie features an Italian bus driver (played by Kirk Douglas) who wants to win the Grand Prix de Napoli in his homebuilt car. De Graffenried acted as stunt double for Douglas, and sold the production company several cars, including the two 4CLTs. These were converted from Maseratis to fictitious 'Buranos'.

Most accounts record that the cars were purchased after filming by Tom Carsten, owner of Autohaus in Tacoma, Washington. But David Steele, director of the American Hot Rod Foundation, tells a different story.

In 2013 Steele became custodian of some of Californian hot-rodder Tommy Sparks' effects. 'Tommy had a Maserati from *The Racers*,' said Steele, 'and I have photographs of the car.' They showed a 4CLT with what looked like a barbecue grille in the nose. It lacked the Burano emblem, but had the twin tapering bonnet blisters seen in the movie.

The photographs were not clear enough to identify Tommy's Maserati as the one that went under the Mantaray, but we know he bought the car from the movie studio for \$100 in 1955. He could not get the Maserati running properly, and consequently sold it.

Tommy and Jeff knew each other, so the 4CLT could have gone to father-in-law Maxson and not to Carsten. Tommy painted his Maserati dark blue to match the rest of the Sparks & Bonney racing team, which matches Judy's memory that her father's cars were blue. However, in two photographs of Maxson's Maserati in the Jeffries family collection, the car appears to be in a light colour. Red Harden, a long-time friend of Jeff, recalled that one of them was silver or silvery blue. It could be that those were the two cars: one dark blue, one silvery blue.

Either way, Jeff got two Maseratis from which he built the Mantaray. He used one complete 4CLT chassis and might have taken the better-looking finned drums from the other car. But what of the other parts? Gone, the well-worn body parts and the engines junked. That's what people did back then, before old cars became historic artefacts. **End**



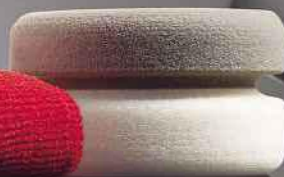


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SUPER CHARGER

*Sydney Allard used to fit Shorrock superchargers
to Ford Anglias, then enter them in the Monte
Carlo Rally. Now the Allardette is back*

Words John Simister Photography Matthew Howell

Left, right and below right
Alan Allard, son of Sydney, rallied
an Allardette to Monte Carlo in
1963; with period-correct
supercharging, this Allardette is a
fully restored 'continuation' car.



We're having lunch at The Plough in Ford. A Ford, a small one, is parked outside. As we eat, Alan Allard is transporting us back to his Monte Carlo Rally days with navigator Rob Mackie, sitting opposite. That's Allard as in son of Sydney, creator of Allard sports cars and the odd dragster. Sydney is the only person to have won the Monte in a car of his own make, which he did in 1952 driving an Allard P1.

Alan and Rob are chuckling about the time they overtook, downhill and on ice, Eugen Böhringer's Porsche 904 on the Grenoble-to-Chambéry stage. Amazing what you can do in a Cortina GT. The pair had been competing together since 1962, when they used a standard-spec Anglia 105E. But 1963 is the key year for our rendezvous today, because then they were in an Allardette, just like the one outside The Plough. So was Sydney.

An Allardette? It's an Anglia with a Shorrock C75B supercharger, and a few chassis mods to help divert a near-doubled power output to the road in a reasonably tidy fashion. You could buy the kit from Allard in Clapham, South London, or you could buy a complete, ready-converted Allardette from the attached Ford main dealer, confusingly named Adlards. About 100 Allardettes resulted (including a particularly fearsome one uprated with a 1498cc Cortina GT engine and a larger Shorrock C142B), which made the hot Anglias eligible for the Monte's modified-saloons class.

One big benefit of doing this, and entering many other rallies such as Britain's RAC, was

the publicity that the Allard company would gain for Shorrock superchargers. It had recently done a deal with Chris Shorrock, the inventor, and Rubery Owen, the components manufacturer that then owned the Shorrock company, to become the worldwide Shorrock distributor and the manufacturer of kits for various popular cars. Minis, Heralds, Sprites, Midgets, MGBs, Beetles and, of course, lots of Fords could all have their induction forced, often to great effect. In one heady month, Allard sold 75 kits at around £100 each.

'There were 13 Anglias on the 1963 Monte,' Alan recalls. 'Pat Moss was in one of them. But only three finished: our two and a French crew.' They did more than that, Sydney and co-driver Tom Fisk winning their class (32nd overall), with Alan and Rob second in class (49th overall). Erik Carlsson won, in his Saab 96.

Further proof of the Shorrock's reliability came in the 1964 Spa-Sofia-Liège rally, two Allardettes and their crews subjected to 90 hours of often flat-out driving with just one hour of rest, at Sofia. 'At the time it was the longest, roughest and toughest rally in Europe and possibly the world,' says Alan, still surprised that they did it. 'Quite mad; ridiculous, really,' adds Rob, fondly. 'All those mountain passes with no barriers...'

Now a new Allardette is waiting for us. Lloyd Allard, Alan's son, searched for signs of Allardette survivors, particularly the works cars, with a view to restoring one in today's Allard Sports Cars workshop where a 'continuation' Allard JR sports-racer is under construction. Having drawn a blank, Lloyd set about building a continuation Allardette. 'I hate the term "replica",' he says, regarding the new car as a logical progression, built by the same company, from those that went before, albeit with a time gap of 56 years.

The Allards have done this simply because they thought it would be fun, and they like the idea of seeing the new one compete in the Rallye Monte-Carlo Historique. It's a 1960 Anglia found in Devon a little over a year ago, one of the earliest 105Es, which had been restored (to a point) in the 1990s. 'A lot of the work was covering up rust,' says Lloyd. 'The floor was mostly original with a few patches, but I don't like overlapping metal so our expert welder, William Jennings, cut them out and butt-welded new steel. There's no sign of crash damage, and the doors and wings are original.'

After a repaint in the Ambassador Blue of Sydney's and Alan's rally cars, it was ready for its new Allardette role, complete with an Ermine White sweep over the rear wings. Alan's car, 856 AYO, wore the narrow, but →

'The Allards like the idea of seeing the new car compete in the Rallye Monte-Carlo Historique'



'Lloyd advances the ignition timing a little. This fires the Allardette with significantly more enthusiasm'

still aluminium-mesh, front grille of a high-spec Anglia van, while Sydney's (403 EYW) had the full-width grille of a De Luxe saloon. The new Allardette, then, celebrates Sydney's machine, complete with rally plates and the number 185 from the 1963 Monte. Three chrome 'Allardette' script badges, too: 'They're original,' says Alan, 'and we've got another 15.' Enough for five more cars.

The engine, built by Specialised Engines, retains the original 997cc, 8.9:1 compression ratio (high for the era) and ridiculously short-stroke, hollow crankshaft. A hefty 1¾in SU H6 carburettor, with intake trumpet but no air filter, is vigorously sucked through by the C75B eccentric-vane supercharger, itself driven at engine speed (they tend to break if revved continually over

6000rpm), but in this case slightly over-speeding because the drive belt has worked its way deeper into its pulley. It's a neat installation with its finned inlet manifold, and once in its stride it gives around 7psi of boost – 0.5bar in modern engine parlance.

Other changes from the form in which this Anglia left the Dagenham production line are front disc brakes, lowered and stiffened suspension with uprated rear lever-arm dampers, and a pair of anti-tramp bars, or radius arms, for the rear axle. Their forward hinge-point is speed-bump-strikingly low. Three extra lights adorn the nose, but so far the Allards haven't fitted the roof-mounted, rotatable spotlight used in the 1960s.

Inside, we find lightweight bucket seats for a visual nod to the Microcells used in period,



Below
Allard-badged
revcounter and
'Shorrock Power' hub
badge on the steering
wheel are period extras.



full harnesses to hold their occupants, and a leather-rim, aluminium-spoke steering wheel that's large by today's standards, but smaller than the spindly Anglia original. It might be from a Cortina 1600E. Extra dials abound, including an Allard-badged period boost gauge and a revcounter, also bearing the family crest, mounted high on the right.

'You might find the brakes a bit soft,' warns Lloyd. 'I bled them for ages but there still seems to be air in them somewhere. And it tramlines on these tyres.' They are proper Dunlop SP Sport 85R stage-rally tyres, chunky and blocky. Noisy, too, I'm about to discover as I navigate my way through the Allardette's symphony of sounds.

I last drove an Anglia in 1974, a pale blue 1965 one belonging to a university friend.

We fitted it with bigger front brakes plundered from an Anglia Super 123E abandoned in the university car park. We might have liberated the Super's 1198cc engine and all-synchromesh gearbox, too. Despite the vast tract of time between then and now, the Anglia's upright windscreen and the blatant, bilateral, anodised-aluminium symmetry of its dashboard are instantly familiar, as are the long, spindly gearlever and the bonnet-release that's pretending to be a heater control.

Less familiar is the laidback driving position forced by the low, and fixed, seat. First gear is a stretch (and a crunch, if you forget to nudge second gear's synchro first to still the gear cluster) away. So is the top of the steering wheel.

Turn the key – yes, a key start, modern in 1960 – and it sounds much like an Anglia usually sounds, just louder. The engine should give around 80bhp, just over twice the original 39bhp, helped by a freer-flowing exhaust and a camshaft that opens the valves further for longer. Is that wise, when a supercharger is all about low-end torque and the feeling of a bigger engine, rather than a peakier, more manic one? We'll see.

What hasn't happened on start-up is the appearance of a cloud of smoke aft, such as my Shorrock-supercharged 1959 Mini used to generate. 'It's because the oil accumulates in the bottom of the supercharger,' Alan explains. 'This one doesn't seem to be smoking. I'm worried now.' The Shorrock uses a total-loss lubrication system, the oil →



1960 Ford Anglia Allardette

Engine 997cc four-cylinder, OHV, SU H6 carburettor, Shorrock C75B supercharger **Power** 80bhp (est) @ 6500rpm
Transmission Four-speed manual, rear-wheel drive **Suspension** Front: MacPherson struts, coil springs, track control arms, anti-roll bar.
 Rear: live axle located by semi-elliptic leaf springs and longitudinal radius arms, lever-arm dampers **Steering** Recirculating ball
Brakes Discs front, drums rear **Weight** 750kg approx **Top speed** 95mph (est) **0-60mph** 11sec (est)

metered through a gap around a very precisely machined pin. A blockage here did for my Mini's Shorrock, but Alan has incorporated an oil-feed adjuster in this one.

I leave him to worry about this as I set off on a familiarisation run. The straight-cut first gear's whine gives way to helically cut quietness from the transmission, the tyres now providing a sonic substitute as their drone rises in pitch. We're wandering over the damp road as cambers change, the Anglia's imprecise steering box weighing up alternative headings rather than nailing a committed course. No matter; you soon get used to it and let the Anglia find its own direction, which on average coincides with the one you intend.

The brakes? They do work, if you press hard enough and trust the floor not to thwart the pedal's downward thrust. And once you're fully recalibrated, it all starts to flow.

What hasn't emerged yet is a torrent of supercharged torque. It feels a bit flat, coming to some sort of life only if revved. These are still early shakedown days for this Allardette, so Lloyd experimentally

advances the ignition timing a little. This fires the Allardette with significantly more enthusiasm and reveals the engine's true character, one that is perhaps not quite as intended.

Below 4000rpm, when it should be thrusting lustily, it still feels flat. Above that point it picks up, boost builds and the Shorrock adds its own whine of finely chopped air pulses. The Anglia rushes on to 5000rpm, hurtles headlong into full sprint mode by 6000rpm, and is clearly game for a thousand or two beyond that if only the Shorrock can keep its vanes from channelling grooves in the casing. That would be the end of the supercharger, if the shaft didn't snap first (trust me, I've been through all of this), so the post-6000 revscape will have to remain unexplored. Yes, it needs a calmer camshaft.

The combination of a narrow power band and wide gear ratios makes for a rather scalloped acceleration curve, but there's no doubt that the Allardette is potentially quite a quick machine. And with the power flowing, you become aware less of the steering's wanderings and more of the

alternative mode of cornering-line adjustment, using the right foot. That said, the rear suspension is a bit too soft at the moment (we have all agreed), so it bottoms out, the anti-tramp bars' mountings snag too often and the traction is almost too good, to the detriment of the power-oversteer potential that lies within.

With some fine-tuning, this will be a great car. It will also be for sale, ready for its new owner to go historic rallying. The Allards will be sorry to see it go, but they can always build another. Later in our day, Alan takes over the driving seat while I take in the view once seen by Rob Mackie. Over half a century on it's clear that Alan's spark is undimmed, that he is still empathetic with the Allardette as he squirts it through gaps in the traffic.

'Alan never frightened me,' Rob Mackie observes, 'and boy, could he go downhill on ice. In all those years, we argued only once. The oil pressure gauge kept dropping on corners, which I thought was important. Alan didn't.'

The new Allardette, you'll be pleased to know, has excellent oil pressure. **End**

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KING OFF THE ROAD

*Mercedes-Benz
has just launched
the mighty new
G-class. Time,
then, to celebrate
the simplicity
of the original
Geländewagen*

Words Glen Waddington
Photography Dieter Rebmann







The contrast couldn't be much greater. Before setting out in this 89bhp, 2.3-litre 1982 Mercedes-Benz G-wagen, I'd stepped out of the monstrously powerful – 577bhp – G63 AMG. The new one. Which is capable of amazing feats on the road as well as off (see *Octane* 181). Yet none of that is to denigrate the original. Times – and it's taken four decades – have changed, especially in SUV world. That phrase, for a start. The original G-wagen was no SUV because such things didn't exist. *Geländewagen* means 'off-road vehicle'. Its evolution has been remarkable. And this is where it began.

The latest is the first all-new version since the G-wagen was introduced in 1979, though there was a bit of a revision 28 years ago (a new dashboard was the biggest visual alteration), which Mercedes-Benz felt was significant enough to change its internal model code from W460 to W463. Yet this time, as if to underscore the lengthy history of its predecessor, the new car is still a W463, though they now call it the 'G Class' to harmonise with the rest of the model range.

There is still a ladder-frame chassis (though overall torsional rigidity is up by

55%) and it's now the only roadgoing production car on sale with three differential locks and a high/low-ratio transfer 'box. Its 700mm wading depth is 100mm greater than before and it'll tackle a 45° slope, so the rock-climbing, sand-duning, green-laning, ice-driving insouciance of old is still a key aspect of G-wagenism. The new G also does things our '82 G230 couldn't, but those are mostly things the G-wagen was never intended to do, such as blasting along the autobahn in comfort and relative silence at 140mph. If you want the real deal, this is it.

It has its origins in a project that began in the early 1970s, when market research (prescient, in hindsight) suggested that there would be an upsurge in the appetite for domestic all-wheel-drive utility vehicles, as proven by the arrival and eventual success of the Range Rover. Mercedes-Benz had history here, with six-wheel tourers for wartime dignitaries and larger, tougher off-landers that led to the more commercial-biased Unimog. Even so, it cast about for a development partner and turned to Steyr-Puch of Graz, Austria, producer of the compact Haflinger off-roader. It was a company with illustrious history, with both

Hans Ledwinka and Ferdinand Porsche among its chief engineers.

Following an agreement in 1972, the 50:50 *Gelände-fahrzeug* GmbH (GfG) joint venture was formalised between Mercedes-Benz and Steyr-Puch in 1977, when extension work began on the manufacturing plant at Graz, and plans were drawn up for the Type 460 *Geländewagen*: a car that would be at home on or off the beaten track.

GfG benchmarked the Range Rover as its main rival, but the brief also called for simplicity of construction – to enable assembly away from the factory – plus the strength and ease of repair required for military use. Interest had been shown by the German Army and also by influential Benz shareholder Mohammad Reza Pahlavi – otherwise known as the Shah of Iran.

There would be two wheelbases, characteristic plain panelling and flat glass, plus gaping, uncurved wheelarches: GfG executives hoped that look would remain current for 'up to ten years', yet here we are at the end of the G-wagen's fourth decade and even the brand new model looks remarkably familiar... Underneath, for raw strength, a tough ladder-frame chassis was specified

with live axles front and rear, plus the availability of forward, central and rear locking differentials, a high/low-ratio transfer 'box and selectable four-wheel drive.

The latter sounds curious in today's world of permanent four-wheel drive and associated electronic control and torque apportioning, but the selectable system allowed for greater ability off-road without compromising on-road refinement, when rear-drive would suffice. Engines (two diesels, plus petrols with four or six cylinders) came from Mercedes-Benz's passenger car range; interior appointments (such as they were – it's pretty utilitarian in there) were shared with the company's light commercials.

The G-wagen was launched in the South of France, at a special off-road course in Toulon. Press reception was highly enthusiastic: 'The new cross-country Mercedes is a truly sensational machine,' said the photojournalist Bernard Cahier. Without a single 'SUV' reference, of course. And Tony Curtis, writing for *Motor*, said: 'It will almost certainly prove to be one of the world's finest small off-road vehicles.' While he admitted that it couldn't match the Range Rover for couthness, he declared it 'markedly superior to the Land Rover in comfort and refinement'.

Which pretty much defines the G-wagen's appeal: less austere than a Land Rover, not so plush and heavy as the Range Rover. It's a theme that *Autocar* explored in February 1979: 'It has been interesting to see how Daimler-Benz would attack the market. Would they aim for a refined, land-going estate car like the American Jeep Cherokee and British Range Rover, or would they aim more for the utilitarian sector dominated by the Land Rover? In the event, they have come out fairly midway between these two with a vehicle that is compact, appreciably smaller even than the Land Rover and yet which is well-trimmed and equipped, and offers a good standard of creature comforts.'

Not bad for a military vehicle. Except the G-wagen never quite achieved the success that had been planned for it in that respect. The Shah of Iran was deposed and took his 20,000-strong order with him, while the German Army bought a fleet of VW Iltis off-rovers instead. Yet GfG had faith in its marketing projection, and launched the G-wagen as a civilian car, plus a handful each going to the German border police and the Argentine Army (although it's said that General Galtieri never paid the bill). Some of the latter fell into the hands of the British

during the Falklands War, and it's believed the rest are still in service, a testament to the car's longevity. The G-wagen was also built during the early 1980s for the French military by Peugeot, badged as the P4 and powered by French engines.

Still, those journalists had enjoyed the G-wagen, and production at Graz (it was sold as the Puch G in Austria, Switzerland and Eastern Europe) was limited, which meant that the clamour for product around the world took time to satisfy. And here we are with an early survivor, in the definitive spec of short wheelbase with estate body and the 2.3-litre four-cylinder petrol engine.

Ironically, we're in the South of France too, not far from Perpignan at Château de Lastours, a vineyard that's also home to a huge and varied off-road course as well as gravel tracks used for training and tuning by rally teams. Between the airport and here we've spotted a few older G-wagens, clearly at home in hilly, rural surroundings, and also clearly well-used. Our red car has come from

the Mercedes-Benz Museum collection in Stuttgart, though it had been bought from a private owner and, while immaculate, it's also totally original.

And it's nothing like as imposing as a Range Rover. If SUVs have grown in stature and market presence as a result of buyers enjoying their somewhat aggressive nature, this car serves as a reminder that they had utilitarian roots. If you want to drive along the tracks and across the rough of a vineyard, you need something compact yet with a commanding driving position, to make the most of the go-anywhere ability.

Charmed by those boxy looks, I clamber inside and find an utterly rational cockpit, with a dash layout that makes for simple conversion between left- and right-hand drive: the lower dash is a painted metal panel, and the cut-out for the glovebox matches that for the steering columns and instrument binnacle on the other side. As if to remind you that, yes, this is a Merc after all, there's a padded plastic top roll that just about →

'BETWEEN THE AIRPORT AND HERE WE'VE SPOTTED A FEW OLDER G-WAGENS, CLEARLY AT HOME IN HILLY, RURAL SURROUNDINGS'



Above left and right

The simple, tough, no-nonsense 230G feels at ease on the bumpy gravel tracks of a French vineyard – indeed, anywhere in rural France.



'A SCRABBLE OVER SOME ROCKS AND A STEEP CLIMB UP A BANK BREAK NO SWEAT, EITHER FOR THE G-WAGEN OR ITS DRIVER'

89bhp fights the better part of two tonnes here, after all. The steering wheel is a simple two-spoker (from that van) and there's no power-assistance, so manoeuvring is sweat-inducing; Southern French sun doesn't help, either, as there's no air-con, of course.

But, once you're on the road, windows down, having fumbled and knuckled your way to fourth gear by 40mph, you can enjoy the low-speed gait, gentle ride, surprisingly roll-free cornering, and the smells of the French countryside. If you lived here, this would be a top choice as daily wheels.

Soon it's time to leave the tarmac behind to tackle the rough gravel track that circumnavigates the vineyard, and here the G truly comes into its own. Apart from a few more bumps and the rooster-tail of dust in your wake, you barely notice the transition. Sure, the 230G is a tad slow in civilisation, not the type of car to appeal to the person who buys that new G63 AMG and travels everywhere at full tilt. But while Mr AMG might be wary of scratching his paint or scuffing his pale leather trim in *this* environment, we rumble on, the G displaying its impressive strength over a surface that would make most other cars creak, shimmy and give up. A scrabble over some rocks and a steep climb up a bank break no sweat, either for the G or its driver.

Point made. The 230G is compact, unaggressive and refreshing – like a Land Rover, only more refined. But it was a starting point. And while the latest G-class takes all the off-road aspects that made the original great, it adds power, refinement and convenience appointments that transform it into a luxury purchase. One that will be built at Graz in limited quantities, just as before. And it's the only current Mercedes-Benz without a finite production span.

If you were unkind, you might call it Mercedes-Benz's 'ultimate SUV'. But it's way beyond that. And a whole range of modern-day SUVs arrived in the G's wake, starting with the ML-class of 1998, intended to replace it. Only the tough guy won. **Cash**



1982 Mercedes-Benz 230G

Engine 2307cc four-cylinder, OHC, Stromberg carburettor **Power** 89bhp @ 5000rpm **Torque** 126lbft @ 2500rpm **Transmission** Four-speed manual, four-wheel drive **Steering** Recirculating ball **Suspension** Front: leading arms, live axle, Panhard rod, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar. Rear: trailing arms, live axle, Panhard rod, coil springs, telescopic dampers **Brakes** Discs front, drums rear **Weight** 1830kg **Top speed** 85mph

matches a W123 saloon's for texture, though all the controls – heater panel, column stalk, doorhandles and locks, minor switchgear – are recognisable from the old T1 van. No matter; the check tweed seat trim combines with rubber flooring to tell you that this is more about robustness than luxury.

So it's all 'U' rather than 'S' in this off-roader. There's a whine and a buzz from that in-line four, instantly recognisable to anyone who's driven a 230 saloon from the same era, and it pulls stoically if without great haste:

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Robin Widdows

He was quick, brave and versatile, but when too many contemporaries met their ends he stopped racing, never to return

Words Paul Fearnley Portrait Stuart Pearce

IT COULD BE a race start. It is in fact a photo of a remarkable photo-finish: seven single-seaters covered by a single second after 180 miles of 140mph hustle-and-bustle-and-jostle at Reims. Among this Formula 2 throng are François Cevert with victorious arm aloft jutting from tiny Tecno, the aptly named Piers Courage, world champion-elect Jackie Stewart, Pedro Rodríguez, Giovanni 'Nanni' Galli and Alan Rollinson. There lurks also the lapped Pygmy of Patrick Dal Bo.

In the thick of this – second by a tyre tread's width – is a man in a vermillion crash helmet in last year's Brabham, vivid in emerald. Robin Widdows refutes that he was abnormally brave, but flinchers do not set records on the Cresta Run, nor do claustrophobics apply for the 'engine room' of an Olympic four-man bob.

It's in the genes. Air Commodore Charles Widdows was a test pilot of Hurricanes and Spitfires and the oldest of 'The Few' at his death, aged 100, in 2010. When his son's fledgling racing career threatened to stall, the family rallied. The resultant Witley Racing Syndicate – named to impress overseas race organisers – operated from a stable at its Surrey home. Its Formula 3 Brabham BT18 allowed Robin to build on his 1965 Autosport Championship success – eight class wins from 14 starts – in a Lotus 23B fitted uniquely with a BRM 1.0-litre screamer and bought from John Coombs by mentor Viscount Edward Portman. By June 1967 he was winning a Hockenheim F2 race in Witley's BT23, prepared by full-time mechanics Les Osborne and Tony Fox.

But it's Hockenheim's Formula 2 Deutschland Trophy of April 1968 – tragedy rather than triumph – that still chimes with 'Widz'. As he says: 'Mine was the car behind Jim Clark's Lotus on the grid and we chatted in the assembly area. Not about the performance of our engines or state of our tyres. Nor were we concerned about the tactics of the race. No, we talked about girlfriends we had in common.'

'It was an absolutely crappy day. Obviously there was something wrong with his car because I was able to stay with him for a bit. Then he disappeared into the spray. I must have been quite close when it happened, but I never saw a thing.'

'The second heat's first few laps were some of the hairiest I can remember. Everybody was pushing like hell to prove they'd not been affected by Jim's death.' Robin finished fourth – seventh on aggregate – in a McLaren M4A condemned by laconic Aussie sage Frank Gardner as 'a load of bloody rubbish'.

'I took Frank along in a bobsleigh once,' says Robin. 'Frightened the pants off him. "You never asked me to brake, Widdows!" But then I wasn't a very good bob driver. I was always over-correcting, driving it like a racing car, which is totally wrong. Whereas Tony Nash, built for comfort rather than speed, was short-sighted and had slow reactions. The perfect bobbing combination.'

Nash and brakeman Robin Dixon won two-man gold at the Innsbruck 1964 Winter Olympics. In the four-man they finished 12th, three-hundredths and one place ahead of the GBR-2 sledge accelerated by Robin →



Clockwise from top left

Widdows shared this Matra MS630/650 with Nanni Galli at Le Mans in 1969, finishing seventh; Formula 2 success captured by Dexter Brown; Nuvolari Trophy awarded for 1969 Lottery GP F2 race at Monza; that extraordinary photo-finish, Reims, 1969.

and stalwart MG racer Andrew Hedges. At Grenoble 1968, by then sandwiched between Nash and Dixon in GBR-1, Robin finished seventh after a sudden thaw limited the competition to two runs.

'Cortina 1966 was the closest I came to becoming a world champion. We'd been fastest in practice but the event was cancelled after the Germans went over the top and one was killed. It was more dangerous then, but it kept you competitive and bloody fit. By spring we'd be ready to go motor racing.'

The Cooper T86B-BRM he drove in the 1968 British Grand Prix at Brands Hatch came as a shock, even so. 'It was a lorry. I was 5ft 10in and 12½ stone, yet it took all my strength to get it round Paddock Hill Bend. Its set-up was totally wrong but I didn't know what I was getting into. It was a confused team, to be honest.'

He qualified 18th of 20 and retired before half-distance, when the V12 developed a severe misfire. Disappointment lingers that this was his only Formula 1 outing: 'Short and sharp,' he summarises, and not particularly sweet. Although BRM had made an offer of one weekend on, one weekend off after tests, Robin pledged himself to Cooper's persuasive team manager, Roy Salvadori, on the promise of a Cosworth DFV-powered car for 1969. Then the money ran out.

Robin remained in F2 in 1969, initially struggling in a Merlyn Mk12 run by Bob Gerard Racing. 'Bob was quiet and studious, very intense on the technical side. I was happy to be driving for him but I didn't know him very well. He was dominated by "Mrs Bob", and the team was run mainly by the lovely Maggie Morris. But when Bob bought a BT23C, we were winning within weeks.'

Robin had a knack for surprise results. He was runner-up to Stewart's runaway Matra at Pau in 1968, for instance. And in 1969 he won the F2 Lottery GP at Monza – the likes of Cevert, Derek Bell and Ronnie Peterson trailing in his wake – one week before

squeaking home second at Reims. 'My engine was losing power because of broken valves, and Piers screamed past me inches after the finish.'

This eye-catching form earned him a Le Mans invitation from Matra's elegant and astute boss Jean-Luc Lagadère. 'When I told him my fee, he replied: "You English are always so reasonable." Damn!'

Robin's prior sportscar experiences included sharing a works MGB with Hedges in 1966: 'Blind as a bat. He drove like hell in the rain because he never noticed it.' This was at the original Mugello, including a section of the Mille Miglia's Futa Pass.

Then there was a chastening sampling of the Repco V8-engined Marcos Mantis XP at Spa in 1968. "'Over to you!" I said, and went and had a black coffee.' Robin adds to the list a crash during a wet August 1968 test at Snetterton of JWA's Mirage M2-BRM that aggravated an old bobbing back injury, and hammering down Nürburgring's long, undulating straight in Ulf Norinder's Lola T70 Mk3B in 1969. In the snow.



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'I WAS SCREAMING ALONG AT 200MPH WHEN I NOTICED HEADLIGHTS IN MY MIRRORS. AND THEY WERE GAINING'

They would go on to include that season's Springbok Series in family friend Alistair Walker's Ferrari 350 P4 Barchetta Can-Am conversion. 'It took me two races to discover why I was having trouble controlling this fantastic car through the corners. I was leaning my knee against the cockpit side and, therefore, also against the throttle cable.'

But Matra was the highlight. 'They were wonderful to work with. Each driver was given his own caravan. They brought chefs up from Nice to ensure we had the best catering in this huge tent. We lived like kings and everybody else was jealous. I was flattered to have been asked.'

'There was only one problem. Although I'd done a short test near Paris, I didn't get my first practice at Le Mans until night had fallen. I had never driven at 200mph but I knew it was going to be pretty nippy once I'd reached a certain rpm.'

'There I was screaming along at 200, thinking everything was marvellous, when

I noticed headlights in my mirrors. And they were gaining. It was one of the Porsche 917s and this chap came wobbling past on that narrow road – dotted with little Alpines doing 130mph – at about 220. All this in the space of a minute.'

Sharing an interim MS630/650 with Galli, Robin finished seventh. He also contested that year's Watkins Glen Six Hours, sharing with Jean Guichet and retiring because of clutch failure.

He stretched his association with Walker into 1970 and strung together a sequence of solid F2 results – fourths at Thruxton and Barcelona's Montjuich Park plus sixth at the Nürburgring – in a BT30. But he called it a day after May's London Trophy at Crystal Palace. 'I had made a promise that when I found the girl I wanted to marry, I would no longer be a racing driver.' Within three weeks of meeting his 'lovely Yorkshire lass' Vicki, that promise was kept – and vindicated within four months of cold comfort.

'I had been proud to race a semi-works car with Bruce McLaren's name on its flank,' Robin reflects. 'Piers was my "twin" – we had the same birthday. And it had been a privilege to race against Jochen Rindt, one of the genuinely fast drivers. To see him perform had been quite something. He glanced across once and wagged his finger when I tried to overtake, as if to say "Not now. Next lap." And suddenly they were all gone.'

Had he not hit a lamp-post rather than skim over straw bales into Monaco's harbour in 1967, in an F3 Brabham with DAF Variomatic transmission, Robin might have

been there to greet his friends. Instead he resides in Mallorca with his bride of 47 years.

'I never got the urge to return,' he says. 'Chris Williams, a lovely guy whom you would never guess had it in him to be a racing driver, was killed testing the Merlyn at Silverstone. I had no idea they were going and so we'd not had a chance to talk about the car. That really upset me. Bill Ivy's death [riding a 350cc Jawa at the Sachsenring in 1969] was another. He was terrific and would have gone all the way in cars.'

'Then Bruce, Piers, Jochen. Like breaking a drug habit, I had walked away.'

And returned to his estate agency roots: property interests brought him to Mallorca some 30 years ago. Between times he has attempted to sell aeroplanes to Africa, and for ten years, beginning at the Albertville 1992 Winter Olympics, he was a roving ambassador for Moët et Chandon. 'They just rang me up. An office in Epernay, travelling the world. The cushiest job.' And one that occasionally returned him to F1's paddocks.

Robin had never really been a slave to motor racing. As a pupil at Haileybury – *alma mater* of Stirling Moss and Mike Parkes – he had leafed through car mags rather than devour them whole. And while he took his opportunity when it was presented and proved capable on his day of mixing it with the best, his was a love affair, not a marriage.

Though recovering from a fall at home that shattered his right femur, he's in a chatty mood. Wistful, too. 'They were crazy days, but I made it out the other side and the sun is shining. That's how I feel this afternoon.' *End*



Left and above
Widdows' one and only F1 outing, in a works Cooper-Maserati for the 1968 British GP, ends with a terminal misfire.

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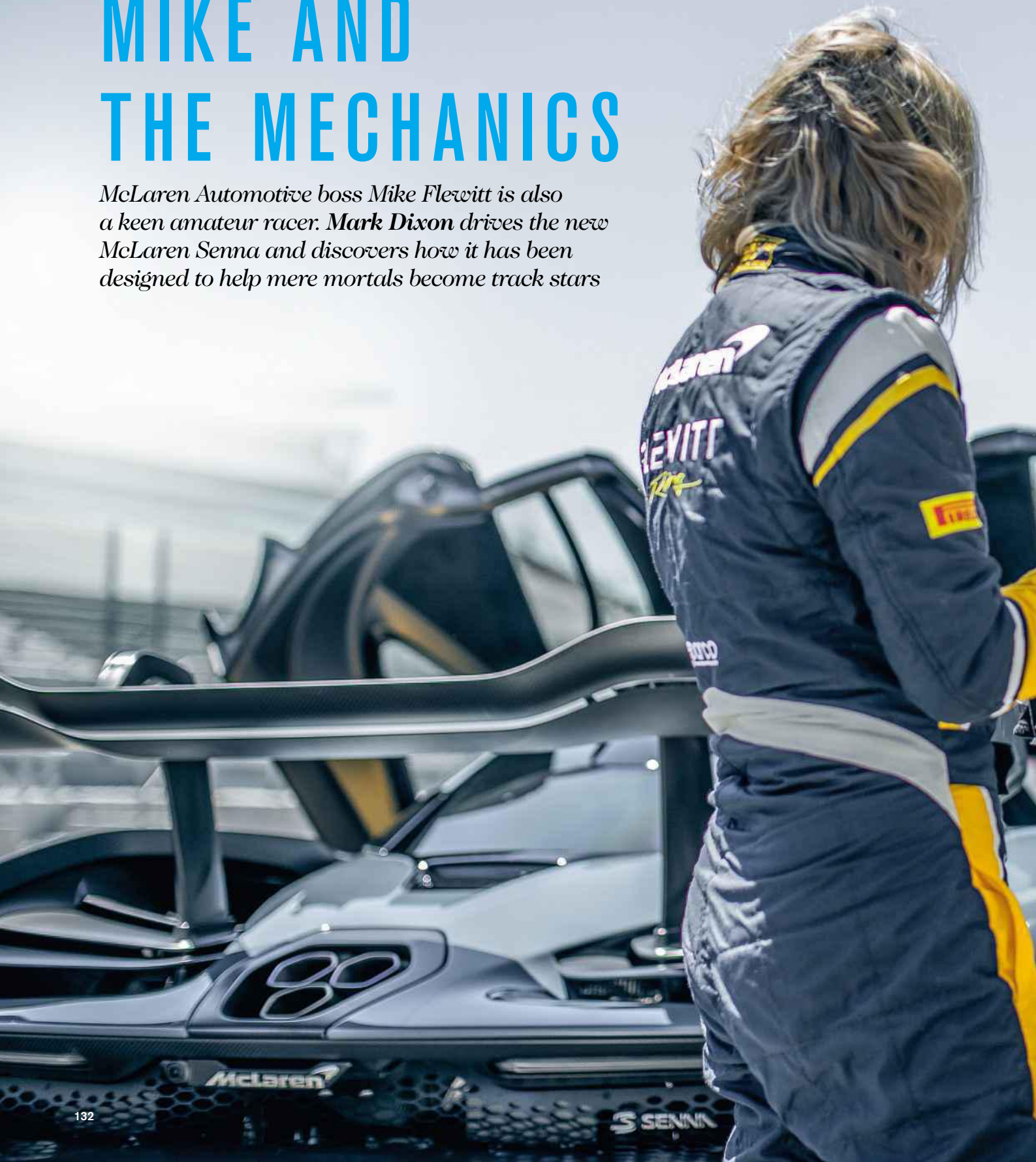


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MIKE AND THE MECHANICS

*McLaren Automotive boss Mike Flewitt is also a keen amateur racer. **Mark Dixon** drives the new McLaren Senna and discovers how it has been designed to help mere mortals become track stars*





🇬🇧 M. Flewitt



Pity the poor Chinese modelmaker, hunched over a workbench somewhere near Hong Kong. Creating the pattern for the 1:43 resin model of the new McLaren Senna that *Octane* will take home as a souvenir of the car's launch must have driven him to distraction. All those diffusers, all those spoilers, all those knife-edge carbonfibre body panels that duct air here, there and everywhere! An old-school monocoque race car, a Jaguar D-type for example, must be a piece of cake to sculpt in comparison.

While it's not a conventionally beautiful car like those old racers, the McLaren Senna is a superbly compelling machine. Paradoxically, given the looks, it's also more traditional than you'd expect. It has rear-wheel drive and it is not a hybrid, instead relying on a twin-turbocharged V8 for its immense performance. To find out why McLaren decided that batteries should most definitely not be included, we talked with the automotive division's CEO (and, let's not be modest here, long-time *Octane* subscriber), Mike Flewitt, during the car's launch at Estoril circuit in Portugal.

LIKE SO MANY McLaren employees, Mike is a confirmed petrolhead, his 11-car stable including a 1967 ex-Piers Courage McLaren F2 single-seater, a 1961 Lotus Elite and a '63 Elan, which he races. He's motor industry through and through, having begun his career as a trainee at Ford's Halewood plant and subsequently worked for Rolls-Royce, Volvo and TWR, before returning to Ford again. He's now been at McLaren for five years. Who better to understand what turns on a car guy?

Mike is also 'one of us' – the majority of us, anyway – in that he admits to being a keen driver and amateur racer but not an especially talented one.

'My wife, Mia, is more committed than me and she's definitely faster! In fact she's leading the McLaren GT4 series at the moment. The chairman of our executive committee also races, and the Senna is very much aimed at people who enjoy driving but aren't professional racers. Is it the most extreme road-legal car of the pre-hybrid era? That's impossible to say for certain, but it is the most extreme made to date.'

A bold claim, but the statistics back it up. The 0-60mph figure of 2.7sec and top speed of 208mph might be the headline grabbers, but there are two others that are even more significant: braking from 124mph to standstill can be done in 100 metres – just think about that for a moment – and maximum downforce is 800kg at 155mph. (Rather neatly, the maximum power and torque figures are also 800PS and 800lb ft, respectively.) The car's brakes and aerodynamics are gamechangers for a road-legal car.

Yes, the Senna is road-legal, but as Mike Flewitt readily admits: 'It's not the car you'd choose for that classic London to Monte Carlo road trip. We've done enough that you can drive it to a circuit, but the focus has been on ultimate light weight; after the F1 it's the lightest road car we've ever made, at 1198kg dry. That's one of the reasons we didn't make it a hybrid.'

'Because it's part of our Ultimate series, we have the licence to do something very extreme in a particular direction. It can have compromises because it's not something that's going to sell 5000 units a year.' In fact, production is being firmly capped at 500 road cars, →



Below and far left
Our man Dixon gets to grip with the Senna and finds it easier to drive hard than anticipated. Rear wing moves to control downforce in different situations.





each retailing at £750,000, plus six to eight refurbished prototype and show examples. There'll also be a run of 75 track-only Senna GTRs, and a couple of pre-pros.

As with all current McLarens, the central cockpit is made of carbonfibre. The lower part of the tub is similar to a 720's, as is the rear subframe – albeit with new K-damper suspension ('K' being shorthand for 'kinetic roll system') – but nearly everything else is new. Starting with proven essentials meant that the Senna could be developed in just a couple of years. The engine is based on McLaren's 840 unit, and is a twin-turbo V8 of 3994cc capacity.

Technical highlights include active aero, front and rear, which adjusts the downforce so that it's at its maximum when you need it – high-speed cornering – and reduced when you don't; for example, at the front end when braking hard into a corner, which could destabilise the rear. Then there's the latest development of McLaren's interconnected hydraulic suspension and damping, which in Race mode allows the suspension to be lowered by 39mm at the front and 30mm at the rear, to keep the downforce working as effectively as possible. And as for the brakes... We'll come onto those in a moment. Let's go and drive the thing.

IT LOOKS SCARY. There's no denying it. And any looming sense of anxiety has only been heightened by the email received from McLaren's PR man before the drive, requesting clothing sizes so that we could be kitted out in flame-retardant underwear ('...unless you have your own. Well, you might,' said PR man, drily).

As I don my flameproof pants – no, I don't possess any – plus full racesuit, HANS device and intercom-equipped helmet, I feel like a medieval knight girding himself for battle. And, like a knight, you really need your own personal squire to help get yourself saddled-up in the Senna's figure-hugging, superlight carbonfibre

'ACTIVE AERO
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Above and top left
Plethora of ducts and vents generate downforce and aid cooling; in Race mode the driver's instrument screen folds away to give a knife-edge minimalist display.

bucket seat. At least one of the six harness belts can be guaranteed to fall out of sight and, once each belt has been located and slotted into the central hub, they all have to be pulled so tight that you feel as though you've been ratchet-strapped into the seat. The tension increases, both physically and metaphorically.

Reach above your head for the roof-mounted starter button and the V8 fires with the hard-edged, businesslike, but not-terribly-sexy, blare that we've come to associate with this flat-plane crankshaft design. The interior is pleasingly simple, and even simpler when the car is set to Race mode and the touchscreen in front of you folds itself away through 90° to reveal a minimalist, edge-outward digital display of revs, speed and selected gear.

Ease out into the pitlane, and the car is a pussycat at low speed, with a protective cushion built into the initial throttle travel. Let the speed build a little and waggle the steering wheel experimentally; after the 720 that we drove earlier for some circuit-learning laps, response from the Senna's electro-hydraulic set-up immediately feels so much sharper. The ride is

noticeably more fidgety, too, as the car hugs every tiny imperfection in the circuit's surface.

Start pushing harder. You're still travelling at only a fraction of the Senna's capability and yet it takes a while for your mind to adjust to this whole new set of parameters. Estoril is the perfect circuit on which to learn the car: there's a long pit straight followed by a tight right-hander, and there are fast, open curves interspersed with sharp esses and a seemingly never-ending *parabolica* that flings you back out onto the pit straight again. It takes at least a couple of laps before you can even begin to acclimatise, but when you learn to trust the Senna and really lean on it... *Oh wow.*

It's hard work mentally, that's for sure. The V8 will scream up to the redline in what seems like the blink of an eye, so your fingers are always dancing on the paddleshifts to optimise engine revs for the relentless procession of corners and straights; there are transparent panels in the lower doors, à la Lamborghini Marzal, supposedly incorporated to aid visibility, but the reality is that you're focusing too far ahead for them to be of practical use. You're vaguely aware of the



engine howling away behind your head but it's muffled by your race helmet and, honestly, there's no time to spare for aural distractions; your brain is constantly processing information – which line do I take for the next corner, how hard do I brake, which gear do I need to be in, where's the apex, how soon do I get back on the throttle, which point am I aiming for as I exit the corner, how wide can I let it drift...

Braking is the least of your worries, because the Senna's carbon-composite brakes are little short of miraculous. Hammer down the pit straight and you can easily get the car up to 170mph and rising, but at the end there's a 90-right that demands maybe 40mph to be despatched neatly. Hold your nerve down the straight – even on what seems like perfectly smooth tarmac, the car starts to buck beneath you as the aero clamps it down hard – and keep the throttle mashed to the floor until the 200-metre countdown marker flashes past, then stand on the brakes with all your might: the Senna slows as dramatically as if it has just plunged into a tank of water, the active aero doing its stuff to keep the rear nailed to the tarmac, hydraulics

and electronics working together with lightning-quick reactions to keep the car flat as the massively powerful disc brakes grab it in a metaphorical iron fist and pluck it from the vortex. Now you're grateful that those harness belts have been done up as tightly as they are.

Yet despite the constant adrenaline rush, the V8's omnipresent battle-cry, the physical and mental demands being heaped onto you, this car does not feel scary as you continue to explore its limits, and your own. You can sense it moving around beneath you in the corners and, even with McLaren's clever electronic stability programme switched on (they aren't *quite* brave enough to let journos loose, first time out, with a totally unfettered 800hp), which gives a natural bias towards understeer – something you really notice as you hug the kerb on the *loooooong* final corner before the pit straight – the car will still oversteer quite readily if you're heavy-footed on the exit from a corner.

The beauty of the beast is that it's easily reined back in, which encourages you to try harder and learn some more. As someone will sagely remark later in the day: 'The car is always better than you are.'



**'YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A PROFESSIONAL
TO GET A LOT OUT OF THE SENNA. IT WILL
LET YOU DEVELOP AT YOUR OWN PACE'**



MIKE FLEWITT has been driving Senna prototypes since they were at the test-mule stage and, being boss of the company, he's had the privilege of trying it flat-out with ESC switched off. So, Mike, what's it like?

'In the tighter corners, if you're carrying the speed that the car is capable of, the ESC will brake the inside rear wheel slightly, and you can feel it dragging – but you may want to keep the back end loose, to get on the power early for a fast exit, and that's when it's an advantage to have ESC off.

'Of course, you have to use your discretion – but people like myself are pretty representative of our customer base, in terms of driver ability. They're knowledgeable and they're good drivers, but they're not chassis dynamics engineers. We're not a bad test sample, all-in-all.'

Besides its user-friendliness, the Senna has one more surprise up its NACA ducts: it won't be a particularly expensive car to run, and far less so than the P1. That's partly because there's no hybrid element to its drivetrain, and also because the brakes – while a massive step forward in terms of stopping power – are a lot less costly to make than the P1's. A set of specially developed Pirelli Trofeo R dry-weather tyres will retail for a reasonable £1500. What's more, any McLaren dealership will be able to service the car – and, of course, you can drive it there because it's road-legal.

For a final bit of Senna pub-quiz trivia, you should know that the distinctive triple exhaust outlets in the rear deck are a feature of Euro-spec models only; US cars will have just two. 'Europe has more demanding exhaust drive-by regulations, so one exhaust operates up to 4000rpm, and then the dual exhausts take over above that,' explains Mike. 'But the US is less restrictive, so the twin exhausts work throughout the rev range.

'We debated whether to leave the third pipe on the US cars, but it bugged us that there would be a pipe that didn't actually do anything. Authenticity is very important to us, so we took it off.'

I HAD APPROACHED the Senna with a degree of apprehension. You'd be a fool not to; electronic safety aids can do only so much. But I came away not only exhilarated but reassured. You don't have to be a professional to get a lot out of the Senna. It will let you develop at your own pace; even in the space of a few laps it's remarkable how much more confident and relaxed you become in handling its power and grip.

As I drove back home up the M40 from Heathrow the following day, I passed one of those Currys electricals delivery trucks with the slogan: 'I'm no racing driver but I know how to deliver a hard drive.' It's a terrible pun that I've always found excruciating – but in the context of the Senna, it's spot on. **Ed**

2018 McLaren Senna

Engine 3994cc twin-turbocharged V8 **Power** 789bhp @ 7250rpm **Torque** 590lb ft @ 5500-6700rpm
Transmission Seven-speed auto/manual **Steering** Electro-hydraulic rack-and-pinion **Suspension** Front and rear: double wishbones, interconnected hydraulic dampers with central accumulators **Brakes** Carbon-ceramic discs
Weight 1198kg (dry) **Top speed** 208mph **0-60mph** 2.7sec





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- 1964 Porsche 904
- 1977 Porsche 930 Turbo Carrera 3.0L
- 1994 Porsche 964 3.6L Turbo
- 1965 ASA 110GT Spyder
- 1962 Maserati 3500GT Vignale Spyder
- 1989 Porsche 930 Turbo Cabriolet

VOLGA SENSE OF HUMOUR

Former Soviet state Georgia has just held its first classic car rally and Octane took part in one of Russia's most infamous cars. What could possibly go wrong?

Photography Peter Baker, other participants and Alamy
Words Peter Baker



Two hours into the five-hour flight heading east to Tbilisi and I'm thinking: what have I let myself in for? Georgia, after all, not only borders Russia, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan, but also enjoys a bit of a reputation in itself. Would I, for example, as with the Liège-Istanbul-Liège rally back in 1997, be driving through a countryside (Bosnia and Herzegovina) littered with abandoned military hardware, be stopped every half-hour by cash-hungry policemen on trumped-up speeding charges, and be expected to stay in hotels where even the cats take indigestion tablets?

Well, I'm pleased to report that yours truly is wrong on all counts. In Georgia, three million citizens go about their honest business in a country, smaller even than Switzerland, that lies snug between the snow-capped Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea, blissfully unaware they are home to a classic driver's paradise. As proof, I have now returned safe and well after taking part in Georgia's first-ever classic car rally, titled 'Driving With Zoë', organised by Zoë Whittaker in conjunction with the Georgian

National Tourism Administration and held between 27 May and 1 June.

Not only safe and well, but also with a greatly enhanced sense of humour, thanks to five days either behind the wheel of, or underneath, a late-1960s Russian-built GAZ-21 Volga, a car whose extra-wide windscreen, slippery slab seats, abundance of unwanted chrome and sticky column gearchange brings forth instant memories of a once-owned, similar-vintage Vauxhall Victor. Of course, to the average Georgian the Volga was always an unobtainable object of desire, though after a short test drive they might have changed their minds.

It's Saturday 26 May, the day before the rally, and Tbilisi is in party mood. Along with the rest of the country it's celebrating 100 years of declared independence from 'Mother Russia', so any ideas of an early night are scuppered. Well, if you can't beat them, join them, and after more than a few glasses of Georgian wine I'm walking down Shota Rustaveli Avenue towards Liberty Square, waving my flag along with the best of them. Already I love this place, and I've only been here 24 hours.

Nine o'clock Sunday morning. While the city is still sleeping off its hangover, the pre-rally ceremony – think mayor, brass band and local radio/TV – is getting under way. Then, at precisely noon, give or take a few minutes (this is Georgia, and some participants have yet to arrive), a hush falls over the square. The mayor raises the start flag – except someone has left the official one at home – the Tbilisi Big Band Orchestra breaks into (*Is this the way to*) *Amarillo*, much appreciated by those hankering after another street party, then suddenly the 12 vehicles taking part in Georgia's first-ever classic car rally follow each other over the line towards the first petrol station, just 10km away.

Our dozen pioneering rally cars range from homegrown Soviet fare such as Volgas and a military GAZ 4x4 to unlikely Capitalist interlopers that include a WW2 Jeep and a

Clockwise from below left

Turner/Blackhall in their Opel (or Moskvich copy) of unknown origin; proud Pobeda owner; Zoë Whittaker meets the locals and pilots Opel Tourer; lonely shepherd; Volga gets new sparkplugs; the start; another GAZ – a GAZ 69 4x4.



'THE ENGINE, SHAKING LIKE A MAN WITH JUNGLE FEVER, HAS ALMOST BROKEN FREE OF ITS MOUNTS'

vast 1970s Cadillac land yacht. Alex Tsalkalamanidze, a restaurateur from Tbilisi, has lent his 1980 Mercedes 280SLC to rally organiser Zoë and her father Colin, while he himself has entered in a 1978 Mercedes 380. 'I wanted to have the best Mercedes in Georgia, so had the 380 transported back to Germany where every replacement part was genuine Mercedes,' explained Alex. Further German influence is exhibited in the form of a pre-war Opel tourer (possibly a DIY job, to judge from the windscreen) and a silver Opel saloon – or is it a Moskvich copy?

Already our GAZ-21 Volga, nicknamed 'Roubles', has misfired its way to the back of the line (we had been second) and, with five days still to survive, the enormity of the task ahead begins to sink in. Back-seat passenger Greg, our Woody Allen lookalike, leans forward: 'Hey guys, I just saw a fly hit the windshield, then get up and walk away.'

At the gas station I add three litres of engine oil, 20psi of air to the rear left tyre, five litres of water to the radiator, and top-up the tank although the gauge already reads full. It takes 34 litres of fuel.

Day one is relatively easy, heading 150km due east to Kvareli. That's not far in rallying terms but still far enough to take us within 20km of the Russian border. Lunch is an introduction to one of Georgia's best-kept secrets, the Alexander Chavchavadze Tsinandali Estate. Stunning in all respects, this recognised centre of Georgian culture, with its museum and astonishing landscaped gardens, also prides itself on being the first vintner in the country to bottle wine.

Just for the record, Georgia itself lays claim to being the world's first wine producer, with a history going back at least 8000 years. And here on the protected slopes of Transcaucasia are produced the best wines in the country.

It's a wrench to leave. As the sun dips below the horizon, the rally arrives at the luxurious Kvareli Eden Spa Hotel, and memories of unhelpful Russian cars soon evaporate.

Day two, and after adding more water, air and oil, Roubles is coaxed into life. But all is not well. The engine, shaking like a man stricken with jungle fever, has almost broken free of its mounts. Five minutes later, with one bolt replaced, the other tightened, we get the thumbs-up and head after the pack. Next stop, Signaghi for refreshments in the town square, overlooking the Alazani Valley (think Napa County, California). After lunch, and with the snow-capped Caucasus Mountains now fading from the rear-view mirror, the happy band heads back to Tbilisi.

Tbilisi, split into old and new by the fast-running Kura river and not much bigger than Oxford and Cambridge combined, is home to 1.5 million people, half the population of →



CLASSIC RALLYING IN GEORGIA

Clockwise from top right


Ladas are still a common sight, and very useful; an actual American Jeep; Firuza, the Blue Palace in Borjomi; sun sets on a later Volga; a guide shows Vardzia's cave village and monastery to Jonathan Turner, James Blackhall and Zoë Whittaker..

Georgia. Fading graffiti, and some not-so-faded, tells the story. Russia, always Russia, but also the Middle East, America and more recently the EU, the entrepreneurial new generation pinning its future on Western democracy. Our hotel goes by the basic name of 'Rooms', but this former Soviet print works is anything but utilitarian. It's a top-class establishment, exuding character and very good value for money.

Day three and Roubles is on good form, starting first pull and running on at least three-and-a-half cylinders, and for the first time we are not last to leave. Destination? Vardzia, an area to the west of Tbilisi that's steeped in religious history. Its spectacular terraced 12th Century rock village, church and monastery are carved into the side of Erusheti Mountain, and its 600 caves include the Church of the Dormition which, with its frescos, paintings and statues, is more than ample reward for the exhausting climb.

Such a dedicated expedition takes time, so it's a surprise to learn that Roubles has covered 250km by nightfall. But now the rally has run out of Georgia, Turkey being no more than a ten-minute donkey ride away, so we turn round, face north ready for tomorrow, and surrender to the comforts of the five-star Vardzia Resort Hotel.

Georgia is full of surprises. Day four introduces us to another, the 85,000-hectare Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park and the adjacent Borjomi Nature Reserve. But, as drizzle turns to more persistent rain, we stop not to admire the view but to repair Roubles' throttle linkage. During lunch, a change of sparkplugs rectifies the misfire and a magic radiator repair potion cures the leak. Our GAZ-21 Volga now runs as well as the day it left the Gorky Motor Works.

Our final night on the road before returning to the finish in Tbilisi is spent in the spa town of Borjomi. Here, enjoying the contrast, we look out from an ultra-modern Crowne Plaza Hotel over Firuza, the Blue Palace and its mineral water park, built in 1892. Here, I'm afraid, I consume wine instead of the water, and feel slightly sorry for those doing the opposite. 

FOR MORE on Zoë Whittaker's unusual rallies see www.zoewhittaker.com.





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NOISE AND GOOD COMPANY

Octane joins racing legends Bell, Merzario and Galli with the screaming flat-12-powered 1975 championship-winning Alfa Tipo 33

Words Sam Hancock Photography Tim Scott





Right, far right and bottom right
Race-prep specialist Tim Samways and co unload the Tipo 33 as the three legends get ready for the track; Arturo Merzario won the 1975 Targa Florio in a Tipo 33.



When it's at high revs the Alfa Romeo's Tipo 33/TT12's flat-12 strikes up a resonance that's as eye-watering as it is deafening. I'm in the pit garage at Balocco, the proving ground in Northern Italy that was formerly the private test track of the marque's dedicated racing division, Autodelta. The TT12 being warmed-up before me was born and raised here by now-legendary racing drivers, three of whom are present today. Here with me are Derek Bell, Arturo Merzario and Nanni Galli, at this most fitting of venues.

'My heart skipped a beat arriving here this morning, so many memories flooding back,' says a misty-eyed Merzario, somehow looking cooler than ever in the white cowboy hat that seems never to have left his head in 40-plus years. 'This was like a home for us in the 1970s. We spent many months here, driving these cars every day; developing, preparing for races. We used to sleep over there, above the workshop!' he says, pointing towards the barn that once formed Autodelta's trackside facility.

Alfa Romeo is one of the oldest, most successful manufacturers in motorsport history, and the Tipo 33 era of the late 1960s and early 1970s is, to many, the most evocative of all. But its grand crescendo with the TT12 nearly didn't happen at all. The man to thank is engineering genius Carlo

Chiti. Back at Alfa Romeo after a World Championship-winning stint with Ferrari, Chiti's Autodelta engineering firm had been absorbed by the Milanese marque in 1964. Soon after, he was instructed to build a 2.0-litre sports car that would herald Alfa Romeo's return to world class motorsport.

The first Tipo 33 of 1967 was revealed in Balocco to an astonished press gathering, who marvelled at its beauty and remarkably low driving position. A debut win was followed in 1968 with class wins at Daytona, Le Mans and the Targa Florio before the model was completely reinvented for 1969 with an all-new 3.0-litre V8 and open monocoque chassis. This Tipo 33/3 allowed Alfa to challenge Porsche and Ferrari with their respective 908 and 312P. After a sticky start, notable class wins followed, albeit often in the shadow of the bigger 5.0-litre cars that fought for outright victory in the World Championship for Makes – or FIA World Sportscar Championship as it was more commonly known.

By 1973, rule changes capped engine capacities at 3.0 litres and Chiti, who had long hinted at the prospect of a 12-cylinder

engine, sensed a chance for overall victory. Yet he delayed its debut to such an extent that it developed near-mythical status, finally appearing at Spa halfway through the '73 season. The world at last was treated to the arresting, Ferrari-like howl of a flat-12, now bolted to an all new tubular chassis – or *Tubolare Telaio* (TT).

It was an inauspicious debut: Andrea De Adamich was pitched into the Stavelot barriers at immense speed when a tyre delaminated. Further outings proved equally challenging and, while the car clearly showed potential, it needed development. Shrewdly swerving the rigours of Le Mans, Chiti left rivals Ferrari, Matra and Mirage to duke it out for the Championship and set his sights on the following season.

And 1974 should have belonged to Alfa Romeo. Ferrari chose not to participate and the TT12's wrinkles had largely been ironed out. But, being a nationalised company, Alfa Romeo was not immune to the prevailing winds of political forces and the global oil crisis made motor racing deeply unfashionable. After some success against a dwindling field, including a win for →

'The Tipo 33 of the late 1960s and early 1970s is, to many, the most evocative racer of all'





*'There is not a hint
of recalcitrance
from the flat-12.
The higher it revs,
the more at ease
it sounds'*





Left and below
Right-hand gearshift features wooden knob and exposed linkage; adjustable drilled pedals feature in ultra-sparse cockpit.



this very car at Monza in the hands of Merzario and Andretti, Alfa's president announced in the August that it would withdraw from the remaining races. He also cast serious doubt on future participation, citing the poor health of the Italian motor industry and dwindling car sales.

Enter German team owner and racing driver Willi Kauhsen. A regular competitor in the German Interserie sports car races, Kauhsen had funding from a German sausage manufacturer and wanted to take over the programme for the 1975 season. Chiti, desperate to fight for a world title, engineered an opportunity to keep the Alfa Romeo programme alive under somebody else's dime. Was Kauhsen a new sponsor? A new team manager? A new owner? In reality, it didn't matter because Chiti had few intentions to change anything at all. The cars would remain factory red, deferring only to the new arrangement with the

addition of WKRT (Willi Kauhsen Racing Team) emblazoned boldly on the nose.

Accounts conflict about whether Kauhsen's more efficient German technicians turned things around, or whether they were window-dressing to keep the illusion alive that this was no longer an Italian-funded effort. German or Italian, Kauhsen or Chiti, something clicked and outright victories soon rolled in.

Drivers such as Bell, Pescarolo, Merzario, Ickx, Scheckter, Lafitte, Andretti and Mass contributed to seven wins out of eight races and finally secured Alfa Romeo the World Championship title. There wasn't a drivers' title that year, but Bell rightly contests that had there been, he would have won it: 'I won four WCM races for Alfa, and I won Le Mans in the Mirage.' He also recalls: 'Kauhsen's involvement that season was critical, and is too often overlooked. He helped us find reliability, and that was our

key strength over the turbo-powered Renault Alpines. Chiti was a good man, but I had little to do with him.'

The powerful, rotund Chiti's Achilles' heel was perhaps that he was too caring.

'He was a great man, a great engineer,' recalls Arturo Merzario over another Coke. 'But he couldn't delegate. So many races we lost to overheating brakes, and when the TT12 was launched – an all-new design – still we had overheating brakes!' I hope not to discover this for myself.

With the needles rising on the temperature gauges, preparer Tim Samways leans into the TT12's engine bay and confidently blips the throttle harder. There is not a hint of recalcitrance from the 3.0-litre flat-12. The higher it revs, the more at ease it sounds. The deliciously awkward gargles on tickover give way to a rapid, shattering chorus that follows Samways' every hand movement with freakish urgency.





Clockwise from right
(Left to right) Galli,
Merzario and Bell;
Merzario and Ralf
Stommelen battle paired
TT12s in the 1974
Nürburgring 1000km;
writer Hancock chills
post-drive; that flat-12.



This is chassis 008. To call it precious would be a gross understatement. In addition to that Monza win in '74, it claimed five of the seven victories that earned the World Championship title in 1975. Despite the revolving door of racing royalty at Autodelta, Merzario was at the wheel for every one.

With oil and water suitably warmed, a nod is enough to tell me that I'm up – first. My job? A dozen laps or so to assess the car and put some heat into the wide, slick tyres and steel disc brakes before handing over to the three legends. The irony is not lost on me. These guys could do it with their eyes closed and I'm a little embarrassed at the prospect of readying a car for them. But it's a mark of their graciousness that they clearly wouldn't have it any other way. 'Vai, vai Sam!' shouts Merzario, ushering me into the car. 'Anyway, I am telling Derek a story...' he says with a mischievous grin that implies something to do with the fairer sex.

There's enough legroom – just – for my lanky proportions. Only the low-hanging dashboard prevents me slinking deeper into my preferred knees-high, head-low driving position, so I sit a little upright, get strapped tight and await the signal to go.

Grabbing first gear with the wood-topped gearlever mounted to my right, I'm surprised at the extensive amount of travel across the gate. The clutch, however, is light and I pull away with ease. Riding into the throttle for the first time and already the sheer volume of the induction noise is astonishing, courtesy of the air intake towering by my left ear. An aural triumph but, my goodness, it's thunderously loud.

'Around 500 horsepower,' Arturo had told me, 'and it's all at the top.' He's right. There is absolutely nothing below 8000rpm and it doesn't even come on cam until nine. 'Keep it around ten if you can,' Samways had told me, 'and shift at eleven!'

With a near-2km straight unfurling ahead of me, I let the stabled thoroughbred bolt. Up through third, fourth and briefly into fifth gear, it feels bizarre to hang on so long before upshifting. I'm positive there has been a misunderstanding and that surely this isn't sustainable, but no, the revcounter is redlined at 11,200rpm, so I continue as instructed. Sure enough, the motor responds beautifully, each change of ratio dropping it perfectly back into the start of its narrow but impressive power band.

The soundtrack is absurd. Rapturous, orchestral, ear-splittingly loud. I feel utterly enveloped by noise and for a moment – while flat in top – I'm almost paralysed by it. This car was capable of 330km/h in period and there's no reason it still isn't. My sudden arrival, therefore, at a tight left-right chicane catches me by surprise and, while I shed speed sufficiently, it's not so easy to get down the necessary three gears.

Fumbling a little with the unexpectedly long throw on the lever, I roll into the apex a cog too high and am met with obstinacy under my right foot through the exit. On the upside, the chassis navigates the twists with aplomb, the front feeling utterly glued, and the rear following suit. Similar turns follow and I sense the chassis twist and flex accommodately through the sharp direction-changes. A little squat at the rear on power, a little roll at the front on turn-in. It's a delicious low-speed balance, with kart-like responses. No wonder the TT12 also won the Targa Florio in 1975.

But what about fast corners? They are no place for a twisting chassis and, although it's only 670kg in mass, most of that is the engine and I fear the pendulum effect as I enter Balocco's notorious Indianapolis-style corner: a long left that seems never ending.

Derek Bell says it makes Spa's Eau Rouge 'like a walk in the park'. Merzario recalls that, while testing here in period, 'this was the one corner you could not even think about making the slightest mistake – it could kill you'.

Mild banking gives it that American oval feel and, boy, does it make it fast. 'We used to enter at 270km/h and emerge at 280km/h,' relishes the diminutive Italian. 'You could not afford to be even 10cm off line. But don't →



McKLEN IMAGES



'I fear the pendulum effect in Balocco's most notorious corner: Derek Bell says it makes Eau Rouge feel like a walk in the park'



1974 Alfa Romeo Tipo 33/TT12

Engine 2995cc flat-12, DOHC per bank, Lucas mechanical fuel injection **Power** 500bhp @ 11,000rpm **Transmission** Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive
Steering Rack and pinion **Suspension** Front and rear: double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers **Brakes** Discs **Weight** 670kg **Top speed** 206mph (approx)

worry, at least you have guardrails today. Back then we only had pine trees.’

I’ve no intention of risking a car that contributed so much to that 1975 world title, so I breathe on the brakes through the entry, happy to take things well below the limit and accelerate back up towards it later in the turn. Attempts over the first few laps are compromised by imperfect lines and, frankly, being somewhat daunted by the immensity of the curve. But a little later I find a line that works and lean confidently into the throttle pedal through the endless mid-corner.

Having felt little or no downforce over the rest of the lap, I am shocked to find it in abundance now. The sense of sure-footedness encourages me to add more throttle still and, for a moment, the car feels rock-solid. But all the while the forces are mounting and an uneasiness descends. I become keenly aware of the weight of the car and the immense strain on every component. Inevitably something has to give and I notice tiny variations in steering response that hint at the twisting chassis problem so vehemently

complained about by period test driver, Teodoro Zeccoli. A deft touch is required and I understand why Derek Bell later joked that he thanked the car each time he emerged from this corner unscathed.

Saving my enthusiasms for less treacherous terrain, I focus on perfecting my gearshifts in order to attack the rest of the lap. Jacques Lafitte recently recalled that ‘the gearbox was not so easy’, and he wasn’t wrong. Unlike the 33/3, which has a succinct, pin-sharp gearchange, the TT12’s linkage is more complex, which reduces feel and precision. The narrow powerband doesn’t help either and, while I would normally leave downshifting until late in the braking zone to minimise the strain on the engine, the TT12 prefers the opposite: shift early to keep the revs high for a nice response when rolling into the throttle for a heel-toe ‘blip’.

‘Don’t nurse it, either,’ Samways had told me. ‘Be decisive.’ It works and pretty soon I’m feeling right at home.

I don’t have enough laps to generate the brake fade that so infuriated Merzario 40-

odd years ago, but I settle in enough to fully understand why, and how, this most gorgeous sports racing car became the automotive treasure that it is today.

Exciting yet dangerous. Heavy yet nimble. Powerful yet initially unreliable. The TT12 is a mirror of the very environment in which it was created. Remarkably basic in so many ways, unfathomably complicated in others – with sparks of genius throughout. Could any racing car be more quintessentially Italian?

As the warm sun sets on our day, I’m left mesmerised. Not so much by the chassis, or the handling, or the brakes. Not even by the power, which is compromised by weight and rev range. But by this car’s aura. It draws transfixed bystanders towards it even when stationary. It raises every hair on my neck at the press of the starter button. It leaves onlookers open-mouthed as it howls past the pits on full song. It is, quite simply, one of the greatest sounds in motorsport. **End**

THANKS TO the car’s owner, Balocco proving ground, Tim Samways Sporting & Historic Cars.

Enzo

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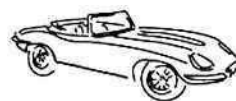
IT'S 55 years since Jaguar's E-type Lightweight hit the racetrack in 1963 as a follow-up to the Le Mans-winning D-type. Eighteen were planned and, initially, 12 cars were produced, along with two spare bodies. Earlier, in 1962, Malcolm Sayer had developed the Low Drag Coupé concept car, which used an E-type tub and was clothed in aerodynamic, aluminium coupé bodywork. It was sold by Jaguar to racing driver Dick Protheroe in 1963.

The E-type Lightweight was based on an open roadster and was an evolution of the Low Drag Coupé. Bodywork was largely constructed of aluminium and the engine featured an aluminium block. The tuned 3.8-litre with Lucas fuel injection produced 300 bhp. The four-speed gearbox was close-ratio and some of the later cars had a five-speed 'box. One Lightweight, the Lindner-Nöcker car, was modified into a Low Drag Coupé by Malcom Sayer and another was modified into a unique Low Drag (the Lumsden-Sargent car) by Dr Sami Klat of Imperial College.

The Lightweight did not go on to have such an illustrious racing history as the preceding XK120, C-type and D-type, and it never won at Le Mans – Jaguar simply took too long to ready it for racing, by which time the Lightweights were no longer competitive in top-flight events.

In 2014, Jaguar Heritage announced that it would build the six remaining Lightweights (pictured right) using the original chassis numbers. These new Lightweights are exactly as per the originals and all have been sold at £1 million apiece.

Robert Couchner



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**1969 ALFA ROMEO
GIULIA SALOON**
MARK SOMMER

WHEN I DROVE my Alfa back from Italy last year, it became obvious that a new clutch would be required very soon. I'd been putting up with its heavy action, but my left leg grew weary and then the clutch started to slip.

Pick-up had also been hesitant below 2000rpm and I knew the distributor was worn. So I decided to replace it with a 123 distributor with a mapped electronic ignition system built in, in the hope that it would improve the Alfa's running. I booked my car in with Ian Ellis Alfa Romeo, a well-known 105 specialist based near the beautiful town of Lewes, in East Sussex.

On close inspection after a test drive, Ian noticed my car was fitted with a 1750 clutch slave cylinder, which has a return spring. Its springiness adds to the heaviness of the clutch, so Alfa dispensed with it on later cars. Ian suggested I have a later one fitted.

He also noticed the front brakes were dragging. The calipers could be freed but it wouldn't be long before new ones would be needed. I gave him the go-ahead to replace them, along with fresh brake pads.

Replacing the clutch meant removing the gearbox and, as with most old cars, Ian discovered a few other small issues worth sorting out. They included a worn gearbox rear seal, gearlever gaiter, and mounting bushes for the gearbox and exhaust. He also spotted a small crack in the offside

front chassis leg by the steering idler, which needed welding. Ian made sure I knew what work was being done at every step and emailed me lots of pictures.

The old friction plate was down to 6.7mm; a new one is 10mm and they tend to slip from about 7mm, so it was certainly down to the rivets! They gave the gearbox a good clean before refitting it, and the new electronic distributor was also fitted and timed.

It was a gorgeous sunny day when I picked up my car and I couldn't resist having a look around the other classic Alfas in the garage, which included a Giulietta sprint and a genuine Ti Super. The drive back to Berkshire was a joy; the clutch was so much lighter and the new distributor had cured that low-rev hesitation. Now it's time for some summer fun with the little Alfa, which drives better than ever.

THANKS TO Ian Ellis Alfa Romeo, ianellisalfaromeo.com.





Above and left

Up on a lift, gearbox out, new clutch in, electronic ignition conversion, new front brakes, spot of welding... just a typical month of Alfa ownership.

OCTANE'S FLEET

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

ROBERT COUCHER

International editor

- 1937 Bentley 4¼
- 1955 Jaguar XK140
- 1988 Mercedes-Benz 560 SEC

TONY DRON

Test driver

- 1932 Austin Seven

GLEN WADDINGTON

Associate editor

- 1983 Porsche 944
- 1989 BMW 320i Convertible

ANDREW ENGLISH

Contributor

- 1960 Triumph TR3A
- 1965 Aston Martin DB5

SANJAY SEETANAH

Advertising director

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

MARK DIXON

Deputy editor

- 1955 Land Rover Series I 107in
- 1966 Ford Mustang 289
- 1991 Land Rover Discovery
- 1994 Range Rover 4.0

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'S FLEET

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

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

EVAN KLEIN

Photographer

- 1967 Alfa Romeo Giulia Super

MATTHEW HOWELL

Photographer

- 1970 VW Beetle 1300



Living two versions of the dream



1966 FORD MUSTANG

MARK DIXON

WHEN I BOUGHT the Mustang earlier this year, I naively thought I'd drive it over the summer while making a snagging list of jobs to attend to next winter. Well, guess what – the plan seems to be working. I've now covered more than 2500 miles, nearly all of them with the windows down for maximum pillarless cool factor, and the car hasn't missed a beat. My one regret in this unusually warm British summer is that I changed the 160°F thermostat

for a hotter one, as described last month: I really shouldn't have bothered!

All I've done lately with the Mustang, therefore, is use it and enjoy it. I frequently find myself living out the old cliché of turning to look back at it after parking up. For a three-box saloon, its shape and detailing are amazingly arresting.

The only car I've ever owned that was cooler is the Lamborghini Espada that I bought with good mate and *Octane* contributor Richard Heseltine a few years ago, and which was regularly featured in these pages until, regretfully, we sold it in spring last year. We'd always hoped to make that classic Italian road trip in it,

which sadly was not to be, but its new owner has just fulfilled our ambition.

Jonny Ambrose didn't do it by halves. He drove the Espada on a 3000-mile journey through France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy that encompassed seven classic Grand Prix circuits, five epic mountain passes, ten motoring museums and three exotic car manufacturers (Pagani, Maserati and Lamborghini). Naturally, Sant'Agata was Jonny's ultimate destination.

'The people in Lamborghini's Polo Storico classic department were charming,' Jonny emailed me on his return, 'and as a special favour they showed me all the archive paperwork

relating to chassis #7825, complete with handwritten notes. Another highlight was a spirited drive down the south side of the San Bernardino Pass, the route that Lamborghini's legendary test driver Valentino Balboni took in this actual car when he was returning with its first owner from an event in Germany. The brakes were squealing a bit by the time I reached the bottom...

'I also managed to drive the old Grand Prix course at Clermont Ferrand, which Jackie Stewart claimed was one of the four most difficult tracks in the world. With that in mind, I was amazed how easy it was to flow the Espada from one cambered bend to the next, even though this isn't its natural habitat.'

Jonny had no mechanical trouble at all, apart from a windscreen wiper working loose on its spindle during torrential rain. My gut feeling is that these Lamborghinis are much tougher and more reliable than cynics tell you – after all, the company made its name building tractors. It's really heartening to see Jonny having the confidence to use his car in the way it was intended.

Do I regret selling it? A little bit, of course. But it was a big

responsibility to run on a journalist's income – even two journalists' incomes – and I needed the share of the money I had tied up in it to move house. Now I have a '66 Mustang sitting outside and the sun is shining. I'm certainly not complaining.

The lure of an Italian road trip is still strong, however, even though the 'Stang's drum brakes wouldn't be my first choice for tackling the San Bernardino. Richard – how are you fixed next summer?



Clockwise from facing page
Mustang looks surprisingly 'right' in its new home of the Cotswolds; Mark's old Espada has just returned from a trip to Italy in the hands of its current owner and auto artist, Jonny Ambrose (see www.jonnyambrose.com).



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On song, at last



**1934
SINGER LE MANS**
JOHN SIMISTER

SADLY, THERE is nowhere near enough space here to detail all that has happened to the Singer since I reported on its radiator's new chrome covering last year. But all of it was done with one crucial goal: to drive it to the 50th National Day of the Singer Owners' Club in June, at Woburn Abbey. As you can see, it was mission accomplished.

So here's a précis of what got it there. I finished the re-make of the body frame's bulkhead area, repainted the steel scuttle side panels and fitted them. Next, on went the cylinder head

with new studs less likely to stretch and able to take a touch more tightening torque. I spent a while timing the overhead camshaft, crucial to optimum pace, then fitted the original Solex carburettors and manifold in place of the too-small SUs previously there as an 'upgrade'. To my great joy, the engine started instantly on all cylinders.

Next, reinstate and improve the dashboard wiring, fit the refurbished chronometric dials and wire the headlights through two relays to protect the fragile, and irreplaceable, SLC2 light switch. Then the brakes, all of which had seized, got a cylinder-hone, new seals – and a new pipe because I split a union.

On 15 December it took to the road for the first time in four years, but bonnet-less and only

as far as a trailer that would carry it to Adam Redding's restoration workshop. There, its new bonnet was trimmed to fit, the front wings and apron were improved as needed and the whole front end was painted.

I'd planned to drive it home but there was a huge flat-spot, caused by wrong-spec jets and chokes in the carbs. Gower & Lee supplied the right ones, and finally the Singer sang as it should. But there was a nasty rear-end clonk on taking up the drive, caused by badly worn splined hubs. I ordered new ones – a heady £840 the pair – and got an engineer friend to split the old ones from their driveshaft tapers. One needed nine tons of hydraulic force...

Now the Singer was ready to face its marque-mates. At last.

Clockwise from top

En route to Singer National Day; proudly placed among its peers; new bonnet fitted and ready for paint.



Seatbelts for a Singer?

'As with most pre-war cars built on a wooden frame and ladder chassis, fitting seatbelts isn't easy, but it's not impossible. The top mounting points should be above shoulder height, or at 45° back from shoulder height, to be effective. It's critical your mounting point provides strength and comfort. They must not interfere with the operation of the hood; we often fit them with detachable mounting points to help this. Static belts may be the only option with this type of vehicle. We've fitted many pre-war cars with 'belts, so we're happy to help if you need advice.'

Monthly advice from Stuart Quick of Quickfit Safety Belts, one of the UK's foremost providers of classic and vintage seatbelts and racing safety harnesses.

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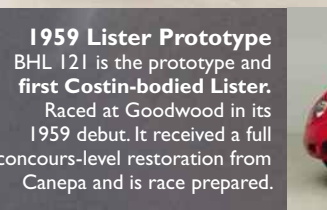
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1959 Lister Prototype
BHL 121 is the prototype and first Costin-bodied Lister. Raced at Goodwood in its 1959 debut. It received a full concours-level restoration from Canepa and is race prepared.



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Anti-wrinkle treatment



**1970
VOLKSWAGEN
BEETLE**

MATTHEW HOWELL

IT MUST BE 17 or 18 years since I last painted a car. That vehicle was my '62 Beetle, which I still drive weekly, and the cellulose paint has stood up pretty well, considering it was all done in a single-car garage and I'm a photographer, not a painter. But I swore I would never, ever paint another car.

The relentless panel prep – a never-ending routine of fill, rub down and repeat until my arms ached and fingers were raw – has never left my mind. So I still don't know why I agreed to put myself through it all again. Maybe because there were two of us this time. Damon, a friend and co-owner of the rally-inspired Beetle, said: 'It will be fun; we've done everything else.'

I'll fess up at this point – as you can see, this isn't a by-the-book restoration performed in a hermetically sealed chamber. It's a regular

garage where two cars, many bicycles, welding gear and all sorts of accumulated automotive junk live on top of each other and collect dust. It's also where the primer and top coat would be sprayed.

Over weeks we filled, sanded and primed over and over till the whole car, inside and out, was no longer a sickly lemon yellow but a beautiful base grey. We guide-coated the whole car and lightly wet-sanded it back again to remove visible imperfections. The work felt endless but it looked great at the end and the fun bit, spraying the top coats of colour, was to come.

With nervous hands and a faint memory of how to paint a car, I picked up the spray gun and methodically applied the first few coats of Clementine Orange, covering the rollcage, interior and all the edges before filling in the main panels.

At first it looked all right, a bit dry on the overlapping passes but OK. Then we noticed something horrible growing on the roof and one of the three-quarter panels: the paint had reacted badly.

Our smiles fell as we started to understand why professional resprays cost so much. We shut the garage door and for a month pretended nothing bad had happened. We felt sick.

Returning apprehensively, we realised the problem wasn't my dusty garage but the yellow paint hidden underneath our primer. The top-coat had not liked it and had developed a wrinkle finish that you'd expect to see on a rocker cover, not an exterior panel.

This saga looks like it will have a happy ending, though. We have since rubbed back the two affected areas, re-applied primer and very slowly built up the top-coats. We know this isn't how a bodyshop would have dealt with it, but this is a car built by a photographer and a graphic designer. We will get it done and we will be proud of it. Just don't ask me (or Damon) to do another for a while.



Above and left

It's all in the prep... yet Matt and Damon still found out the hard way that spraying a car is never easy.

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Rolls Royce Phantom I Tourer by Hooper ex-Maharaja of Chhotu Udepur 1926

This imposing Phantom I Tourer is an extraordinary relic of the luxurious lives that Indian sovereigns led in the 1920s. After forty years in India and twenty years in the UK, its current Belgian owner spent over 10.000 hours of labour to fully restore it. Drives remarkably well with very light steering and an ultra-silent OHV six cylinder 7.7L engine. Price: ASK



Kieft "LDA5" - 1953

Extensive and impressive period racing history, including 1955 Le Mans and 1956 Mille Miglia. Price: ASK



Fiat 1100/103 ex-Mille Miglia - 1953

Authentic Mille Miglia car (1956 & 1957) with a heavily tuned engine. Price: 235.000 Euro



Alfa Romeo 1900 CSS by Touring - 1954

Pebble Beach entrant in 1999, eligible to myriad classic car events. Price: 270.000 Euro



Porsche 912 Soft Window Targa - 1968

Excellently maintained, this early 912 Targa is your ideal summer car! Price: 105.000 Euro



Belgravia belles



**1955 JAGUAR
XK140**

ROBERT COUCHER

THANK GOODNESS London remains a city where most people rise late at the weekends. Early morning weekend drives are a treat, and on Sunday 24 June the Jaguar and I duly motored across to Belgrave Square for the Belgravia Classic Car Show (See *Events*). With no parking restrictions on a Sunday, I left the XK outside the Square garden, where the inner circle of the concours was on display, so a quick getaway was assured.

Belgrave Square garden is usually locked, with access for residents only, so I normally drive past without paying much attention. Only when you're in it do you realise how big it is.

Bentley man John Rendall (pictured right, with the hat)

and Ferrari man Christopher Cornelius led me to where most of the usual suspects were to be found chatting around the cars displayed in this very green and lush park. With grub and drinks on offer the show soon became a fine garden party. The mix of classic cars on the lawns was refreshing and threw up some previously unseen motor cars.

My XK has seen a lot of action this summer and as usual



Left and below

XK140 looks right at home in Belgrave Square, from where the RAC used to run the nation's motorsport; classics gather in the Square's lush inner sanctum.

is running well. The engine, now 20,000 miles on from its full rebuild, has always been very refined with its standard 1¾in SU carbs, torquey XJ6 cams and a quiet twin-exhaust system. But recently, when starting from cold, it has sounded a little rattly for a few seconds before the hydraulic plunger pressurises the lower timing chain. And at operating temperature the engine sounds a bit tappety.

I think one or both of the timing chains must have become slack, or the tappets need adjusting, which is unusual after so few miles. The top timing chain is adjustable so I'm hoping that's what it needs. The lower chain should be self-adjusting, but if there's wear around the plunger the issue gets more serious because the front engine cover has to come off. Maybe it's time for another trip down to Twyford Moors.

The exhaust also seems to have developed a bit of a blow, from the sound of it most likely where the pipes join the manifold. This might be an opportune moment to fit straight-through pipes and a tuned manifold, but I believe the standard manifold is quite efficient for an engine like mine and the Jaguar's soft burble suits it well. So I think I'll leave it nice and quiet.

OTHER NEWS

'On a very hot day in Los Angeles, two people told me in traffic how great my Alfa Giulia looks, and commented on its lack of air-con. I love how everyone in LA feels compelled to share and engage in everyday life'

Evan Klein

'Achieved the same speeds at the VHRA's Pendine Sands event in my Ford Model A hot rod as in the last four years. I'm nothing if not consistent'

Sarah Bradley

'Fettling of the Jensen to reliable daily driver status has now included replacing a cracked thermostat housing. No big deal... until I got the bill. Still reeling'

James Elliott

'Took my 1961 Saab 96 on the Guild of Motoring Writers' Euroclassic to Normandy in June. Downhill it was just as fast as a participating Ferrari F355'

John Simister



THIESEN

AUTOMOBILE RARITÄTEN

Hamburg · Berlin



Ferrari 250 GT Ellena Coupé, 1957, LHD, certified by Ferrari Classiche, matching numbers and colours, Mille Miglia in 2007.



BMW 507 Roadster Serie II, 1959, extensively restored in Germany, 1 of just 252 exemplars built, popular collectors car.



Talbot-Lago T26 Record Convertible, 1947, RHD, Wilson Pre-Selector, full history, fully restored, well documented.



Mercedes-Benz 680 Sport Tourer, 1927, matching numbers, interesting history, fully documented.



BMW 503 Coupé Series I, 1956, LHD, delivered new to Germany in this colour configuration!



Monteverdi High Speed 375 L, 1970, LHD, 2 owners, totally restored, 1 of 53, this by Fissore.



Mercedes-Benz 300 b Convertible D, 1954, LHD, recently restored, 1 of only 125 built!



Lagonda LG 6 Cabriolet, 1938, 1 of 30, restored to Concours condition, a legend on wheels!



Talbot Lago T26 Grand Sport, 1954, 4.5 litre twin cam engine, pre-selector, sun roof, Concours, 1 of 19.



Aston Martin DB 5 Coupé, 1964, extensively restored, matching numbers, first delivery England.

AC Ace Roadster, 1959, white, black interior, rare LHD.
Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 SS Villa d'Este Convertible, 1949/50.
Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 s Touring Berlinetta, 1947.
Aston Martin DB 6 MK 2, 1970, LHD (ex RHD).
Aston Martin DB 5, 1964, RHD, Webasto sun roof.
Facel Vega HK 500, grey, manual, restored!

Jaguar E SI 3.8 l Flatfloor Roadster, 1962, LHD.
Lagonda V12 Drophead Coupé, RHD, 1938, restored.
Lamborghini 400 GT 2+2, 1967, matching numbers.
Mercedes Benz Patent Motorcar, 1955 / 1995.
MB 280 SE 3.5 Coupe, 1969, LHD, blue metallic.
MB 280 SE 3.5 Convertible, 1971, silver, original engine.

MB 300 S Roadster, 1953, extensively restored.
MB 300 Sc Roadster, 1957, dark blue, just 53 made.
MB 320 Combination Coupé, 1937, Concours!
MB 540 K Convertible A, 1939, 5 Speed, 770 K Brakes.
MB 540 K Spezialroadster, 1937, imperial red, restored.
MB 770 K Convertible D, 1931, "Großer Mercedes".

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OVERDRIVE

Other cars we've driven this month



All day, and all of the night



**1962
ASTON MARTIN
DB4**

GLEN WADDINGTON

OCTANE WAS on press the day before this year's Le Mans 24 Hours kicked off. So I missed the chance to drive over there with a fleet of classic Astons in order to see the Aston Martin Racing team's new Vantage GTEs in full flight. Instead, it was a 4am start from Heathrow, and arrival at La Sarthe an hour or two before the start of the race (more on that shortly). At some point I'd find the chance to drive the fabulous DB4 that had made the trip all the way from Newport Pagnell.

It's a 1962 Series IV that had been on sale in the showroom

at Aston Martin Works, given a once-over by the mechanics and pressed straight into action for a two-day, 450-mile blast across to the French race.

To be honest, I was a bit bleary-eyed when I took the wheel. It was about 7am on the Sunday and I'd been dozing at Aston Martin's 'glamping' site just a couple of miles down the Rue du Mans from Tertre Rouge. It's a very refined way to see the race, with large tents, proper mattresses, excellent washing facilities and a superb open-air eating area for barbecues into the night or al fresco breakfasting. All accompanied by the background wail and thunder of the racing cars.

This year was a trial run; the company intends to make 'Glamping with Aston Martin'



Above, left and above right DB4 drove beautifully; a refined social atmosphere at the gîte; steep learning curve for the Aston Martin team in this year's 24 Hours.



available properly in time for next year's 24 Hours.

I left the gîte and headed out via Ruaudin, surprised to find that traffic was pretty sparse so close to the racing action. Round here, the straight roads lined with pine trees feel iconic, special and appropriate. So does the DB4. What a wonderful car!

This one is highly original and completely unmolested bar a respray at some point in its life. It's mellow inside, the leather gently creased and lightly worn. And it sounds utterly intoxicating, its multi-layered exhaust rasp bouncing back from the trees.

The steering, though a tad heavy at low speeds, is beautifully precise on the move, it rides with rounded refinement, and the delicate gearshift slots home with ease. It really is the perfect car for showing off in these parts. Couldn't have chosen better.

Back at the track, it was time

'IT SOUNDS UTTERLY INTOXICATING, ITS EXHAUST RASP BOUNCING BACK FROM THE TREES'

to check on the progress of the AMR team and its pair of Vantage GTEs. The cars are brand new for this year, so they're at the bottom of the learning curve after great success with the generation before. Driver Darren Turner had told us the previous day that they were extremely happy with the handling, and that the brakes, though a little dead in feel, were extremely powerful. More pace will come with time.

The result? A double-points finish in the GTE Pro class, and the highest-placed new GTE car in the field. Aston Martin has form at Le Mans...



Size matters

BENTLEY BENTAYGA V8 JAMES ELLIOTT

After an urban weekend at my London home, the Bentayga's natural habitat became an effortless motorway pounding, but a greater challenge was an A-road blast for Dixon, Waddington and Elliott to visit the godfather of classic motoring journalism, Tony Dron. This star chamber of critics tried to pick on everything from its looks, to its ride and handling, and it's true that it seemed to flounder a bit on tighter roads, the weight transfer and braking illustrating how difficult it is to shift 2½ tonnes of high-sided vehicle as if it is a Lotus Eleven. During a week of varied use, it averaged 20mpg, not too bad for a 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 that woofles seductively when the throttle is buried. But what did Dron think of a car so far removed from his Austin 7 (above)? He loved it, unconditionally and in every respect. The Svengali has spoken.



Fast and roofless

MERCEDES-AMG GT C ROADSTER GLEN WADDINGTON

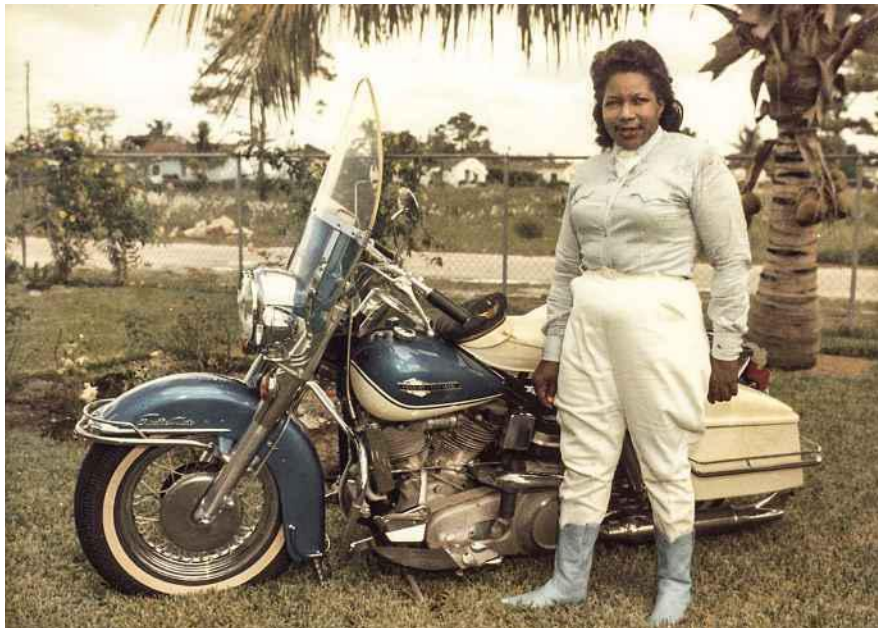
It's all too easy to spend a day with a car like this, turn dampers and throttle map up to 11, declare your love for it (somewhat breathlessly), then (somewhat thankfully) hand the keys back while you're still in one piece. You can learn a lot more in a week.

I thought it was too flash at first, but after a few days I caught myself looking back at it (it's especially comely from the rear), and noticing how it garnered admiration rather than envy from other drivers. And I discovered that my favourite drive mode was Race, with the damping knocked back a notch: full-force in that case is best left to a smooth track, not a British B-road. And boy does that twin-turbo V8 crackle: the perfect soundtrack to make you exploit a throttle response so sharp you could slice marble with it.

Gone but not forgotten

WORDS DALE DRINNON

ANN FERRAR / WWW.BESSIESTRINGFIELDBIOGRAPHY.COM



BESSIE STRINGFIELD

Motorcycling wasn't a respectable pastime for young ladies, family elders told her, and society said black people should Know Their Place. Still she persisted

PHOTOS AREN'T necessarily what draw my attention to a *New York Times* obituary, but this wasn't the standard obit portrait image. A time-faded snapshot from a suburban back garden, and a classic full-dresser Harley Electra Glide; beside it, a black woman of middle years meets the camera with a level, uncompromising gaze and squared shoulders, in an old school military-style riding uniform, colour-coordinated with the 'bike, right down to pristine white jodhpurs and baby-blue boots. 'Bessie Stringfield, Motorcycle Queen of Miami,' read the headline. It might well have added: 'Lesson for the ages in sheer, bloody-minded, courageous independence.'

Although some details remain stubbornly elusive, Ms Stringfield's precise bio is cloudy because she constantly updated it to fit the expectations of circumstance, as blues musicians, writers and jobbing actors have always done to help their odds with the powers-that-be. She declared a mixed-race Caribbean birth and orphaned Boston upbringing as Betsy Ellis, infinitely more dramatic – more quotable, if you will – than her real origin as Beatrice White in small-town North Carolina, around 1912. Similarly, her first motorbike at age 16, an Indian Scout,

may have arrived as claimed through the largesse of an Irish adoptive mother. Or maybe by other sources she never discussed.

Whatever the specifics, there's little dispute that she learned unaided how to ride it. At 19 she took to the road, blasting far across the Depression-era South and on to America-at-large along the still mostly gravel highways, usually alone and, thanks to segregated lodging, sleeping in the open. She reportedly paid the bills with carnival stunt-riding (relatives described the young Bessie standing at speed, one foot on the saddle, one on the handlebars) and displays on the Wall of Death, occasionally racing dirt tracks and collecting her winnings via discreet male proxies. If the men in charge discovered she was female, she recalled, they wouldn't pay.

Nor is there much reason to doubt her World War Two service as a civilian despatch rider between mainland Army bases; war has a way of sacrificing prejudice to expediency. Or that Stringfield wandered each of the Lower 48 States at least once, although the stories of touring Europe and South America are less credible. But her tales about outrunning carloads of angry bigots certainly ring true to any African-American biker across many decades, and from my personal

'RELATIVES DESCRIBED THE YOUNG BESSIE STANDING AT SPEED, ONE FOOT ON THE SADDLE, THE OTHER ON THE HANDLEBARS'

experience also to the white friends who have travelled with them. So do the hassles from lawmen for the perennial crime of DWB: Driving While Black.

It wasn't until the early 1950s that Bessie slowed somewhat, making Miami her permanent base, training as a nurse and assuming regular employment. Of course she kept riding, and after allegedly schmoozing the local cops into a permanent DWB truce (schmoozing was among her strongest talents; better to charm than to battle), she even formed a motorcycle club and held rallies. In time, she stunted at cycle shows, led public parades, married again (she proudly asserted six times in total, each at least 20 years her junior, Mr Stringfield being number three) and, with her natural charisma and smooth storytelling, the Motorcycle Queen became a South Florida media celebrity.

She never really stopped riding, despite the progressive cardiac disorder that killed her in 1993. Her celebrity had already spread, too, in biking circles; the American Motorcyclist Association Museum honoured her in their inaugural 1990 exhibition on her favourite brand, 'Heroes of Harley-Davidson'. In 2000 the AMA also instituted the Bessie Stringfield Award for motorcycle achievement by a woman, and two years later inducted her into the AMA Hall of Fame. For the past five years, hundreds of the female bikers she inspired have turned out for the annual cross-country Bessie Stringfield Ride Celebration, starting from Harley's hometown of Milwaukee.

Recognition in the wider press happened as well, if belatedly; in April 2018 *The New York Times* ran the aforementioned retroactive obituary in its recently launched series *Overlooked No More*. Bessie Beatrice White Stringfield, BB to her friends, may have been quite the self-publicist, always seeking the angle, but she never set out to be a hero. History has finally come to recognise her as a genuine, straight-up hero nonetheless. Which is a quality in perilously short supply these days, and much to be cherished, everywhere.

HALL & HALL



1974 Lotus 76/2 JPS10
Ex Ickx and Peterson.
Maintained to a high standard and
an important part of Lotus history.



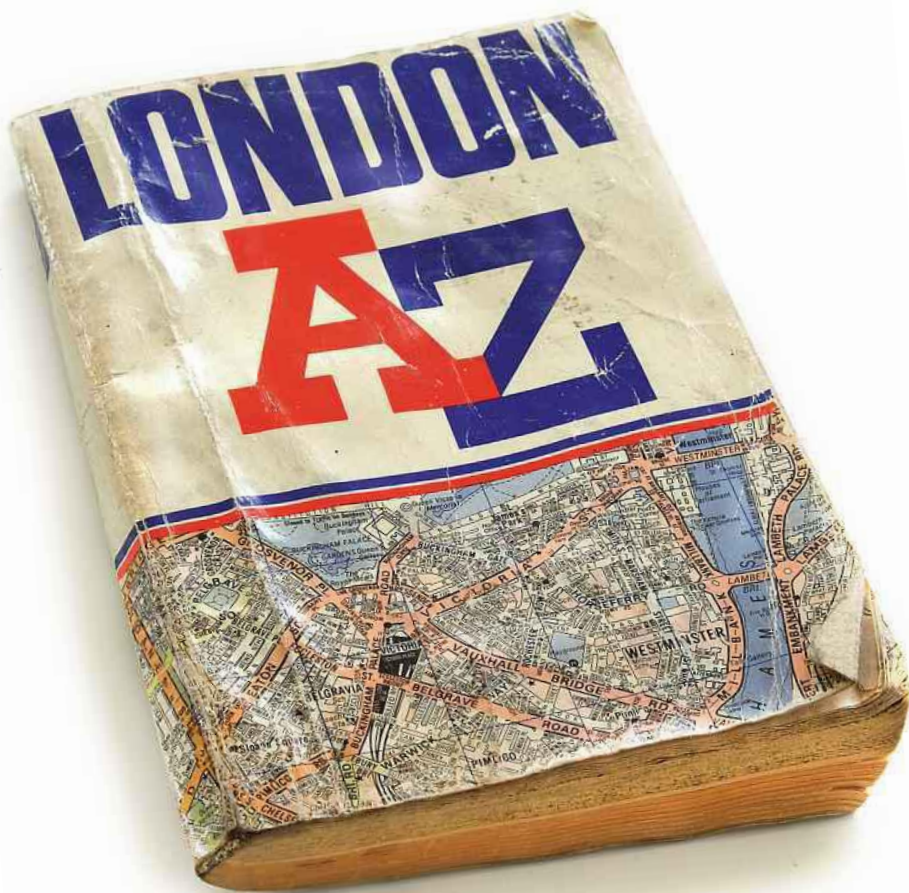
1973 Osella PA1/08
2 litre sports car
Continuous history.



1974 Shadow DN3A-5A DFV
Ex Tom Pryce.
Prepared for Monaco 2018 but not used.



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'SHE PRINTED 10,000 COPIES BUT WAS REBUFFED BY ALL UNTIL WH SMITH AGREED TO TAKE 1250. THESE SHE DELIVERED ON A HANDCART'

Phyllis was eking a living as an artist when she started to compile her A-Z. Despite her claims that it was the first of its kind, other companies had published map guides of London, notably Bartholomew's Reference Atlas of 1910. More significantly, her father had published his own guide in 1913.

For her version Phyllis even used the cartographer previously employed by her father. The most likely scenario is that, rather than tramping the streets, she visited each local London County Council office to get the latest information on rapidly expanding London. She got the job done, printed 10,000 copies, cold-called major retailers and was rebuffed by all until she hit the jackpot with WH Smith, which agreed to take 1250. These she delivered herself on a borrowed handcart, scurrying from shop to shop.

FW Woolworth also placed orders, and success seemed assured until war intervened and the printing of maps was banned. Throughout all of this Sandor appeared to be a long-distance influence and, right up to his death in 1958, the A-Z carried a footnote declaring 'Produced under the direction of Alexander Gross, FRGS'.

Phyllis resumed business in 1945, but the British paper shortage forced her to commute to a printer in the Netherlands. On one such trip her KLM Dakota crashed into a ridge in Surrey in heavy fog; miraculously she survived, although badly injured. After a long recovery Phyllis was back at her desk supervising the production of more maps and extending the A-Z to other British cities.

Phyllis's later years were devoted to painting, but to ensure the future of her A-Z 'family' she turned it into a trust in 1966 so it could never be taken over. She died in 1996, a month short of her 90th birthday.

The smartphone may have consigned countless dog-eared, scuffed, page-shedding A-Zs to landfill but, when engaged in that prodigious feat of memory known as 'The Knowledge', London's cabbies still refer to 'learning the oranges and lemons' – the A-Z colour scheme for A- and B-roads.

LONDON A-Z

Smartphone apps might have ousted Phyllis Pearsall's indexed map of the Capital, but cabbies still revere it

ONE DAY IN 1935 a young woman set out from her north London flat to walk to a party in Belgravia. Eventually she realised that she was lost. Frustrated by her inability to navigate the metropolitan maze, she determined to create an indexed map of the capital. She even had a name for it: A-Z.

She later claimed, in a self-published biography and many interviews, that it was the first complete map of London's thoroughfares and that, astonishingly, she had spent a year of 18-hour days tramping 3000 miles surveying every one of its 23,000 streets. Only it wasn't, and she didn't. It seems that Phyllis Pearsall (née Sandor), as well as being charming, entertaining and enterprising, was also a good self-publicist and rather flexible with the truth.

She was born in 1906, youngest child of Hungarian Jewish emigré Alexander 'Sandor' Grosz (anglicised to Gross), who had arrived in England in 1900, and his Irish-Italian Catholic wife Isabelle. In 1908 Sandor

started the Geographia Map Publishing Company. Financial success and a rapid ascent of the social ladder quickly followed.

Phyllis's privileged childhood, despite the volatile relationship between her father and mother – who was becoming ever more unstable and alcohol-dependent – saw much travelling throughout Europe and even a baby elephant as a birthday gift. The idyll was rudely curtailed when a telegram arrived at Roedean School instructing 15-year-old Phyllis to 'Make your way home immediately'. Her father had gone bankrupt. As a result of the humiliating fall from grace, he departed, alone, for America.

Phyllis was despatched to France. She later studied at the Sorbonne, leading a hand-to-mouth Bohemian life. In Paris, where her artist brother was also living, she met Dick Pearsall who, after a brief romance, she married. Then, after eight years of travelling and painting together, she abruptly walked out on him while in Venice.

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Places to go

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BARRY WISEMAN



BRILLIANT BERLIN

A dazzling city with many car-related surprises

PEOPLE WHO visited Berlin in those early days after the Wall came down owe it to themselves to return. This reunited city is full of places that we are now free to visit – on both sides of the Brandenburg Gate. There's the rebuilt Reichstag, the spectacular Potsdamer Platz, the lovely Unter den Linden avenue and the Fernsehturm communications tower, known by the locals as 'The Toothpick'.

And you can get around Berlin in some unconventional ways. Take a guided tour in a Trabant drophead (or even a stretched Trabant limo!), or why not go the whole hog and drive a Trabbie yourself, with Trabant Safaris, based near Checkpoint Charlie. After a look around the Trabant Museum, you can join a convoy seeing the sights. With ecological pressure mounting, surely these little pollution-puffers will someday soon be banned from the city, so get in and enjoy one now (trabi-safari.de).

Still too conventional? Well, perhaps a mini hot-rod tour is for you, driving a 170cc single-seater around the city. A bit like a 1930s Ford that didn't know about steroids. (hot-rod-tour-berlin.com). Do you get it yet? Germans have a sense of fun and want to give visitors a good time.

Then there's Classic Remise, huge sheds full of classic and collectors' cars, some even

in glass boxes, open every day to allow people to wander around (remise.de).

On the edge of the city, on Autobahn A115, there's a scene a little like Reims, where you pass a huge, ghostly grandstand. This is part of the remains of the famous Avus racetrack, really just two lengths of autobahn, 11.9 miles in length, with a narrow central reservation and a banked loop at each end. The timing building still stands, now used as a motel – appropriately with a huge Mercedes-Benz symbol on the roof. Pause a while and imagine the Silver Arrows shrieking past at top speed.

In a quiet street, just outside the city centre, is the Deutsches Technikmuseum, a large museum housing everything from aircraft and locomotives to household appliances and cars. Established in 1982, it was formed by the merger of more than 100 smaller collections and is contained within a former trade hall.

Of particular interest here is, of course, the automobile building, with its collection of interesting and sometimes lesser-known cars. Several NAGs are displayed, good-looking Berlin-built cars. The Kaiser had one, so they were well-respected and, just before production ceased in 1934, NAG had experimented with a front-wheel-drive V8, making us wonder what might have been.

Clockwise from top left

1913 NAG Rennsportwagen, flanked by an Audi Quattro rally car and Colani GT Spider wall-hanging; Douglas C47 Skytrain hangs above the Deutsches Technikmuseum entrance; take a city tour in a mini hot-rod; museum's 'early days of motoring' display.

There's also a 1922 Grade-Wagen on display, the boat-tailed monocoque two-seater with an air-cooled, two-cylinder, two-stroke 808cc engine, all designed by the pioneer of aviation Hans Grade. Motorcycles include a form-fitting 1965 Zundapp that set records in several different engine categories, and also a beautiful Berlin-built four-cylinder Windhoff.

This is not a huge collection by any means, but it is all within a lovely, uncrowded, quiet room where the visitor can sit and absorb the display. It is genuinely a special place.

There is a small gift shop and a bustling, atmospheric café. The museum is a great way to while away a couple of hours in this extraordinary city.

German Museum of Technology, Trebbiner Str 9, 10963, Berlin (sdtdb.de). Open daily except Mondays. Expect to pay about €8.

Sam Miller
EXTRAORDINARY CARS



1960 Aston Martin DB4 series 1 | £ P.O.A.

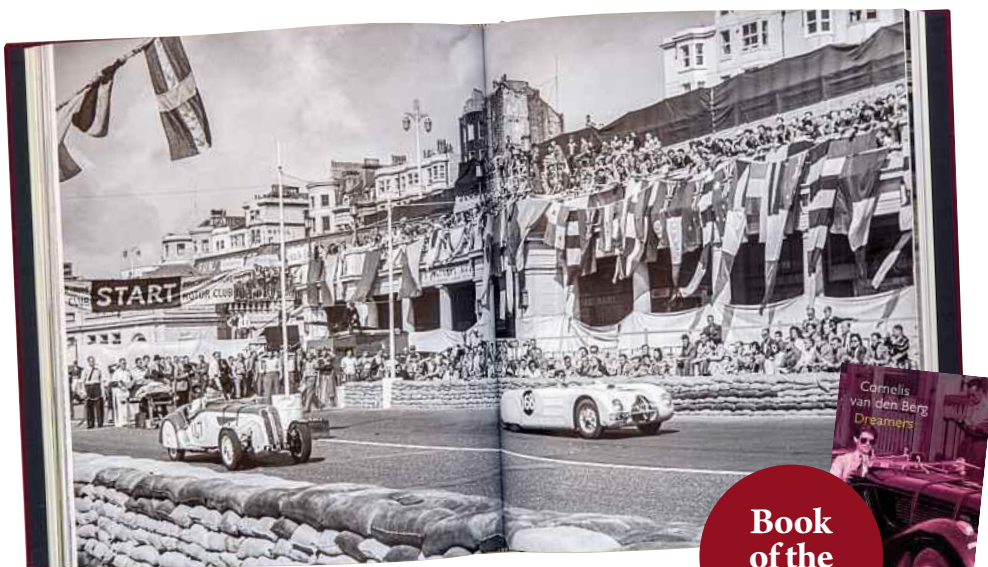
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Books

REVIEWED BY OCTANE STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS



Mr Bristol The Remarkable Life of T.A.D. Crook

MICHAEL W BARTON, *Butterfield Press*, £300 (standard edition)



Does anyone still use the phrase 'like a curate's egg – it's good in parts'? Tony Crook, the famously idiosyncratic founder and long-time boss of Bristol Cars, certainly would have been familiar with this subtle

British witticism (Wikipedia will give you the low-down, should you require it).

As to why it's relevant to this book review... Well, let's start by saying that *Mr Bristol* is actually very good in most of its parts, as indeed it should be for an asking price of £300, which rises to £1250 if you want it bound in Mongolian calfskin.

The production quality is sublime. Beautifully printed on heavyweight art paper, the majority of its 220 pages are devoted to photographs, from family snapshots (rarely seen, and all the more interesting because of that) through to lots of action pictures from Crook's competition career. Plenty of the latter are used full-page or across a spread, such as the image, top, of Crook in a Veritas at the 1949 Brighton Speed Trials.

There is also a colour section devoted to key Bristol cars that held a particular meaning for Crook. Sadly, it's the book's weakest element. The images are dull and unimaginative – a 406Z plonked in a stubble field on a grey day, a mud-spattered Beaufighter on a seafront, and so on. Even 30 years ago, they would have looked average, and they're not worthy of a book of this quality or, indeed, price.

Then again, the relatively short text about

Crook's life is nicely written, and there are some absorbing appendices about the many cars he owned, plus a full list of his competition results, and a reprint (albeit with some horrendous, non-original typos) of an article that Crook wrote for *Motor Sport* in 1944 about his driving experiences while in the RAF. These included running a supercharged Mercedes in the deserts of Egypt, and a short-chassis Alfa 2.9 among the bomber fields of Lincolnshire.

Unusually, buyers of *Mr Bristol* also receive a small soft-back novel, *Dreamers*, in which Crook features as a supporting character. Translated from the Dutch, it is, frankly, weird – it features a long and irrelevant rant about Anti-Fa demonstrators, for one thing – although the portrayal of Crook is well-realised. But Crook's successor at Bristol, Toby Silverton, gets a very rough ride both in the novel and in *Mr Bristol*, with no opportunity to make his own case, and that lack of balance is slightly disturbing. A curate's egg, indeed. MD



Porsche 918 Spyder

IAN KUAH, *Palawan Press*, £600 (standard edition)

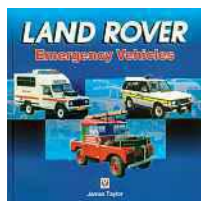
This isn't Palawan's usual fare, but embodies many of the qualities for which the company has become renowned. What you get for your money is a beautifully presented, slipcase-shod hardback of over 500 pages on the hybrid hypercar, plus a 46-page supplement listing bespoke detailing chassis by chassis. Part 1 of the main event covers the conception and development of the 918, while the last 300 pages form a comprehensive chassis list, each car illustrated with a picture. An epic effort. JE



McLaren MP4/4 Owners' Workshop Manual

STEVE RENDLE, *Haynes*, £25, ISBN 978 1 785211 37 9

It's not really a manual, of course, although it shows how to dismantle the suspension and change the brake pads. It's a deep guide to how one of the world's most dominant F1 cars (it won 15 of 1988's 16 races), raced by two of the greatest drivers (Senna and Prost), was created, enlivened by quotes from key players. Every race is chronicled, then every bit, from Honda engine to the switch for the rain light, is analysed in detail. One for the serious racing-car nut. JS



Land Rover Emergency Vehicles

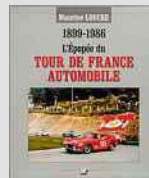
JAMES TAYLOR, *Veloce*,
£30, ISBN 978 1 787112 44 5

It's a shame this book's garish cover looks as though it has been appropriated from a children's book, because it conceals a goldmine of rare Land Rover images and it's authored by James Taylor, who is perhaps the pre-eminent historian of the marque.

The format is simple: a chronological picture gallery, with extended captions, of the numerous conversions carried out on Land Rovers through the decades, right up to the L322 Range Rover and Discovery 4. It's the period images of Series vehicles that captivate, however – who could fail to love a Spanish Police Series I on wide-whitewall tyres?

Naturally, fire, police and ambulance vehicles dominate, but there's a huge variety of more specialist applications pictured here, too – everything from a mobile vet's clinic to the cliff-rescue vehicles used by Avon & Somerset Police to winch up unfortunates who've lived life too close to the edge.

Maybe that cover isn't so ill-judged, for this book is guaranteed to charm children of all ages, from nine to 90. **MD**



Tour de France Automobile

MAURICE LOUCHE, 2009,
value today £295

Maurice Louche is a legend in the motoring book world. He was one of the first people to realise he could write, publish and sell his own books, and his stall has been a fixture at Paris's Rétromobile show for the past 30 years; indeed, he was there in 2018 with his latest work, *Émotion Citroën*.

Tour de France Automobile was his first major project. This history of the famous French road-race was published in 1987 and quickly became sought-after by the owners of cars that had competed in period, thanks to its

comprehensive chassis info. But that first edition was in French only, so in 2009 Louche released a brand-new version, pictured here, with dual French-English text and fresh pictures.

Because all those car owners tend to hold onto their copies, it's not easy to find and is relatively costly when you do. **Ben Horton**



The Perfect Car: the Biography of John Barnard

NICK SKEENS, *Evro*, £40,
ISBN 978 1 910505 27 4

It's impossible to resist turning straight to the epilogue, in which author Skeens manages to get Barnard and Ron Dennis back together, two relentless perfectionists, for a tour of McLaren's super-swish factory after 30 years of mutual hostility. It's priceless. The rest of the book, too, is a great insight into this driven, fractious and brilliant race-car designer, and you'll even become an expert in the carbonfibre structures that Barnard pioneered. **JS**

Intermeccanica: the Story of the Prancing Bull

ANDREW MCCREDIE WITH PAULA REISNER, *Veloce*, £45, ISBN 978 1 787112 53 7



The Prancing Bull. Doesn't another Italian maker of fast cars have one of those on its badge? Leaving that aside, this is an updated edition of a book about an obscure Italian car company with

crucial US links and a many-threaded tale.

The Intermeccanica saga begins with founder Frank Reisner – born in Hungary, raised in Canada with frequent visits to the US, settled in Italy – creating a neat Peugeot-powered Formula Junior racing car, which he sent to the US. Next came a very small rear-engined car called the IMP, not *that* Imp but based on a Steyr-Puch 500 with a curvy coupé body: InterMeccanica Puch.

Then came the brainwave: sleek Italian design, *carrozzeria* construction and reliable US V8 power, the best of all worlds for fashion-chasing US buyers terrified of mechanical complexity. The Apollo, with 3.5-litre Buick power, was launched in 1963, then stalled in 1965 when the US end failed to pay the Torinese end and briefly reappeared as the Vetta Ventura. Next came a deal with Jack Griffith for a Ford V8-powered car to replace

his TVR project. Then an Omega, a Phoenix, the svelte Italia, even a (non-Matra) Murena.

But, as Frank's widow Paula relates in this very detailed and amply illustrated account, things were always on a knife-edge. There was the court case with GM, who blocked the (Opel-approved) supply of six-cylinder engines for the final Indra models commissioned by Erich Bitter, who went on to build his own cars. There were diversions into the Squire Jaguar SS100 pastiche and Porsche 356 replicas. Frank's final project was a VW Kübelwagen replica, but now – hence the update – son Henry runs Electra Meccanica and builds the three-wheeled Solo electric car.

It's a fragmented story, but worth the read. **JS**



WILLIAMS FW14 ENDPLATE REPLICA SIGNED BY NIGEL MANSELL

There is no part of the brightly liveried FW14 that wouldn't look good on the wall; easier to find room, though, for an endplate than for a nose cone, or a wing, or an airbox. This is a replica of the famous Labatt's plate seen on Williams cars during the 1991 and '92 F1 seasons, but rest assured it is signed by the real Nige.

£199. thesignaturestore.co.uk



MERCEDES-BENZ W196 MONZA T-SHIRT

Mercedes may drily describe this as 'men's shirt B66041577' but it's a bit more exciting than that, featuring a W196 streamliner.

£41.28. shop.mercedes-benz.com



ALFA ROMEO 8C-2300 MODEL BY AMALGAM

There was, obviously, no CAD data to lean on when Amalgam set about creating a 1:8-scale version of the 1932 Monaco GP-winning Alfa, yet this is a dead ringer for Tazio Nuvolari's car. Alfa Romeo shared archive to ensure the job was done properly, and the drawings and photographs revealed enough detail that each model of the 8C takes 3000 hours to build.

£7940. amalgamcollection.com



PEUGEOT LR01

Peugeot has made a few pedal-powered classics in its time, and the LR01 draws on the marque's illustrious past. The elegant, old-school lugged steel frame is paired with aluminium everything-else, and with its 16-speed drivetrain and reasonable price tag, the bike looks the perfect city runabout. **€749. cycles.peugeot.com**



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DAPPER JACK BOW TIE

That looks to us like a Cobra, which means that this nifty cotton dickie bow – available, you may be relieved to know, pre-tied – is eligible for your Goodwood Revival outfit. **£26. dapperjack.co.uk**



ABSOLUTE LIMIT BY JOHN KETCHELL

At the 1971 Sebring 12 Hours, Vic Elford and Gérard Larrousse managed to navigate crashes, controversy and a dangerously dilapidated circuit (period photographs show that wooden planks had replaced Armco barriers in places) to claim victory in their Martini Porsche 917K, which is the subject of John Ketchell's latest work. **Original £2500; signed canvas print £599. historiccarart.net**

SEIKO 1968 AUTOMATIC DIVER'S RE-CREATION

This recreation's dial is less wordy than the original but otherwise identical; the case is one-piece steel; and inside is the 36,000bph 'hi-beat' movement.

The price is very 2018, though.

£5000. seiko.co.uk





1:18 scale

1970 Ford Cortina 1600E

By Cult Price £157.95 Material Resincast

A pushed-up, revved-up Cortina may not seem the most obvious choice for a large-scale, collector-quality model – you have to wonder why manufacturer Cult didn't choose the more obvious 'hot' Lotus version – but there's something perversely appealing about this resincast's simplicity. Maybe the slightly oddball subject matter is actually a strength: our regular supplier, Grand Prix

Models, tells us that Cult's recent release of a Triumph TR7 to the same scale has sold remarkably well.

The Cortina deserves to follow suit. Superbly finished in a very period metallic gold and with excellent Rostyle-type wheels, the model's clean lines remind you of something from a 1960s styling studio and it really makes you re-evaluate the design with fresh eyes.



1935 Voisin C28 Aerosport
Matrix £85.95

French blue and super-fine details are an appealing combination, plus the interior is viewable via the sunroof.



1958 Vanwall
Spark £53.05

That's Moss in the driving seat (Dutch GP, 1958) but the cars of Tony Brooks and Stuart Lewis-Evans are options.



2018 Bentley Continental GT
Looksmart £132.70

Available in various colours, this is a good-looking model of the latest Bentley super-coupe.



1962 Maserati T61 Birdcage
JF-B Models £265.50

The high price of this French handbuilt is mitigated by a terrific representation of the eponymous 'birdcage' frame.



1963 Ferrari 330 LMB
MG Model £160.85

Yes, it's gold – as driven by Dan Gurney at Bridgehampton in '63. The model matches well with period pics.



2018 McLaren Senna
TrueScale Miniatures £89.95

You've read the feature (pp132-140), now buy the model: TSM has done a great job of the Senna's complexities.

Classic model

WORDS: ANDREW RALSTON
IMAGE: MUSEO VALENCIANO DEL JUGUETE



'Internacional' Racing Car by Sanchis

In 1954, a man called José Antonio Sanchis Pina, who ran a workshop making thermoplastic mouldings and metal castings near Alicante in Spain, decided to use his expertise to produce toys.

He was only one of many doing something similar, for there had been a flourishing toy industry in the town of Ibi since the early 20th Century. By 1936 there were three large companies making tinplate toy products – Paya, Rico and Jyesa. The Spanish Civil War put an end to all that, but the industry revived in the late 1940s, making increasing use of plastic rather than tinplate.

In spite of the competition, Sanchis prospered and by 1969 he was able to open a large modern factory. Most Sanchis toys were moulded in plastic but this *Bolido Metalico Electrico*, one of the company's best products, was cast in metal.

Eleven inches in length and based on a typical 1950s Grand Prix car, its body consists of an upper and lower casting, with a rather noticeable gap in the middle. The wire wheels and side exhaust are vacuum-plated and the car is powered by an electric motor, the batteries being accommodated under the opening bonnet. Ingeniously, the on/off switch is positioned beside the driver like a gear lever, and another switch underneath adjusts the position of the front wheels.

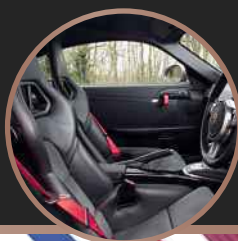
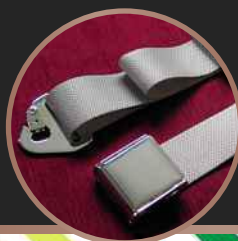
Some versions wear the flags of other nations, such as France and Italy, and for those lucky enough to find one still in its original box, the superb artwork depicts Grand Prix cars battling it out in the style of the covers of 1950s boys' annuals.

Sanchis went on to make many plastic racing cars before folding in 1982, but never again anything quite like the *Bolido Metalico Electrico*.



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ICON

PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR'S SILVER POCKET AND DESK WATCH

A monochrome watch that belonged to a colourful Royal

AN IMPORTANT ROYAL talisman is offered for sale via the Private Sales service at Christie's, London ([christies.com/privatesales](https://www.christies.com/privatesales)). Stored away in its original silk-lined case, this large silver watch (signed as the 'Atlas Watch') once belonged to Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale, the bon-vivant grandson of Queen Victoria and second in line to the throne.

The silver-cased open-face watch with 1885 London hallmarks was supplied to the Royal Household by Clark of Old Bond Street, a specialist in gentlemen's accoutrements. Surviving examples of the retailer's wares today include gambling sets bound in bright leathers, a Malacca wood walking stick with silver gilt knob handle which had belonged to Edward VII, and a silver-plated picnic set with collapsible beakers.

Prince Albert Victor's watch is fitted with a cleverly concealed hinged strut stand, giving it a dual use as both pocket watch and desk clock. It

was a present to Prince Albert Victor on his 23rd birthday (8 January 1887), and an engraving adds the date to his Royal monogram of Prince Albert Victor Christian Edward, the name he was given at his 1864 christening at Buckingham Palace's private chapel.

After studying at Trinity College, Cambridge, Prince Albert Victor joined the British Army in 1885. This explains the timepiece's unusually coloured enamel dial: black was chosen in line with military customs. The Prince's own life was much more colourful. Known as Prince 'Eddy', he embarked on a seven-month tour of British India in October 1889, passing by Athens and Cairo. There was tabloid gossip, too, including the 1889 Cleveland Street Scandal which uncovered a male brothel in the central London thoroughfare. The Prince's involvement was never proven.

In 1892, Prince Albert Victor – then engaged to Princess Mary of Teck – died of pneumonia at Sandringham House, aged just 28. He had fallen victim to the 1889-90 'flu pandemic, which claimed an estimated one million lives worldwide. He was outlived by his parents, King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. This silver pocket and desk watch is a reminder of a life cut tragically short.

MARKET WATCH - PLATINUM



VACHERON CONSTANTIN PLATINUM OPEN-FACE

Vacheron Constantin is celebrating its heritage via its *Les Collectionneurs* selection of certified vintage pieces ([vacheron-constantin.com](https://www.vacheron-constantin.com)). Carefully sourced from a number of private collections and auctions, the 20 models include wristwatches made between 1927 to 1969 plus this Art Deco-style 1931 platinum pocket watch with white gold Arabic numerals, priced at £15,200.



AUDEMARS PIGUET PLATINUM MANUAL-WIND WRISTWATCH

Dated to the 1960s, this Audemars Piguet wristwatch is for sale via 1stdibs at £9245.56. An engraving on its platinum case-back – 'To dear dad with love from Neil' – reveals this example's special provenance. It was once purchased by Neil Levenson, a prolific songwriter whose hits include the 1963 *Denis*, as covered by Blondie over a decade later.



PATEK PHILIPPE REF 5050

Patek Philippe produced its Ref 5050 from 1993 to 2002 at its Vallée de Joux, Switzerland, factory. The model was the marque's first perpetual-calendar wristwatch with 'retrograde' date display. This 35mm platinum-cased version dated to 1995 realised HK\$550,000 at Phillips and is exceedingly rare: according to the auction house's research, the brand finished just 150 models in the precious metal.

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It's neo-neo-Bauhaus as a 1961 classic lives again

SWISS ARTIST, architect and designer Max Bill was a founder of Germany's Ulm School of Design which supported a neo-Bauhaus philosophy: art with a positive societal impact and objects that were affordable, functional and stylish, each characterised by precise proportions.

One of his most memorable works is his poster for the 1972 Munich Olympic Games – a white rhombus at the centre of a criss-cross of colour, a prism of optimism all the more poignant given the tragic events that would overshadow the Games. His mission was to unite style and utility through simple geometry and graphic devices.

In the early 1950s, Bill was approached by Junghans to create a number of clocks and timepieces which have become horological classics, the most famous of which is his 1956 V-shaped kitchen wall clock in baby

blue, with integrated timer. Bill brought this pragmatism and ingenuity to the wrist in 1961 with his first super-sleek dress watch for Junghans, which has since become a pillar for the German watchmaker.

There have been many iterations of this design classic through the decades from chronos to quartz editions, but the first automatic version, in gold-coloured stainless steel served on a dove-grey leather strap, is a fine tribute to the original 1961 timepiece. The watch, available with stick markers or Arabic numerals, recently scooped the Red Dot Award for outstanding design.

Every care has been taken to replicate the original watch's streamlined elegance and uncluttered dial; a new movement and a date window at three o'clock are the only changes. A classic which remains resolutely contemporary. **£915, mrporter.com**

MARKET WATCH



HAMILTON KHAKI FIELD MECHANICAL

This robust tool watch is a faithful evocation of a 1940s original supplied to the US military, which was later updated and worn by American soldiers and pilots during the Vietnam War. Everything about it is sturdy and no-nonsense, from its chunky knurled crown (perfect for easy adjustment on the battlefield) and rugged NATO strap to its Swiss-made, manually wound workhorse movement. The dial display is functional and easy to read, with luminous hands against a matt black dial with retro-looking Arabic numbers, arrow points at each hour and an inner ring marking 24-hour time.

£400 approx, hamiltonwatch.com



A LANGE & SÖHNE 1815 TOURBILLON

There have been many variations of A Lange & Söhne's 1815 Tourbillon range, in which the escapement and balance wheel are mounted in a cage which itself rotates at 1rpm to cancel out gravity-induced errors. This one, limited to 100 numbered examples, has the tourbillon visible through the face and the rest of the engraved movement visible through the crystal glass back. Blue hands and a red 12 are backed by an enamelled dial. You can catch an exclusive first glimpse at the Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court, held from 31 August to 2 September.

€198,000, lange-soehne.com



TIMEX MARLIN

If you're in the market for an unfussy affordable dress watch, look no further than this 1960 reissue. It was originally billed as 'the sinking watch' on account of its durability underwater, which is why it was named after the Marlin deep-sea fish. That 30m water-resistance may matter less today, but the new Marlin is an elegant re-make of its predecessor – and is the first mechanically wound Timex in over three decades. The original stainless steel bracelet has been changed for a sleek faux-croc black leather strap, but the stylised numerals and silvered dial keep the vintage flair alive.

£174.99, timex.com

Porsche 70th Anniversary



2018 marks the 70th Anniversary of Porsche and why not celebrate this milestone with a fine 1:18 hand built resin model of one of their earliest production models, the 356A.

These fine miniatures are produced by Italian-based specialists BBR, one of the leading names in limited production hand built models, and make fine additions to any collection with six colours to choose from. Silver (BBRC18020A), Black (BBRC18020B), Green (BBRC18020C), White (BBRC18020D), Ivory (BBRC18020E) & Red (BBRC18020F).

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www.MHDWatches.com



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£4,200



Cartier Tank Francaise
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TAG Heuer Carrera CV2116
£3,250



Breitling Chronomat 8808.3
£6,000

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1964 Jaguar E type 3.8 series one roadster, finished in original Carmen Red with original black hide interior and black mohair soft top. Undoubtedly one of the very best restorations we have had the pleasure of marketing and the attention to detail is exemplary. It comes with Jaguar Heritage certificate which confirms that it still bares its original Coventry registration number 8517 WK. Equipped with its original 4 speed Moss gearbox, a period Motorola radio and sitting on perfect chrome wire wheels shod with original pattern Dunlop radial SP tyres. The car performs extremely well and is ready for immediate use. Realistically priced for one in this condition at £165,000



1997 Ferrari 550 Maranello finished in Grigio Titanio with contrasting Burgundy hide interior. This is an exceptional example of a motor car that most Ferrari enthusiasts consider as "A Keeper". The coachwork is completely unblemished and the sumptuous Burgundy interior shows no signs of wear. It has covered only 31,000 miles from new and has been owned by a serious enthusiast who has looked after the car without regard to cost. With the car is a well stamped up service history by both Ferrari Main dealers and Ferrari specialists showing regular and correct maintenance with cam belt services done on time, the most recent of which has been carried out only 800 miles ago in 2016. Also there is a large history file with invoices detailing works previously carried out. From the history file and the current unblemished condition it is obvious the car has been well looked after and will undoubtedly provide many years of exiting motoring. These cars are a real Grand Tourer, ideally suited for long continental trips and providing an effortless motoring experience. They have seen a steady increase in value over the past five years, mainly due to the fact that they are such a good car to drive rather than a pointless hype of market trends and are predicted to continue to steadily rise. Very sensibly priced for one in this exceptional condition at £125,000.



1955 Austin Healey 100/4 BN2 built to full race specification and an eligible and competitive car for numerous current national and international events and includes the Mille Miglia. It was built and maintained by Dennis Welch Motor Sport to exacting standards and has been a regular competitor in various high profile events in the hands of the present owner over the past few years. Due to the low numbers of this model that are ever offered for sale, this represents a rare opportunity to acquire a Healey that is race ready and eligible for events such as Tour Auto & Tour Britannia Rallies and circuit races such as the Woodcote Trophy, Classic Le mans and the Spa 6 hour. This car has all the correct modifications and improvements to be on equal par to the best of the field and will undoubtedly continue to enjoy success with a new owner. Not expensive at £95,000



1965 Ford Mustang 289 Notchback completely rebuilt in 2015 to compete to FIA period "F" rules the papers for which are valid until 31st December 2025. This stunning car in Hertz racing Colours has been built to a very high standard and comes with a specification sheet which is far too detailed to repeat here. During this process the chassis/body shell were both lightened and strengthened, all brake and suspension components were replaced. The engine was assembled by an ex-Nascar engine builder and the set-up was carried out by the Mustang Workshop. The car is now available at considerably less than the current build costs and will no doubt prove to be a competitive race car in the right hands. Sensibly priced at £79,950

MARKET NEWS

BUYING + SELLING + ANALYSIS



RM SOTHEBY'S

Dingman sale dazzles in USA

The past month's action focused on two collections and Le Mans

THE CALMING NEON glow that bathed bidders during the RM Sotheby's Dingman Collection sale did nothing to subdue sales, as all 740 lots sold, without reserve, raising \$7 million. The auction included around 34 cars, mostly Fords, led by the 1995 Roush Mustang Cobra SCCA Trans Am at \$720,000. The bulk of the sale, however, consisted of 500 neon, porcelain and metal signs, as well as a beautifully restored '40s American diner – the Silk City Diner by Paterson Vehicle Company – which sold for \$336,000.

In France, Mercedes-Benz SLs took a starring role during Artcurial's fifth biennial Le Mans Classic auction on 7 July, contributing significantly to the sale total of €12.6m. The single-owner 1380km SL Roadster was top seller at €3,143,400, setting a world record for the model.

One of the final ten built, the Roadster spent its life almost entirely unused by its one and only owner, Gunnar Giermark. The Swedish collector chose to put many more miles on his white Gullwing, which was also offered in the auction and sold for €1,013,000. Although the sale total

represented an all-time high for the auction house at this venue, the sale rate was rather less impressive at 55%. A number of more modern supercars failed to sell, as did the Group 4 Ferrari Daytona racing car (previewed in *Octane* 181).

Another significant collection auctioned during June was the Den Hartogh Museum from The Netherlands. Bonhams was the auction house that had the tearjerking job of splitting up the largest collection of Ford cars and trucks in Europe on 23 June. Again, it was all sold without reserve, and 100% of the 300 lots were snapped up, totalling €6,157,353. Highlights included the ex-William F Harrah and Imperial Palace Collection 1905 Ford Model B Side Entrance Tonneau, which sold for seven times its estimate at €419,750.



TOP 10 PRICES JUNE 2018

£1,086,500 (\$1,450,000)

**1965 Aston Martin DB5
Convertible**
Bonhams, Greenwich,
USA. 3 June

£886,300

**1965 Aston Martin DB5
4.2 Convertible**
Bonhams, Reading, UK. 2 June

£790,000 (€899,000)

**1960 Mercedes-Benz
300SL Roadster**
Dorotheum, Vösendorf,
Austria. 23 June

£670,500 (\$895,000)

**1959 Mercedes-Benz
300SL Roadster**
Bonhams, Greenwich,
USA. 3 June

£637,500

1970 Aston Martin Volante
Bonhams, Reading, UK. 2 June

£628,700

**1964 Aston Martin DB5
4.2 Sports Saloon**
Bonhams, Reading, UK. 2 June

£583,500 (€663,800)

**1966 Maserati Mistral
Spyder 3700**
Dorotheum, Vösendorf,
Austria. 23 June

£543,000 (\$720,000)

**1995 Ford Roush Mustang
Cobra SCCA Trans Am**
RM Sotheby's, Hampton, USA.
23-24 June

£494,300

1967 Aston Martin Volante
Bonhams, Reading, UK. 2 June

£393,500

**1958 Aston Martin DB MkIII
Drophead Coupé**
Bonhams, Reading, UK. 2 June



DAVE KINNEY'S CAR OF THE MONTH

BARRETT-JACKSON

1953 Buick Skylark

Barrett-Jackson, Mohegan Sun Casino, Connecticut 21-23 June

GM'S MOTORAMA was a big-deal car show that ran from 1949 to 1961, usually in conjunction with the New York Auto Show in January. Held at the elegant Waldorf Astoria hotel, it was often a display of dream cars, one-offs and new production ideas.

In 1953 General Motors offered three of its full-sized Motorama-inspired cars for sale. The trio – a 1953 Oldsmobile Fiesta convertible (458 built), a Cadillac Eldorado convertible (532) and a Buick Skylark (836) – were long regarded as the must-haves for any serious '50s US car collection.

Those days when the three 1953 Motorama cars were must-haves are fading rapidly. Along with many other distinctive examples of 1950s American Iron, they just don't hold the appeal they did for a newer generation of collector-car buyers.

Darn' shame, that.

This nicely restored example of a 1953 Buick Skylark sold for \$99,000, or about half of what it might have brought only eight or ten years ago. A nice example with some years and miles since its last restoration, this is a Buick that still just might win a local show after a comprehensive clean-up. It's a lovely, if showy, piece of American exuberance from the middle of the past century.

It's still an excellent buy for a car that has more chrome than the next 500 Hyundais you will see, and represents the 'Yes, I do own the road' silliness of cars of this era. Another fun fact about the 1953 Motorama? GM also introduced a little sports car there. Something called the Corvette.

Dave Kinney is an auction analyst, an expert on the US market scene and publishes the *Hagerty Price Guide*.

SURPRISE OF THE MONTH



RM SOTHEBY'S

1967 LINCOLN CONTINENTAL

RM Sotheby's, New Hampshire

The surprise is the continued interest in the 1961-67 Lincoln Continental convertibles. However, they were a favourite of the Hollywood set and will be remembered for their connection – good and bad – to presidents John F Kennedy and Lyndon B Johnson. This restored first-year example made \$103,600.

BARGAIN OF THE MONTH



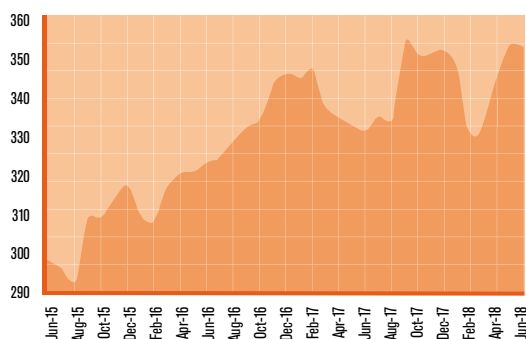
MECUM

1959 ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER CLOUD

Mecum, Portland, Oregon

Yes, two months in a row with Rolls-Royce cars from the 1950s as Bargain of the Month, both from Mecum auctions but one month and 2000 miles apart. This Cloud was no show-winner, but it was a reasonable driver with plenty of life left in it. As for the \$21,450 price, let's call it wholesale at auction.

HAGI TOP INDEX



HAGI
TOP INDEX

MONTH/YEAR
Vertical axis is based on a benchmark of 100 set at 31 December 2008.
The HAGI Top index charts the prices of key collectable cars.

DESPITE A MARGINAL retreat in June of 0.14%, the HAGI Top overall market measure is still in positive territory year-to-date – but only just. The Top's 0.17% advance over the first six months of 2018 is broadly reflected across HAGI indices, with no other sector gaining more than 1.03% year to date, and none losing more than 0.84%. In the wider world global equities are down 1.08%, and the Liv-ex fine wine index down 1.28%.

As with most segments, the HAGI Top experienced a marked downward correction early this year, from which it has just about recovered, thanks to three months of growth from March through May. Year on year, the Top's gain of 6.41% appears more benign, but it's important to appreciate the context, as this gain is in relation to the low point of 2017, which took place last June.

However, the year-on-year comparables are hardening further. This is because the market rallied from the 2017 trough to achieve a peak in September 2017 of 353.63. Now, as of June 2018, it's marginally shy of that on 352.34. So, clearly in the coming three months, the market will have to perform robustly to sustain anything approaching the current 6.41% year-on-year return.

Since the peak growth year of 2013, when the HAGI Top gained 46.75%, annual returns in each successive year have dropped off, settling to 1.66% for 2017. That's a figure to keep an eye on. Those diminishing comparables don't stack up for short-term speculators, but still provide satisfaction for enthusiasts with a longer view, who are at the heart of today's market. See www.historicautogroup.com for more.

Dave Selby



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PATRICK ERNZEN COURTESY OF RM SOTHEBY'S / KLEMANASKI COLLECTION

GTO heads to Monterey

RM Sotheby's, Monterey, California, USA 24-25 August

WITH PRE-EVENT hype-building now a huge factor in the success of the Monterey auctions, the opening salvos were fired as early as June in the run-up to August's Pebble Beach week sales. And there was no question which outfit won the early skirmishes as RM Sotheby's declared a 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO for its sale. Beyond the headline-grabbing 'in excess of \$45 million' widely being touted for the car, this overlooks the fact that, despite their desirability, GTOs have scant history under the gavel. In fact, only two have been consigned in recent memory and only one of those made it as far as the dais.

In 2010 RM consigned the factory-rebodied 1964-shaped example from the Matsuda collection, but that was sold before the auction. And, despite setting a new world record for the ex-Schlesser chassis 3851GT from the Maranello Rosso Collection at Quail Lodge in 2015, the £38 million raised by Bonhams was, believe it or not, viewed as quite a 'sensible' price and far from as extreme as many had predicted.

RM Sotheby's will hope such sense is left at the door of its Monterey Conference Center sale on 24-25 August when 3413GT goes under the hammer. Owned by Dr Greg

Whitten, the car has good competition history, taking class wins in the 1963 and 1964 Targas and blitzing the 1962 Italian GT Championship with nine wins out of ten.

It was first owned by Edoardo Lualdi and then Gianni Bulgari, came to the UK in the mid-1960s and passed through the hands of several renowned collectors – Margulies, Corner, Bamford, Moores – before moving to Yoshijuke Hayashi in Japan in 1988. It returned to the UK for much of the 1990s before settling with Microsoft tycoon Whitten at the turn of the millennium.

It's said never to have been crashed in competition and to retain all its important original bits, and the only blemish on its history – apart from lack of frontline success with an A-list driver – is the fitting of a factory Series II body by Scaglietti in 1964.

rmsothebys.com

Sole survivor Bentley

Bonhams, Quail Lodge, Carmel, California, USA 24 August



FLYING THE FLAG for the UK at Monterey, for the 21st time, will be Bonhams, which takes up residence at the Quail Lodge resort for its sale on 24 August. Just in case its Britishness didn't contrast enough with the North American auction houses, Bonhams' early PR majored on a trio of Bentleys. Straight out of the traps was the only surviving Vanden Plas 8 Litre saloon, and the imposing beast has been joined in the catalogue by a brace of four-door tourers. But first the 8 Litre...

Bought by AJ Player of the John Player tobacco family in 1931 and later moving to the United States, it has been in its current ownership for more than half a century. One of only three built, it retains the original

all-aluminium coachwork, the light weight of which helped it to the status of Bentley's fastest production car until the emergence of the R-Type Continental two decades later.

Similarly original is a fabric-bodied, brush-painted 1928 Bentley 4½ Litre Open Tourer by Vanden Plas. It has previously been owned by Alan Clark and John Sword, the sale of whose collection is regarded as the moment the classic car industry was born.

Less original is a 1928 Bentley 6½ Litre Open Sports Tourer by Barker that goes to auction fresh from a total restoration. It can, however, claim to be the last man standing with this style of body. Estimate for all three is 'refer to department'.

bonhams.com

QUICK GLANCE



DUESIE RARITY

Worldwide, Pacific Grove, CA, USA 23 August

Hard to imagine a more glamorous way to cruise Mulholland Drive than the 1931 Duesenberg Model J Derham Sport Convertible Sedan that's heading Worldwide's entries for Monterey Car Week.

Described as 'exceptionally pure', it is one of just five built in this style and one of only two that features the rakish V windscreen.

worldwide-auctioneers.com



PREMIUM BOND

SWVA, Poole, Dorset, UK 27 July

With an estimate of £6000-6900, it is a lot of money to shell out in order to answer the eternal question:

'Was it really that bad?' But we can't be alone in being fascinated by a car that says '70s as much as Henry Cooper and Kevin Keegan splashing it all over.

This refurbished 1972 Bond Bug 700ES is showing 20,000 miles. Beware corners!

swva.co.uk



UNDER THE RADAR

Morris Leslie, Errol, UK 18 August

Those in the know have long said that Jaguar's MkV saloon is unfairly overlooked in favour of rivals from Bentley and Rolls-Royce, and this 1949 example represents a great deal of car and class for its estimated £28,000-30,000. Despite not needing one legally, it has an MoT and has had only three keepers. As the 3.5-litre variant, it's good for 90mph.

morrisleslie.com



LOW-MILEAGE GT

Gooding, Pebble Beach, CA, USA 24-25 August

You might suspect that someone spotted the investment potential in this 2004 Porsche Carrera GT: it has had just one owner, who put fewer than 5000 miles on its clock. And they were right. With fewer than 2000 of the 5.7-litre V10 produced over three years, the 208mph hypercars sold new for £300k but are rarely seen under £600,000 now.

goodingco.com

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR...

In 1979 a fire ripped through Elstree Studios, destroying Stage 3 and halting production of *The Shining* temporarily. The blaze caught the attention of Jun'ichi Yaoi, a Japanese UFO enthusiast, who concluded, naturally, that the set of Stanley Kubrick's horror film was a hotbed of paranormal activity. Amazingly, when he pitched up with a TV crew to 'investigate', he was given a full tour – and managed to speak to the director on the phone.

'Uh, Space Travel 2001. What is meaning of last scene?' Jun'ichi asks, in an unaired clip that surfaced

recently. Perhaps disarmed by his interviewer's broken English, Kubrick answers the question he had dodged for years. 'God-like entities... put him [Dr David Bowman] in what I suppose you could describe as a human zoo... When they get finished with him... he is transformed into some kind of super-being and sent back to Earth.'

So there you have it. Fifty years after the release of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, we finally have some idea what the bloody film was about, and the revelation comes just in time to stoke interest in this rare poster, set to be offered by Heritage Auctions in Dallas on 28 July and sure to make more than its low estimate of \$6000.



AUCTION DIARY

26 July

H&H, Bickenhill, UK
(Motorcycle Auction)

27 July

SWVA, Poole, UK

2-4 August

Mecum, Harrisburg, USA

4 August

Coys, Jüchen, Germany

4 August

Worldwide, Shipshewana, USA

11 August

Mathewsons,
Thornton-le-Dale, UK

13 August

Shannons, Sydney, Australia

18 August

Morris Leslie, Errol, UK

18 August

Cheffins, Harrogate, UK

23 August

Worldwide, Pacific Grove, USA

23-25 August

Mecum, Monterey, USA

23-25 August

Russo & Steele, Monterey, USA

24 August

Bonhams, Carmel, USA

24-25 August

Gooding & Co,
Pebble Beach, USA

24-25 August

RM Sotheby's, Monterey, USA

24-25 August

Vicari, New Orleans, USA

25 August

Anglia Car Auctions,
King's Lynn, UK

25-26 August

Lucky Collector Car Auctions,
Tacoma, USA

30 August – 2 September

RM Sotheby's, Auburn, USA

1 September

Bonhams, Beaulieu, UK

1 September

Worldwide, Auburn, USA

1-2 September

Silver Auctions,
Sun Valley, USA

5 September

RM Sotheby's, London, UK

6 September

Brightwells, Leominster, UK

6 September

Coys, Fontwell, UK

In association with

GLENMARCH



1923 Aston Martin S-type Sports

£330,000. *Cotswold Collectors Cars, Gloucestershire, UK*

INTRIGUING AS THEY were, the earliest Bertelli-era cars were not a success for Aston Martin. The 1½-litre T-type and S-type saloons struggled to make much of an impact, leaving Aston Martin on slightly shaky financial ground until the International came along in 1929. This was not good, given that the company had already gone through bankruptcy in 1924 and again in 1925. Very few pre-International Astons were sold and even fewer survive today – making this eye-catching 1928 'short-chassis' S-type Sports all the more interesting.

It's actually the third-oldest Bertelli Aston in the world and one of the very first to feature lightweight two-seater bodywork. After it was exhibited at the 1928 Earls Court Motor Show, chassis TS10 was sold to the Maharajah of Patiala, who had it exported to his residence in Punjab, India. There it joined his extensive Rolls-Royce collection. TS10 then dropped off the radar for many

years. There's a record of its sale by Mr Paraamjit of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, in 1967, but nothing else until it eventually reappeared on the market in the early 2000s.

The ravages of time had taken their toll, though the chassis was complete, and many unique parts remained with the car. Unfortunately its original engine and worm-drive rear axle did not.

Andy Bell of pre-war Aston Martin specialist Ecurie Bertelli undertook the ground-up restoration after TS10 returned to the UK. Sourcing a correct wet-sump engine proved to be the biggest challenge. After much searching, a correct 1½-litre engine – the last known survivor of its type – from chassis TS18 ensured that the car could be returned to its original form. A new rear axle was manufactured to replace the missing original.

It presents extremely well today, and will give its purchaser access to a very exclusive club indeed.

cotswoldcars.com



SHOWROOM BRIEFS



1994 Land Rover Defender 'NAS'. £89,850

North American-specification Defenders carry big prices in the States, as does this repatriated example. Up-rated 4.6-litre engine and 1400 miles. bramley.com (UK)



1965 Huffaker Genie Mk10 \$125,000

One of only six Mk10 Genies built, and an original factory works racer driven by Jack Dalton, Bob Bondurant and Augie Pabst. Still relatively fresh from a rebuild in 2013. fantasyjunction.com (USA)



1992 Mercedes-Benz 500 SL 6.0 AMG. £69,950

Pre-merger AMGs were a different breed. This 6.0-litre Beryl Blue R129 is fast, loud and possibly the least subtle SL ever. And it's barely run-in with just over 11,000km, too. ddclassics.com (UK)



1957 AC Ace €305,000

Sold new to Cyprus in 1957, this Ace was hobbled with the AC 2.0-litre six-cylinder engine, but got the rare lightweight transmission and aluminium brake calipers. Eligible for the Mille Miglia. houtkamp.nl (NL)

HENDON WAY MOTORS



1998 Porsche 993 Turbo S 65,000 Miles



2014 Porsche 991 Turbo Coupe 14,000 miles



**2011 Porsche 997 GT3 RS 4.0 LTR Miles
£325,000**



**2003 Porsche 911 GT3 Coupe 50,000 Miles
£75,000**



**2010 Porsche 997 C2S Cabriolet 40,000 Miles
£43,950**



**2005 Ferrari 430 Spider FI 28,000 Miles
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Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost

Extraordinary refinement and usability for a centenarian

THERE'S USUALLY an interesting story behind a Rolls-Royce, be it a famous first owner or an amazing tale of survival. And with over 100 years of history behind them, the stories that make up the past of every Silver Ghost can be truly fascinating.

Officially named the 40/50hp when it was introduced at the Olympia Motor Show in 1907, the car soon attracted a more exciting title. The aluminium-painted demonstration car was given the 'Silver Ghost' name by the factory before completing the Scottish reliability trials, followed by a further 15,000 miles of hardcore testing, all without major breakdowns. The name stuck, and was officially adopted by Rolls-Royce in later years.

The Silver Ghost's defining moment came in 1911 during the London-to-Edinburgh reliability trial. A Napier had completed this in 1910, carrying four passengers and using only top gear, so Rolls-Royce set out to beat the record. The engine was tweaked to improve torque, allowing the Ghost to pull away from rest in top gear, and it completed the run with ease, using a lot less fuel, and smashed the Napier's top speed record at Brooklands a few days later. It's one reason why the Silver Ghost became known as 'the best car in the world'.

That effortless propulsion came via a 7.0-litre sidevalve six, which was torquey, smooth and, above all, quiet. Consisting of two three-cylinder blocks and a seven-bearing crank, it was improved over the years and enlarged to 7.5 litres in 1910.

Drive was sent via a three-speed transmission, with four speeds offered from 1913. Rear-mounted drum brakes came along in that year, too, replacing the earlier transmission brake that was effective but caused unnecessary wear to the drivetrain. The big leap forward came in 1924 with the introduction of servo-assisted front brakes.

Although even the youngest Silver Ghost is now 92 years old, you can happily use any Ghost on the public road today. Leave a decent gap for stopping – rear-braked cars are limited by the minimal contact patches of the narrow tyres – and it will happily cruise at 50mph. With a bit of fettling, 70-80mph can be achieved with ease, and you rarely have to change out of top gear. The steering is precise and the gearchange very user-friendly.

Just as importantly, the 20-Ghost Club that caters for these cars is a welcoming bunch, and its members are certainly not all 'high net worth individuals', many having scrimped and saved to afford their dream vintage car.

Rolls-Royce built 6173 Silver Ghosts, and it's believed that at least 1000 remain in running condition the world over. That's amazing, especially when you delve into that history. These machines have endured a century of use, survived two world wars and often suffered serious neglect. Given the care and attention they deserve, there's no reason they won't go on for another 100 years. With a few more stories to tell.

Matthew Hayward

THE LOWDOWN

WHAT TO PAY

The same could be said of any Rolls-Royce, but there is no such thing as a cheap Silver Ghost. History can play a big part, as can body type – limousines, and open tourers in the style of the London-Edinburgh cars, are the most common – but age is the biggest consideration. Pre-World War One cars can range from £350,000 for a restoration project to over £2m, depending on condition and provenance. As a rule, the earlier the chassis, the more valuable it is.

Those built following the war are considerably cheaper and much easier to find. They range from just over £125,000 to around £750,000 for a restored car. The USA-manufactured Ghosts potentially offer the best value.

LOOK OUT FOR...

It's important to ascertain the 'test date' of the chassis. This puts a definitive age on the car and can have a big impact on value. It's wise to talk with the 20-Ghost Club about this if you have any doubts about the age of a Ghost.

The bodywork may well have changed over the years, but don't worry as long as it remains true to the original's spirit and is in good shape. Some of the more unusual and opulent body styles are rarer and so can be more valuable, but they can also be considerably more complicated to restore.

The specialist fabrication skills needed to restore a Ghost are costly. Given the time it takes to restore one, think long and hard before undertaking such a project.

Don't under-estimate the cost of merely maintaining a Silver Ghost, either. Routine servicing and greasing are required frequently, and even basic consumables such as tyres can be hugely expensive.

Many earlier Silver Ghosts have been upgraded using parts from later cars to aid usability and safety. It was not uncommon for this work to be undertaken back at the factory in period, and it can be a huge help if you want to use the car for tours and events.

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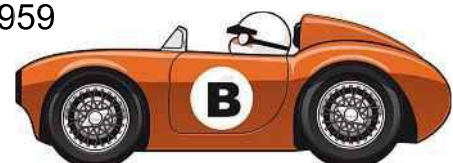
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Ferrari 308 'Spyder' 1 of 3



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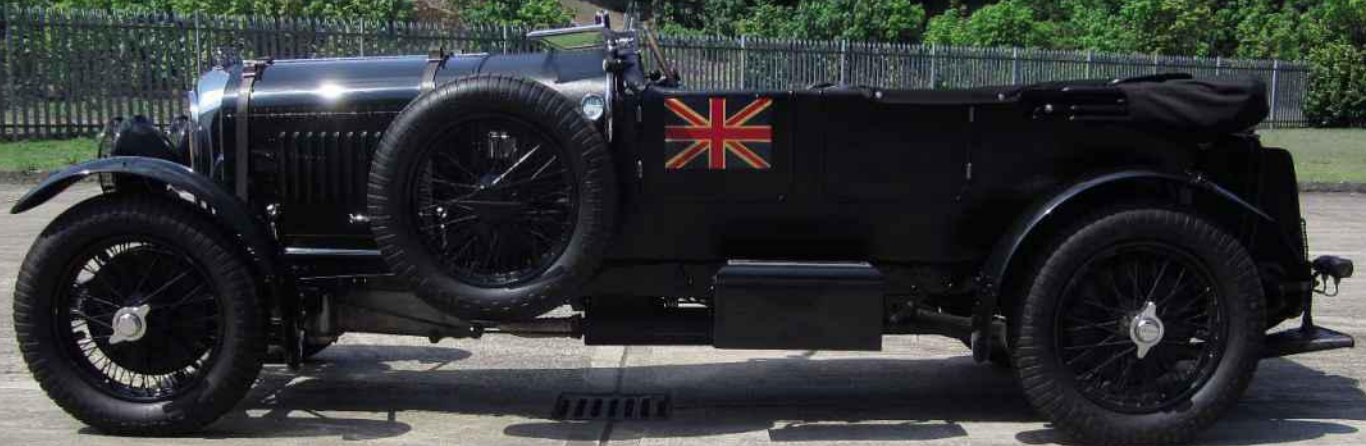
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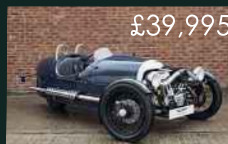
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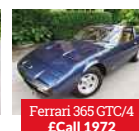
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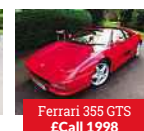
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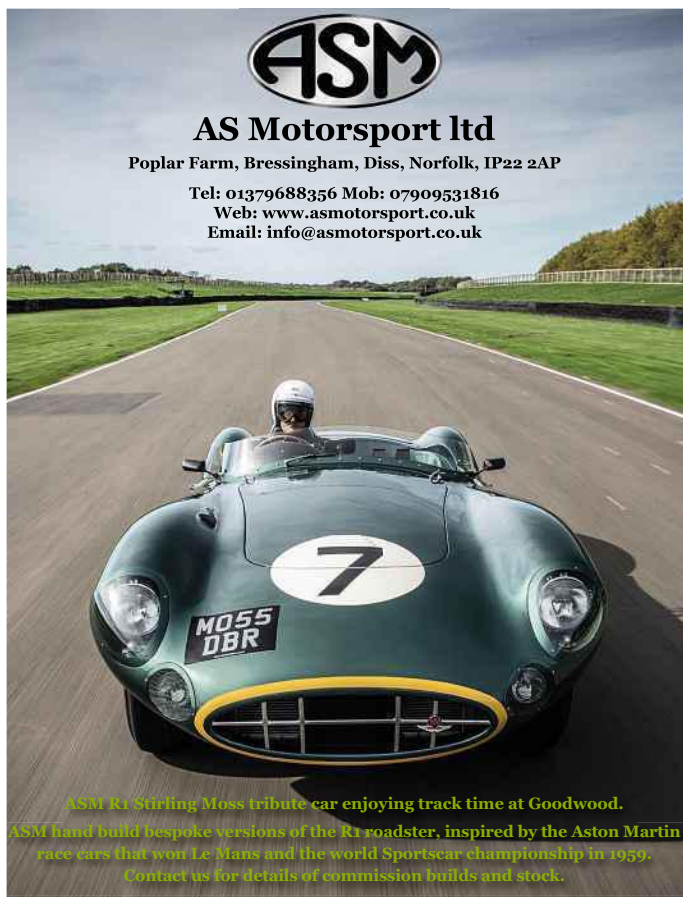
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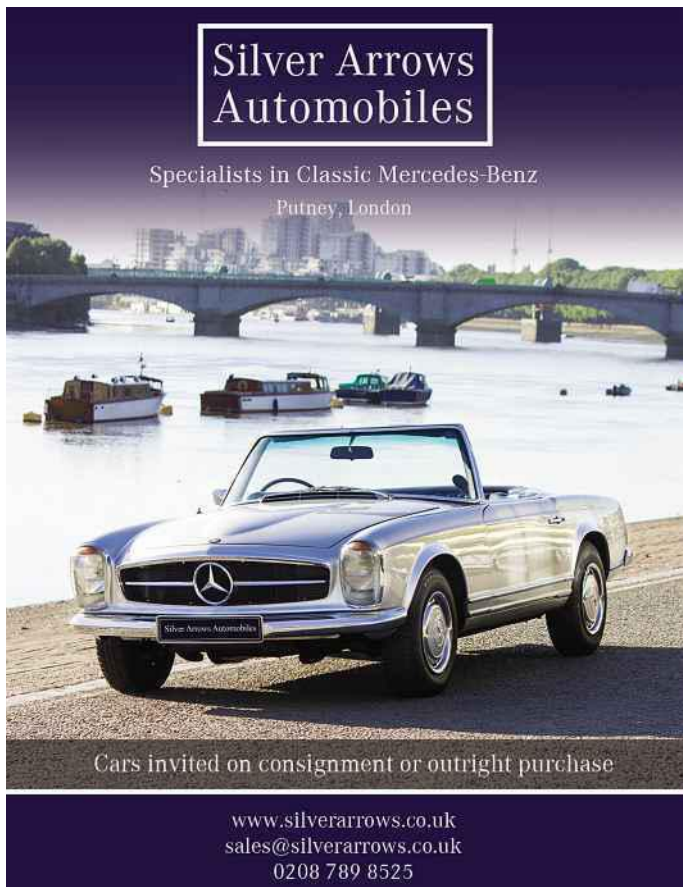


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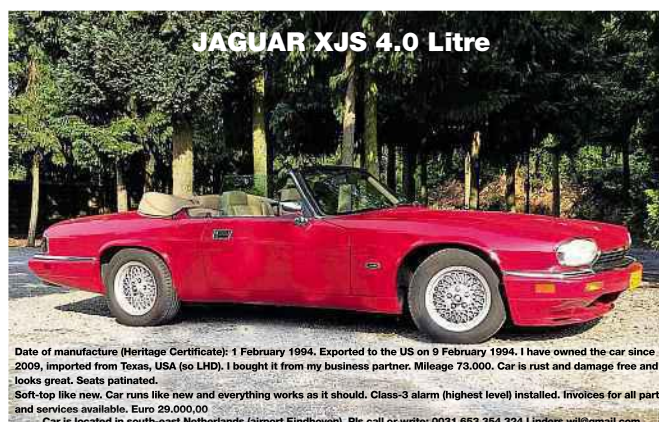
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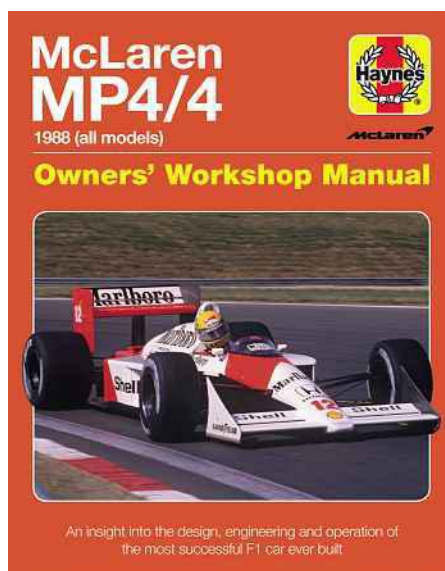
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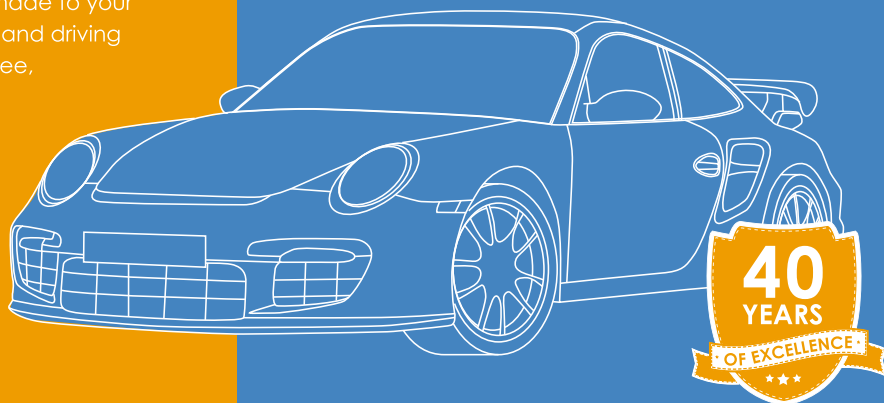


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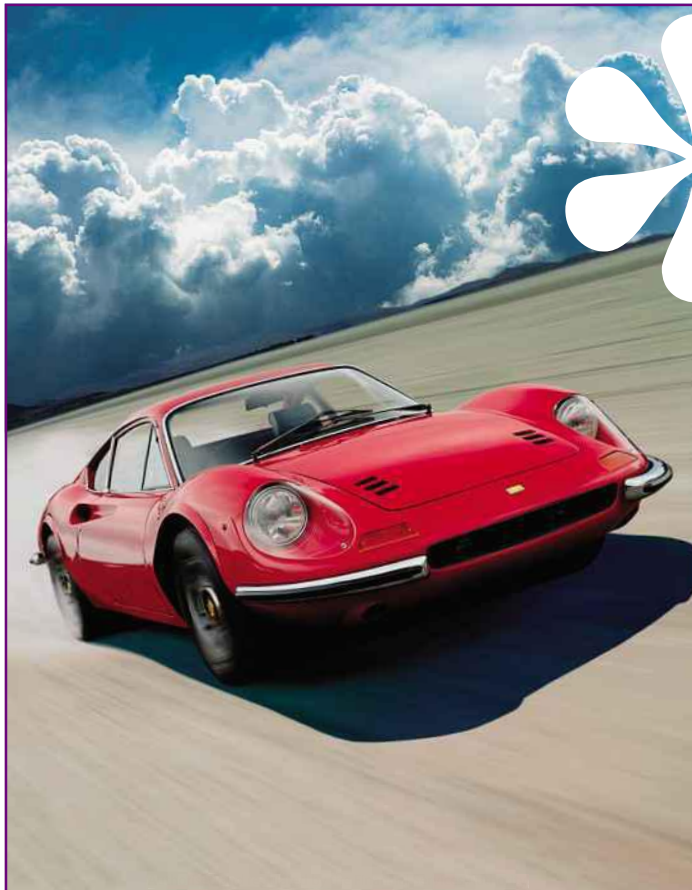
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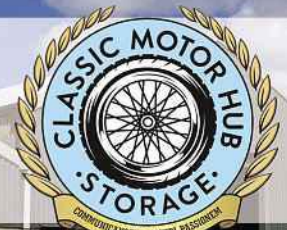
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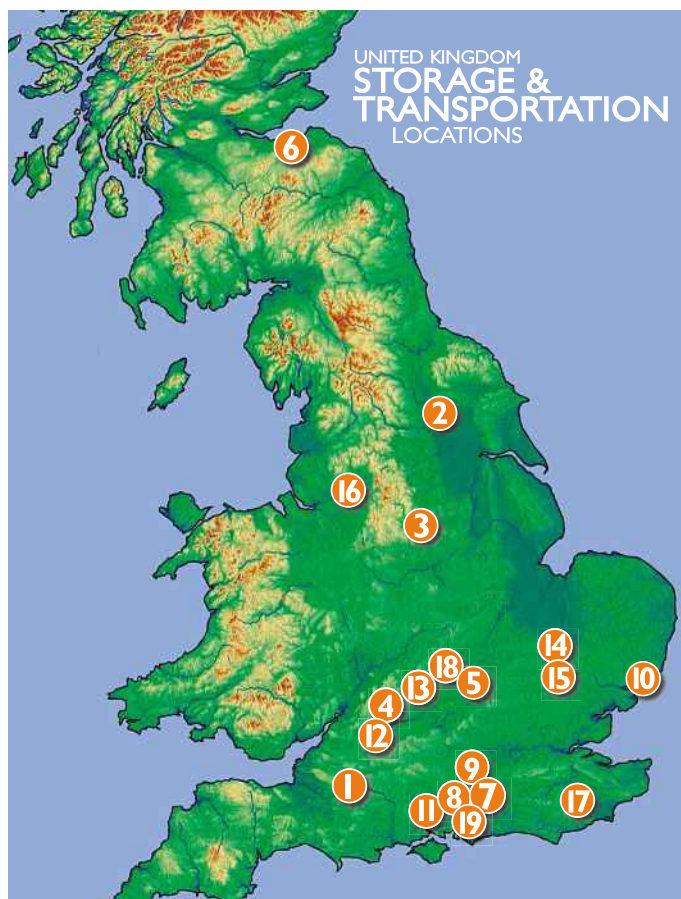
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Day in the life

INTERVIEW GILES CHAPMAN



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RICHARD TIPPER

It takes more than a T-Cut and a quick wax to get a perfect paintwork finish, as this detailer to the stars reveals

THIS MYSTIFIED LOOK comes over people's faces when I say I'm a detailer, an 'extreme valet'. When I say I can spend four days on one car, they're suddenly fascinated. I've been married for 19 years to Amanda, and our children are Faye, 16, and James, nearly 13, but I'm not sure if even they know the level I do it to.

The 'detailing' term is only ten years old, but I first used a machine polisher on paintwork over 20 years ago, when it was only done by bodyshops post-accident. I'd seen imperfections in paintwork that frustrated me because I couldn't remove them by hand. It needed a new technique to get a truly glass-like finish. I knew it was achievable.

If I have a car to do, such as a Ferrari F40, it's an early start from home in South Woodford, to beat the M25 traffic. I typically leave the house at 5.30am for a two-hour drive, and if I'm running early I'll stop for a coffee at Starbucks so I still arrive absolutely on-time.

There's normally a half-hour chat with the client before I start. It's important to establish what's achievable in the time available. My services come at a fee, but I can inject considerable value into a car, which far outweighs my labour rate.

A whole F40 is tight in one day. It usually takes two. It's so intricate and they vary between largely original and partially restored cars.

'POLISHING THE PAINT ON AN F40 TAKES SIX OR SEVEN HOURS BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY AIR DUCTS, VERY EDGY, VERY SHARP'

By 10am, I've completed all the wet work outside. The car will be washed, decontaminated, and what I consider clean. From that point I usually move into a workshop, showroom, garage, storage facility, sometimes a converted basement. I've been driven indoors by the rising values of cars. I rarely work on a driveway any more.

On a well-used F40, I spend a whole day purely on the engine, suspension, the exposed tub under the nose cone, calipers, hubs, struts, the insides of the wheels. These are the areas that get missed, often because people are scared of using the wrong chemicals. I don't wear gloves because I need the sensitivity of my fingertips, so I have scars on the backs of my hands from hard-to-get-at brake discs.

Polishing and enhancing the paint on an F40 takes six or seven hours' solid work because you've got so many air ducts, all very edgy, very sharp. It's a fantastic car but a detailer's nightmare. Thin paint is often age-old, filler caps don't always lie flat, the 'F40' embossed into the rear wing takes ages, and I have to be careful working around the brittle edges of the Perspex engine cover, which is irreplaceable. I often get so absorbed in it I forget to eat lunch, and only realise when I start getting giddy.

Every time you polish paintwork, you very slightly thin the paint surface. I don't want to cut away so much that it can never be polished again. It's another boundary.

I've done Dario Franchitti's Ferrari F40, and Nick Mason's... and 29 others! It's amazing to prepare cars for people I've grown up admiring. Yesterday I completed a Porsche for Derek Bell. I'd watched him in the Rothmans Porsche 962 with my dad at Brands Hatch; now here he was thanking me and signing a 1:18 model of his Ferrari 512M for me. I'd also worked on that actual car for Fiskens. I'm a huge fan so it was one of those 'wow' moments.

Cars I work on often come with tremendous stories, and I don't want to erase any of that history. Earlier this year, again for Fiskens, I did 49 FXN, the low-drag Jaguar E-type Lightweight. It has slightly different coloured panels, fuel discolouring down its sides, battered wheels, paint cracks and blisters. I was working around the stone chips; I needed to bring it to a level where it was stunning on stage but, if you looked closely, you could almost read its history book with the battle-scars from pit crew and mechanics. Polishing brought out the rich depths of its British Racing Green and made the light bounce off the surface beautifully. Suddenly, it looked a £10m car.

With components, under-arches, engines, bare metal, they're aged and that's it, but paint surfaces become marred, scratched and swirled through poor handling and cleaning techniques, and that's all recoverable.

I work on seven big sales each year for Silverstone Auctions. They're long days for a team, with 15 or 20 cars to prioritise. Each will be transformed, but we have to decide what's the most noticeable benefit. People will examine them closely so, for example, the door shuts, roof gutters and the tops of glass must all look fantastic.

Typically I get home by 8pm, and I'm to bed at 10.30, after eight-to-ten hours of physical work. Sometimes I get a warning from my back or shoulder because I spend so long bent over or kneeling, with pressure on my right because I'm not ambidextrous. I use so many muscle groups that I don't need the gym.



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