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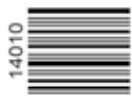
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APPRECIATING CLASSICS

Recent international auction results show that classic cars and bikes continue to be sound investments. But this is not the only reason for owning an older vehicle. One only has to see how many shows and events line the spring calendar locally to realise that the main reason for ownership is the use and enjoyment of machines, and the mates that we meet along the way.

This month we feature two readers' cars that have enjoyed some serious use lately with Howard Bates taking his South Africa Volvo on an 8 000km trip through Scandinavia, while Arthur Wassenaar conquered the Mille Miglia in a Johannesburg-based Triumph.

Graeme Hurst looks at a Jaguar E-Type that has not only done regular trips from Zimbabwe to the South Coast of KwaZulu Natal, but could well be the only E-Type with a tow bar and the accomplishment of towing a full household content, including a 21-foot yacht and two goldfish. While doing this story he stumbled across the owner's Sunbeam Tiger and celebrates the brutal Brit's 50th in fine style with a look at

South African production.

South African specials continue with the manic Chevy Can-Am homologation units and Gavin Foster and Greg Mills talk about special South Africans in the form of Bentley man Brian Gush and world-class karter Stephen Line.

High-end luxury is covered by Mike Monk's feature on a presidential Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullman and John Smith tracks down a very rare Facel Vega. Perhaps not luxury but definitely high-end on the price scales, Rob Reneson takes one of only seven GT40 road cars for a spin on public tarmac.

Of course the usual classified adverts, readers' letters, news and events pages find a home and we've introduced a 'Reader Rides' page, so feel free to send in a brief story and images on your car, or a trip you've done with your car. Send this and any classified adverts or letters to me at stuart@cpca.co.za.

Please enjoy, and with the weather turning, the blossoms flowering and temperatures rising, get out there and make use of your appreciating investment.

Stuart

TARGA

For some years Porsche's Targa versions of the pre-'73 911s were regarded as being somewhat lesser than the more sporting coupé models. That's no longer the case as **Robert Coucher** discovers.



Inevitably, motor cars are affected by fashion, both modern and classic alike. Here in Britain, in the Thirties, big engined motor cars were all the rage and heavy, standard saloons were chopped to become open sports cars so wealthy 'chaps' could indulge in a bit of light motor racing at Brooklands or over on the Continent.

After World War II, motor cars became smaller and lighter by necessity but open cars were still seen

as the sporting option although the hood arrangements were rudimentary and not particularly effective. Sports cars of the Fifties and Sixties continued the tradition but automobiles in the biggest car market in the world, America, had generally morphed into large two- or four-door sedans. Open cars were becoming rarer because American legislators were planning to ban automobiles without a roof as 'unsafe', helped along by anti-car campaigner Ralph Nader and his book

Unsafe at Any Speed published in 1965. Fortunately, it didn't happen.

Porsche unveiled its first 911 model at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1963, as a coupé. But Porsche's first 356 No. 1 was in open configuration and the German engineers wanted to continue this tradition. So in 1965 it launched its ingenious Targa, an open car with fixed roll hoop. Initially the Targa featured a removable vinyl roof and soft plastic zip-out rear window. In 1968 the fiddly and leak-prone soft rear

TIME

Robert Coucher was born in Cape Town but has lived in London since 1988. Previously the editor of *Classic Cars* and the *Bentley* magazine, Robert started *Octane* magazine ten years ago and it now sells around the world to discerning motoring enthusiasts and racers.

www.octane-magazine.com



window was replaced with fixed glass.

The Targa models were always popular but expensive and ran through the Porsche range over the decades. Porsche recently launched its new 991 Series Targa 4 and 4S to much acclaim. The new car is an unashamed, retro nod at the Targa style of the Seventies, with its polished aluminium roll over hoop. The styling has been very well received and the fully electrically operated hood, which retracts in 19 seconds, is just what the modern, hassle-free,

sporting car driver wants. But most of all, the new 991 Targa is one of the best-looking Porsches. Ever.

As most of you probably know, the values of early Porsche 911s have jumped significantly over the past two years. They have come into focus as the younger demographic enters the classic car market, able to afford the cars they wanted when they were growing up.

To a forty-something, a classic car of the Seventies is spot on. Vintage cars are too ancient, as are classics of

the Fifties and Sixties. But there are precious few decent classics of the '70s, apart from Porsches. The Ferraris of the period, like Dinos, are too expensive; Aston V8s are too ponderous; BMW CSLs too rare; Ford Capris are okay if a bit 'orange on the aerial'; Jaguars were too badly built and unreliable and Lambos plain scary. But now also too expensive as Countach prices have hiked some 300% in three years!

Of course, the younger generation of classic car enthusiasts want even



later cars, those of the '80s... but that's another discussion. No, it's the Porsche 911 for the savvy, younger-middle-age enthusiasts and the recent jump in prices reflect this huge demand.

Lead by the fabulous Porsche 911 2.7RS, enthusiasts began converting early, ropey 911s to RS spec, two decades ago. It is cheaper and easier to fit simple, painted, aftermarket glassfibre front and rear bumpers to a stock '70s 911 than have to re-chrome everything and fit new rubber details, etc. Stripping out the interior to ape the RS is similarly cost effective and easier than a full re-trim. Over the last decades Porsche specialists in the UK and USA (and I am sure in SA) have done a roaring trade in hot-rodding 911s.

But the market has changed and collectors now want their early, pre-'73 911s in original condition, so those same Porsche specialists are now busily undoing their cheap cut-and-shut replicas and hastily returning the cars to full road trim specification.

The vagaries of fickle fashion. But not surprising because, seemingly, every poor early 911 had been dressed up to resemble something it was not. Original is best.

And with the launch of the beautiful new 991 Targa, early Targas are back in fashion. The thinking used to be that Targas were soft, 'creak and leak' hairdresser's cars. The classic car

coupé but you don't feel it on the road. The suspension set up is softer and so much better over rough surfaces. I don't see the need for the heavy, complex four-wheel drive system, (the car weighs 1 575kgs) but that's what the wealthy customer in the northern snow belts of Europe and America want, apparently. Expect a lightweight, two-wheel drive soon.

I also drove a beautiful little '73 2.4S Targa and it is a revelation. Fingertip light – at 1 085kgs it is only 15kgs heavier than a coupé – it's responsive, delicate, refined and damn fast. Beguilingly gorgeous. Interestingly, the early Targa is better with the roof removed, as it is actually quieter than the new Targa. The new version is best with the electronic roof erected at motorway speed, which is again unsurprising as this is a Porsche designed to be used as an everyday sporting machine. For fun – dropping the electric hood is a real crowd stopper – but also for the daily commute. Indeed, the Targa is back, and in tremendous '70s style. 🏁

But the market has changed and collectors now want their early, pre-'73 911s in original condition

world has grown up and the uber-sophisticated Porschephiles now realise that is a load of rubbish! Sure, if you are going to race the nuts off your 911 at Killarney, Kyalami or Zwartkops circuits then you might want a coupé. But, as enjoyable open road cars, the Targa's time has come and the market knows it.

Recently I drove the new 991 Targa and it's fabulous. Apparently it weighs some 110kgs more than the lightest

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Classic and Performance Car Africa is the only dedicated historic motoring magazine in the country. From racing, to personalities, to some of the most special vehicles ever produced, we are continually unearthing great stories, illustrating them with a mixture of old photos and new, and helping

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A complete range of two-, four-, six- and eight-cylinder 123ignition distributors is available for most classics, including Alfa Romeo, Aston Martin, BMW, Citroën, Fiat, Jaguar, Land Rover, Mercedes-Benz, MG, Mini and Triumph amongst others. Most Lucas distributor-equipped cars are also catered for. Historic racers will enjoy the 123\TUNE ignitions that are compliant with regulations for Pre-66 Legends of the Nine Hour and Historic Racing South Africa Pre-77 Touring Cars for 2015. USB compatible, the distributor can be tuned according to specific individual requirement and has the advantage of two available curves for running



at Gauteng altitudes or at the coast with the flick of a switch. The two curves also allow classics to run on a variety of fuels without chance of detonation.

The unit also includes a rev limiter and vacuum advance functionality for turbocharged classics. The computer-based dashboards include fun facilities like a stopwatch to measure acceleration through the rev range when tuning.

The distributor should ensure engine longevity and ease of maintenance. Prices range between R5 000 and R7 000. For more information visit www.123ignition.nl. The 123ignition distributors are imported exclusively to South Africa by Spannerworx and can be ordered from 123ignitionsa@gmail.com.

WINGS & WHEELS



The Kitty Hawk Aerodrome east of Pretoria played host to a fly-in of 45 RV kit planes to meet an equal number of visiting Lotus kit cars for their annual RV day. It was a huge success and the similarities between the planes and the cars are quite remarkable. The RV kit plane originates in America where the kits are supplied in various forms, from a scratch-build, a quick-build version and then a type of rolling chassis version where finishing touches are required. The build can take approx. 7 000 weekend hours in a normal size garage and comes with a detailed instruction manual. It is a requirement that

a safety officer visits during the building process to approve what has been done at given stages. Even the rivet holes are machine marked off a CAD-type drawing. This ensures that all components are perfectly aligned, a bit like getting the suspension pickup points aligned! The RV comes in 2-seater as well as 4-seater models and with the evolution of time the product has become a highly professional piece of work. Power plant is normally a 180bhp Lycoming 4-litre number, but alternatives can be used. Like the Lotus 7 it is basic, very simple and a huge amount of fun.

- Dave Hastie

BMW SHINERS

The annual BMW Car Club Concours d'Elegance was held at the Montecasino Piazza, highlighting the Bavarian classics under perfect sunny skies. The Piazza was stretched to the very limit and could not accommodate one more BMW without infringing on municipal safety regulations. It wouldn't be a Concours without the South African specials, which were all present and accounted for: the E12 530 MLE, E23 745i, E30 333i and the E30 325iS.

With only five M1s that I know of in South Africa it was a real privilege to have two at the Concours, both having been driven there - nice to see that these are no trailer queens. Other rarities included the 700 Hans Stuck replica and a 2000 Cheetah. Evolution 2 Motorsport displayed Batmobile, the Tony Viana Winfield E30 325i Shadowline and a replica Group A Schnitzer BMW 635CSi.

Jack Kaplan's 2002 Turbo cleaned up nicely taking the following classes: d'Honneur Modified, Best Classic and Best 2002. It also happens to be the only running 2002 Turbo on the African continent. Robin Sadler's Z3 M Coupe took a well-deserved win in the d'Etat class as well as in the Best M class. Bilaal Mia took the d'Elegance class with his white E30 318i Coupe and Gerhard van Niekerk's 1995 E36 325i convertible nabbed d'Honneur Stock class. The prize for the biggest South African BMW Icon, the E30 325iS, went to Mike Salt for the Best E30/325iS. Another first-time entrant, Alex Johnstone, took the Show & Shine class with his 2004 E46 330i.

— Johann Venter



Hamptons in Randburg has added collectable motorcycle sales to its repertoire making it a one-stop shop when buying or selling both classic cars and bikes. For more information and stock lists visit www.hamptons.co.za or pop in for a coffee at 5 Main Road, Sandton.



BUYING BIKES

MINI HITS 55



The National Monument in Pretoria was the venue chosen by MOCSA to celebrate the 55th birthday of the Alec Issigonis revolution in automotive innovation. Previous Mini birthday celebrations had a competition element of driving tests and races whereas this year the competitions were of a more social nature that allowed for full family participation. They included fun events with a modified version of Jukskei, where a fan belt improvised as a skittle. This event was called fan belt tossing. Others were a rocker cover race, a cake-baking contest and a blindfolded driving test. The fan belt tossing competition was won by 12-year-old Aidan Viljoen, Daniela Everts nabbed the rocker cover race, and Nicky Potgieter won a cake-decorating kit and book after taking the Best Mini Cake honours. The Best Period Dress competition was won by the members from OMC (Our Mini Club) who really were superb in their '60s and '70s garb, and Johann van den Heever Jnr scored victory in the Blind Driver skill test.

– Dave Hastie

BATTLE OF THE BRANDS

The one thing that unites all the so-called 'Petrolheads' is the love of their particular brand of car but occasionally, these types gather to do battle of the brains and brands during the *Classic and Performance Car Africa Inter Club Quiz*. Planned by the MG Car Club the competition, Quiz-Mastered by George Shipway and Clive Winterstein, got the show on the road. This year saw new question formatting and invited audience participation. Teams consisted of four members from each of the participating clubs namely Alfa Romeo A, Alfa Romeo B, Mercedes Benz, Jaguar, MG, Rootes, Triumph, Lotus, Morgan, Austin

Healey, Sunbeam and a Wild Card crew.

Sitting there, anxiously awaiting George to fire the first question at us, my memory once more drifted back to those very early days when the 'Martini' Inter-Club Quiz was held at the Alba Hotel in Braamfontein, and the wonderful times spent in the company of members of other car clubs. I remember a much younger Norman Ewing of the Octagon gang vehemently protesting about some trivial aspect of an ancient MG. Ah what memories! Anyway back to the present and reality. After three question rounds, the pecking order saw Lotus leading Alfa and Jaguar followed by Triumph. The final rounds were contested eventually by Alfa A, Jaguar, Lotus, Triumph and Wild Card and when all was said and done the Lotus team stood on the highest tier of the podium with runners-up Jaguar and Triumph (Pretoria) in third.

– Colin Black (Alfa Romeo Club of SA)



FERRIS



FAST LEARNERS

The social side of the Lotus Register of South Africa, who host the popular Lotus Challenge Club racing series, came out to play on 10 August with a Driver Coaching Day that gave members, wives and children free reign of the Zwartkops Raceway. What we saw was a mix of machinery ranging from Marnus Bronkhorst in his mother's one-owner Datsun 1200, to some high-powered sportscars such as a McLaren and Porsche Boxster. Other cars included a few Volvos, Lotus Exige and Elise and a beautiful James Bond reminder Lotus Esprit of Jo dos Santos. The current racing competitors also enjoyed a few fast laps in their competition 7s to test before the upcoming round of the Historic Tour. A brilliant day and education for all those involved.

– Dave Hastie

PACKED IN THE PARK

One could suggest that POMC have become a victim of their own success with the running of their Cars in the Park event as the roads leading into and out of Zwartkops blocked up. Older generation cars need little provocation to boil easily in the African sun, but it was nonetheless a feast for the eyes with something for everyone. With several hundred Clubs and interest groups requiring the simple necessities in life, the vendors parked around the race track did a roaring trade and desperate measures were needed to secure more stock of rolls, boerewors and drinks. It was another tough day in Africa.

– Dave Hastie





For the Enthusiasts...

By the Enthusiasts

The small town of Knysna has become a focal point when sourcing vintage, post-vintage, classic and sports cars. Knysna is also home to the **HOUSE OF CLASSIC & SPORTS CARS**, situated on the Main Road (N2). Their impressive, modern building invites visitors to come in and view a wide range of vehicles including MG's, Triumphs, Classic Mercedes', Austin Healeys, e-type Jaguars, Buicks, Porsches, etc., from convertibles to sports, sedans, coupés and classic LDVs.

Enthusiasts enjoy owning and driving these beautiful vehicles, but also appreciate them from an investment point of view as their value continues to escalate.



Since opening in November, 2012, **HOCASC's** showroom has become a "must see" for car lovers from all over Southern Africa and abroad. Enthusiasts will find probably the largest selection of vintage cars for sale under one roof ranging from a 1926 Chevrolet and 1928 Ford to Chevs, Fords, Buicks and Cadillacs produced in the 30's, 40's and 50's.



Some cars prove more popular than others, but **HOCASC** believes there is a car for everyone. Their friendly and efficient staff goes the extra mile to find suitable vehicles for their buyers and to negotiate prices to suit each individual pocket.

"Project Cars" are also available for those who wish to restore a vehicle to their own specifications.

Cars are accepted for sale on consignment with safe, reliable carriage being arranged for these valuable vehicles. On arrival at **HOCASC** in Knysna, the vehicles are thoroughly cleaned, checked and displayed in a modern, spacious showroom. Advertising is done via **HOCASC's** website, their extensive email data base, car club newsletters and a number of upmarket car magazines. Sellers are assured of the best service possible to secure realistic, achievable prices.

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HOUSE OF CLASSIC & SPORTS CARS has recently been appointed as an authorised

Harley-Davidson® dealer for the Garden Route. The showroom will be located at 70 Main Road, Knysna and will feature the latest Harley-Davidson® motorcycles, parts, accessories and clothing. A full workshop will be available to service Harley-Davidson motorcycles and fit parts and accessories. The new dealership is expected to open before the end of the year.

Visit... HOUSE OF CLASSIC & SPORTS CARS at 70, Main Road, Knysna (N2) and view the wide variety of cars and motorcycles for sale. Browse at your leisure and feel free to ask questions.

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SAREL OILED UP

The Franschhoek Motor Museum played host to an unveiling of a new painting by world-renowned artist Nicholas Watts. The painting features SA racing hero Sarel van der Merwe driving the Dunlop-sponsored works Porsche 962C at the 1988 Le Mans 24 Hour. The image, painted in oils, depicts Sarel in car number 8 heading the sister car and, in the background, the race-winning Jaguar, down the Mulsanne Straight during the twilight hours.

The fine art study is the first in a series by Watts that will highlight "South Africans who have lit up the racing circuits of the world," said UK-based Watts' local representative John Dalton at the unveiling, held in the Museum's Hall D appropriately enough close to FMM's own Porsche 956 Le Mans car. Sarel himself was present to reveal Watts' work and was honoured to receive a framed print for his personal collection. Sarel then entertained the audience with his memories of the race, delivered in his usual straightforward



and humorous style. John also presented Sarel with a 1:43 scale model of the car. Wine, coffee and snacks were served as attendees milled around recalling great moments in SA motorsport history.

Only 40 individually numbered 700 x 600mm prints of the original will be made and all available only in SA. Prices are R2 850 (framed) and R2 250 (unframed) and available from pdalton@mweb.co.za.

SEFAC CAPE VISIT

The Cape chapter of the Ferrari owner's club SEFAC visited FMM in September. No less than 31 cars arrived at L'Ormarins where a start-up and running display of a few of the museum's special Ferrari's took place including the 250 Lusso Competition, 275GTB, F50 and the Enzo, as well as the McLaren F1 just to keep things well rounded... The 71 attendees enjoyed a wine tasting tour around the farm followed by lunch and a big-screen viewing of the Italian GP, which, sadly for the gathered *tifosi*, was not one of the Scuderia's better races.



JAGUAR D-TYPE PRESENTATION



Cape Town's newest classic car showroom, Crossley and Webb, is fast becoming a focal point for local enthusiasts. The expansive building is tucked away in an historic part of the city's CBD and apart from the mouth-watering display of classic and exotic cars on the floor, there is an elegant coffee shop where a continual stream of visitors chill out and soak up the atmosphere. The company organises 'storytellers evenings' and recently FMM was invited to present the

Museum's Jaguar D-Type XKD573 to an appreciative audience. The D-Type is the most successful Jaguar ever to enter Le Mans, winning in 1955, 1956 and making a clean sweep of the top four places in 1957 with XKD573 finishing fourth. "It was a great evening spent looking at the wonderful array of Jaguars on display, kicking tyres and sharing stories with Big Cat owners of the Cape," said FMM's curator and presenter on the evening, Wayne Harley.

WHERE, WHAT TIMES AND HOW MUCH

For more information about the Franschhoek Motor Museum, view galleries of the collection and learn more about forthcoming events, logon to www.fmm.co.za

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THUNDERSTUCK!

'You and 99 others' was what the advertising department came up with for the Chevrolet Firenza Can-Am. This was because it was yet another small car fitted with a big heart by South African shoe-horners, and needed that number manufactured to get the go-ahead to take part in local racing. **Stuart Grant** looks at the brutal 'Little Chev' that arrived and dominated like a Highveld thunderstorm.





Basil van Rooyen, top-drawer saloon car racer and the man behind tuning company Superformance is where the story begins. Van Rooyen, who had raced a Capri Perana, saw the benefits of tying up with General Motors on the racing front. In order to convince the powers-that-be, he took a pair of Firenza GT coupés (originally designed to run a 2.5-litre 4-cylinder) and squeezed a 307 cubic inch GM lump under the hoods. From there it was off to head office in Port Elizabeth for approval. With the heavy honchos suitably impressed, plans were set in motion to build 100 units for homologation purposes, kicking off in 1972. The 307 motor had to make way for a 302 cubic inch small block unit as the Argus Production Car championship rules stipulated a maximum capacity of 5 litres, although Van Rooyen thought he'd spotted a loophole in the form of an over-bore clause. Fate played a hand when GM America built 302 CI engines for its Z28 Camaro to compete in the Trans-Am series but withdrew the idea, leaving a stockpile of hot motors ready and available. Specs saw that the big-valve engine with four-bolt main bearing blocks, running an 11:1 compression ratio and with an 800 CFM Holley carb mixing the juice and air was good for 290 horses and around 400Nm of torque.

In road guise weighing in at only 1100kg the Can-Am combined lightness with oodles of grunt to gallop from standstill to 100km/h in just 5.4 seconds and would reach a top speed of 225km/h. Power went via a Muncie M21 four-speed manual box to a locally developed Borg-Warner limited slip differential and was delivered to the black stuff by some Personal 13-inch alloys (in a smokey fashion if not gentle on the loud pedal). A Personal 3-spoke leather-rimmed steering wheel fed the driver inputs to the front wheels and if you still weren't convinced you were piloting something special, Superformance painted road Can-

In total 100 road units made it into showrooms and sold at around double the price of a 2.5 Firenza. 6 full blown race-prepared cars hit the national circuits and rally tracks bringing the total Can-Am count to 106

Ams white, added a black fibre-glass bonnet featuring a pair of air-scoops, Koni shock absorbers and an adjustable American Racing Equipment aluminium wing on the boot lid. Other unique-to-Can-Am features included larger brakes, racy seats (borrowed from an Opel GT) and different rev counter markings from those found on the tame Firenza. In total 100 road units made it into showrooms and sold at around double the price of a 2.5 Firenza. 6 full blown race-prepared cars hit the national circuits and rally tracks bringing the total Can-Am count to 106. It is estimated that in the region of 30 still are accounted for with a few having even left our shores.

In an interesting move the Can-Ams went racing as the 'Dealer Team' which saw the funding coming from Chevrolet dealers countrywide. For every vehicle sold at dealership level a portion of the profit went to the team to run the programme. Of course when talking Can-Am we can't forget Geoff Mortimer, who not only piloted these brutal racers but also played a huge role in the development and engineering of them. All in all the package worked from the outset with Van Rooyen and Mortimer finishing 11th in the '72 9 Hour before Van Rooyen claimed victory on Production Car debut at Kyalami in January 1973. Van Rooyen nailed 11 wins in a row through 1973




while Paddy Driver, Eddie Keizan and Nols Niemann piloted the second Dealer Team car on occasion.

For the 1973 9 Hour it looked likely that Chevy would steal the show with three cars entered but sadly that was not the case, with the first Can-Am (Van Rooyen/Frank Gardner) retiring with gearbox troubles, the second piloted by Jan Hettema being crashed and the final one falling off the trailer before even turning a wheel at Kyalami. Victory went the way of the international Jacky Ickx/Hans Stuck BMW 3-litre CSL, which also became the first saloon to lap at over 100mph.

Just as the Can-Am gained momentum on track and in the sales

department, so disaster struck with the oil crisis and the implementation of fuel rationing and ban on motorsport events. Can-Ams continued to sell through to 1975 but any thoughts of extending production further were canned as the public sought more economical rides.

Like a Highveld thunderstorm the Chevrolet Firenza Can-Am arrived in a flash, shook the atmosphere up and then cleared off into the distance. For local Chevrolet and saloon racing fans a genuine car is akin to the Holy Grail. As and when one crops up it is worth seizing it on the spot, but do your homework, as there are likely to be more fakes than originals lurking. 

Van Rooyen nailed 11 wins in a row through 1973 while Paddy Driver, Eddie Keizan and Nols Niemann piloted the second Dealer Team car on occasion







EXPORT APPEAL

By John W Smith

By the mid-1950s, the great French 'Grand Routiers' were a dying breed.

World War II had not been kind to the French motor industry and while companies like Peugeot, Renault and Citroën were able to attract capital to produce modern cars for the bourgeoisie, the aristocrats like Bugatti, Delage and Delahaye could only update their pre-war products. Added to their woes was an onerous taxation system on large capacity cars with even a super-tax on overhead camshafts! Bugatti ceased car production in that decade and the merged Delage/Delahaye company



amalgamated with Hotchkiss, eventually making only military vehicles. One could say that the market was wide open for a French supercar with export appeal.

Into this breach stepped the Facel-Metallon company of Jean Daninos. Specialists in steel pressings to others in the motor industry, particularly Simca, the company was well placed to enter into the manufacture of a car of its own design.

A modern, luxury, high performance car sporting French design flair that would appeal to an international clientele was drawn up on a completely new chassis. Its styling had some

resemblance to the Simca Comete, a 2-door pillarless coupe whose bodywork Facel was producing in some quantity. The engine and automatic gearbox were sourced from Chrysler, so ample power and ease of driving would

The FVS that followed benefited from the horsepower race in the USA; a succession of ever more powerful engines was offered including the 5.8-litre (354 Hemi) unit from the Chrysler stable

be assured by this reliable powertrain. For those who desired a manual transmission, the superb French-made Pont-a-Mousson all-synchromesh 4-speeder was available. The cars wore the badge *Facel-Vega, Paris* and the

first model designated the 'FV' was introduced in 1954.

A 2-door pillarless coupe, it was capable of nearly 200km/h with the 4.5-litre de Soto Hemi engine. The FVS that followed benefited from the horsepower race in the USA; a succession of ever more powerful engines was offered including the 5.8-litre (354 Hemi) unit from the Chrysler stable. Similar engines powered the famous Chrysler 300 'letter cars'

in the late 1950s which were arguably the fastest production cars in America at the time. Interestingly, the French-built 4-speed manual gearbox crossed the Atlantic to become an extra-cost option on these cars. By comparison, Facel



production figures were small: 357 FV/ FVS models were made of which 6 were convertibles. Just over 840 of the more powerful 6.4-litre HK 500 found buyers among the movie stars, pop musicians, leaders of industry and racing drivers like Stirling Moss. The latter apparently preferred to drive his car from event to event rather than fly! No wonder, with the 392 Hemi grinding out 360Bhp and 425ft/lb of torque, the magic 'Imperial ton' (100mph) was reached in third gear with fourth giving at least another 40mph or so. City-to-city times would have rivalled that of a light-plane charter, taking airport transfers into account! Facel Vega had truly 'arrived' on the world market, pioneering an American-engined/Euro-engineered genre of cars for the following decade. The Gordon-Keeble, Iso Grifo, Jensen

Interceptor and de Tomaso Mangusta *et al* followed Facel's example.

A four-door saloon was shown at the Paris Motor Show in October 1956 which reached production in 1958 as the FV 'Excellence'. (French accent required!) The chassis, designed by Lance Macklin, was an elongated version of the FV's tubular frame, with double wishbone, coil sprung front suspension and a solid axle at the rear located only by leaf springs. Today, this specification would be considered antiquated, but it was conventional at the time for American cars. Jean Daninos reputedly did the styling himself, and the result was a remarkably modern, almost futuristic car from a European perspective. The fins at the rear deferred to American fashion, but the frontal styling owed nothing to

the European upright radiator-grille tradition. A contemporary Bentley or Mercedes 300D looked a decade out of date by comparison; indeed the fin-tail Benzes from the 1960s look remarkably similar. The most interesting design feature has to be the 4-door pillarless roofline. The rear doors open in reverse fashion, like the so-called 'suicide' doors found on early Fiat 500s. Not having a pillar against which to lock closed, the rear doors are secured by huge latches mounted on the floor-pan inner sill. With the windows rolled down, the side aspect is satisfyingly clean with the rakish roof pillar edging out the need for a cluttering rear vent window. The front vent window snugs up to the dogleg pillar of the wraparound windshield, under a lashing of polished stainless steel.



The interior detailing is superb. The dashboard shows some cockpit design inspiration, with generous instrumentation housed in the rather convincing fake wood appliqué. The seats and door panels are exquisitely trimmed in top quality leather befitting a car that cost four times the price of a Citroën DS, not a cheap car in itself. The electric windows glide up and down on a mechanism that could have been used by Otis Elevators. A vanity kit is concealed in the centre armrest, and chromed reading lamps peep from the rear roof pillars, which in turn offer a measure of privacy to the occupants. Prestige comes as a standard feature, air conditioning was optional. For a car with a 3 meter wheelbase, the interior is not as roomy as that of a contemporary Buick. It's definitely a narrower car, and a lot lower, giving it that classy European look which eludes the American car. There is the aura of a hand-finished product all over the Facel Vega, much like that of a Rolls Royce; it would be equally at home in Monaco or Hollywood.

Out on the open road, there would have been few Fifties cars that could stay the course with the Excellence. Various

Chrysler Corporation V8s were offered, with push button TorqueFlite automatic or the French-built manual box from 2-door FV series. The early production cars were equipped with the 392 Hemi engine (6.4-litre) punching out 360Hp. These cars could run 220km/h with a suitable axle ratio; on the French Autoroutes of the 1950s one would need a 300SL to stay with a 4-door Facel EX, never mind a 300 Dora! The chances of finding one to dice would have been slim; only 11 were made. Unfortunately,

... on the French Autoroutes of the 1950s one would need a 300SL to stay with a 4-door Facel EX, never mind a 300 Dora

the Hemi engine was discontinued and so the 361 Wedge motor (5.9-litre) was substituted. It could not have been for reasons of cost! From 1959, disc brakes appeared on the front wheel hubs of the EX1 - no guesses why in this case. While it could accelerate to 100km/h as quickly as one could light a cigar, it could at least stop as quickly as one could extinguish the match, so they said! They were also slightly more plentiful: 137 were built in all.

By 1961, a re-style was called for and the 'unfashionable' wraparound windscreen and tailfins were lost, and

with that, some of the car's character too. The good news was the engine upgrade to the famous 383 Wedge motor (6.3-litre), which restored some performance. Sales were slow and only 11 were completed before Facel closed. Despite costing the price of 12 Renault Dauphines in that year, every car was built at a net loss to the Facel company. Profit came from doing 'outsourcing' work for other manufacturers, but the red ink really started to flow when a smaller sports car, called the 'Facellia',

produced to compete with the likes of Alfa Romeo, was a disaster. Due to warranty claims on its French-built

engine and loss of public confidence, the small-car venture sank the company, and the big Chrysler-powered cars from France were no more.

The featured car, an EX1, was found in South Africa and restored by Frederick Booysen. A 383 Wedge motor does the honours through a push button TorqueFlite 3-speed auto. It has finned aluminium drum brakes and power steering. The finish is completely authentic with all the unique and difficult-to-find trim in place. The car is currently for sale. Enquiries to hibooyesen@yahoo.com

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R165 000

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R245 000

2012 VOLVO S60 T4

59 000km. Great example with factory extras such as a glass sunroof, xenons, park distance control, and the balance of the service and maintenance plan to 2017 or 100 000kms. It is a handsome car in ice white with soft black leather.



R245 000

2006 BMW Z4 M 3.2

103 000km. THE ultimate sports car from BMW. An M3 engined convertible, the Z4M was brought in very limited numbers. This black beauty is in good condition, runs very very strong and has a very low mileage for the year.



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R499 000

2011 MERCEDES-BENZ M-CLASS ML 350 CDI

79 000km. Superb low mileage example with factory extras such as lane assist, Xenons, comfort package, sunroof, tow bar and the big wheel option. Balance of service and maintenance plan to 120 000 or the year 2017. Compare this mileage to others currently available.



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— A TYPE OF — ENDURANCE



Jaguar's E-type is an undisputed icon of the classic car world but most have been enjoyed for their show and go rather than as everyday transport. Except this 1969 2+2 which has been driven through a war zone, towed a keel yacht and been drag-raced over the last four decades.

Graeme Hurst gets to meet the machine.

Photography: Darren Epstein

A 21ft yacht jerry-rigged to a trailer behind it, a grenade launcher and Sten gun, a helicopter, a 130+mph dice with a motorbike and ... er ... two prized fish in a goldfish bowl ... you could be excused for thinking this is the prop list for the latest Indiana Jones film sequel, but these are just some of the highlights of 38 years of Jaguar ownership for Capetonian and former Zimbabwean, Roger Wood.

As in so many cases of E-type ownership, the seed for this car's unusual script was sown when the model was launched. "As a schoolboy I'd seen them come out in the early

1960s and thought I must have one. At that stage there was no chance!" explains Roger who was living in then Rhodesia. Fast-forward to the mid-1970s and Roger, by then working as a meteorologist in Victoria Falls, was in a position to scratch the itch. And despite being stuck out 'in the colonies' there wasn't a shortage of them. "I tried out a Roadster that was on offer for \$2 500 Rhodesian dollars but I decided that as I had a young family, it wasn't too practical," he recalls. "Then I saw a Coupé in Bulawayo and bought it but I got 30 miles outside the town and it started overheating so I took it right back," he adds. "In those days you were friends with your bank

manager so I got straight on to him and stopped the cheque even though it was bank guaranteed!"

Despite the mishap, Roger persisted in his quest. "I posted adverts in the newspaper and left a note under the windscreen of any E-type I saw." Cue round two of the purchasing saga when a Coupé bought over the phone turned out to be a rust bucket. "When I went to collect it, I found the dreaded lurgie under the doors," recalls Roger. "The bloke was seriously unimpressed when I cancelled the deal!" Then this 2+2 turned up at a dealer in 1976. "I tracked the owner down to Umtali and managed to do the deal privately," adds Roger, who paid \$5 000 for it. It was a



1969 Series 2 model in Primrose Yellow that had just 30 000 miles on the clock at the time. "That was the colour to have, especially with black upholstery."

With his dream realised, Roger didn't waste time when it came to enjoying his purchase with wife Lorraine and their two small children. "It was my daily drive and our family car. Whenever we went anywhere we went in the E-type," he recalls. And that meant it was also the Wood family's holiday transport. "We used to go down to the (then) Natal South Coast every year and the E-type towed a Sprite trailer with all our luggage in it." Quite an epic trip considering the distance: Victoria Falls to Beit Bridge is all of 750km with

another 1 100km ahead of them to Durban before heading down the coast. But the Jaguar took it in its stride. "We must have done that trip at least six or seven times."

Towards the late '70s the Jaguar's commuter role saw it loaded up – literally – to combat the threat of the country's civil war to road users. "I was working at the airport outside Victoria Falls and the air traffic controller and I used to commute 30km to work in the E-type," explains Roger. "As employees in essential services we were issued with weapons. He had an FN rifle with a grenade launcher attached to it and a Sten gun while I had a regulation issue .38 revolver and my own 9mm pistol!"

Just as well Roger bought a 2+2 or he may have struggled to accommodate that arsenal which, thankfully, was never needed. "We drove through a few situations but never had any trouble ourselves." In later years the E-type was part of a secure convoy on a daily basis. "The SAP were up there and escorted us daily with a helicopter and an Eland armoured vehicle."

A move to Salisbury brought the daily gauntlet to an end. By then the E-type shared Roger's garage with a Triumph TR4a and a Sunbeam Rapier, although the Jaguar still featured heavily – again quite literally – as it hauled the loaded Sprite trailer as the family moved to the bright lights of



Salisbury (now Harare). The 700km+ trip was a precursor for what was to undoubtedly become the car's biggest and surely unique (even among the circa 72 000 examples made) role: helping the Wood family emigrate to South Africa in 1982.

"Back then, the Zimbabwean government had a rule that you could take only one of everything with you. One car, one boat, one motorbike and so on." So Roger got to work to maximise his chances. "I bought a 21ft keel boat with a trailer. I wasn't into yachting but it was a way to move money." Naturally the Sprite trailer came too, only this time on a hitch on the back of the yacht's trailer! And on the back seat of the E-type sat 10-year-old son Guy with the family dog – along with 12-year-old daughter Heather who had a goldfish bowl containing a pair of fish on her lap. The space in the keel yacht was put to good use too. "I loaded it up with my lathe, welder, garage tools, the kids' bicycles and two spare wire wheels." With all that, Roger was still able to cruise at 50mph, thanks no doubt to the

car's torquey XK engine. "Above that, it started to wobble as I couldn't load the weight on the back of the car for fear of damaging the E-type's suspension," recalls Roger. After overnighting at the border, the Wood family headed for Johannesburg with a police inspection along the way. "We were pulled over but the police didn't have a problem with the trailer towing a trailer. They just looked around the car and then wished us a good journey."

The Woods then settled in Durban where Roger went into business with his old school mate and well-known club racer Ashley Ellis. "He ran Blair Atholl Motors, selling Alfa Romeos and I ran the workshop." With another family car to use, the Jag became more of a hobby car, featuring in various club concours events and outings, including one to a racetrack near Pietermaritzburg where Roger thrilled the crowds by attempting to out-drag a Corvette!

After 15 years in the Kingdom the Woods moved to Cape Town so that Roger could join Ashley in another

business venture. Naturally the E-type featured in the journey, only this time with just the Sprite trailer in tow. Over the ensuing years it's been a regular fixture on various classic car runs and even been used for his daughter's wedding, when he took the passenger seat out so the bridal couple could sit together. The E-type has also shared Roger's attention for various classics. "I've had an Austin-Healey 100/6, several Sunbeam Rapiers, a Jaguar MKII and an earlier MKV saloon plus a Ford Capri although that wasn't really a classic at the time." Today his fleet includes a well-known (on the racing scene) Sunbeam Tiger and another MKII but the E-type, now with over 120 000 miles on the clock, is the most cherished. "It's the one I'll never sell," he admits. And it's easy to understand why: apart from its incredible history it's also one of the most untouched examples on the road. "It's never had any paint in my time and the only work I've done is a cosmetic restoration of the engine bay when the engine had to come out to



change the clutch,” says Roger. The cylinder head has never even been off and, given the car’s low mileage when he acquired it nearly 40 years ago, the head gasket is quite likely the one it had when this 2+2 rolled out of the gates of the famous Browns Lane factory in Coventry!


The originality extends to the inside too, where the leather seats and ceiling are near perfect, barring the pleasing light patination from years of careful use. The shut lines on the body are spot on too, unlike so many restored examples, and the originality and years of care (Roger’s done all his own maintenance) extend to the road: on the move it feels sorted with taut handling and a rattle-free ride.

As a Series 2 – launched a year before this one was built – it boasts a larger grille aperture to aid cooling, exposed headlights and re-positioned indicators and taillights to meet North American safety legislation. Inside, the Jaguar feels more modern with black rocker switches and a conventional column-mounted ignition in contrast

to the early model’s ally dash and push button starter. It may not have the purity of the original but it’s still aircraft cockpit-like in feel and a nice place to be. And any owner of an early E-type will tell you the early model’s flat floor and single plane seat backs are no match for the comfort of the later cars, which feature a dropped floor in the pedal area and proper webbing-based seat design.

With the full-fat 4.2-litre XK unit, which Jaguar developed to up the performance of its hefty MK10 range-topper saloon and which superseded the earlier 3.8-litre unit in the E-type from 1964, there’s plenty of easy performance on offer – something Roger’s only too aware of. “Back when we were living in Salisbury, Ashley used to visit on his six-cylinder Honda CBX and one time we dined together. We topped out at 132mph and he couldn’t pull away from me!”

To some fans of the Coventry marque, the 2+2 isn’t as cherished as the Roadster or standard Coupé variants. While there’s no contest

on the looks front, the 2+2 still has enormous presence with a striking profile and that sensational trademark bonnet bulge: few classics can touch an E-type for the view from behind the wheel. In all honesty, if Jaguar founder William Lyons had only produced this variant, we’d possibly have been none the wiser; certainly its voluptuous lines would’ve still been a sensation against the backdrop of other turn-of-the-‘60s cars when the E-type was famously launched at the Geneva Motor Show in March 1961. Plus the 2+2 is by the far the most comfortable with more leg room and the sensible only choice if you’re 6ft+ and don’t wish to visit an osteopath every Monday morning after enjoying the car over the weekend. And there’s no doubt that Roger’s example would have been unable to boast its amazing history had he opted for the two-seater Coupé. It’s a past that often comes up: “People are generally astonished to see an E-type with a tow bar but I tell them I can’t take it off as it’s part of the car’s history.” 



Presence. Anyone in a global limelight needs to have an impressive appearance or bearing that garners respect, be it a papal leader, the head of a country, a movie star, a business mogul or (replace any rose-tinted spectacles with dark glasses) even a drug lord! Travelling in style forms just one aspect of the overall impression,

and what is generally referred to as a 'stretch limo' is often the preferred mode of transport, although today they are as much about taking regular folk to Matric balls and hen parties. In America, many are used as hotel/airport shuttles in place of customary taxis. But back in the 1960s such vehicles were less commonplace and far more bespoke, and when Mercedes-Benz

saw fit to produce something custom-made to offer esteemed clientele, it was little surprise that a special vehicle would result.

Tagged as a 600, the design of this *grosser Mercedes* is generally credited to Frenchman Paul Bracq, whose career began in the design studio of Philippe Charbonneaux, where in 1953 and 1954 the studio produced the designs



STATELY — AT A — STRETCH

At least half-a-dozen of South Africa's leaders have been transported in this rare, right-hand drive Mercedes-Benz 600 that boasts a number of evocative descriptions. **Mike Monk** joins the list.

for the French presidential limousine built by Citroën. After fulfilling his military service in 1957, Bracq worked for Daimler-Benz as head of the design centre at Sindelfingen for 10 years. Bracq then returned to France and was employed in a number of styling roles that included the TGV high-speed passenger train. From 1970 he worked as design director at BMW for four

years followed by a stint with Peugeot, where he was involved in personal transportation for the Pope. Working with famed Daimler-Benz engineers and designers Friedrich Geiger and, latterly, Bruno Sacco, there can be little doubt that the 600 was conceived and developed in good hands.

The car was offered in two basic formats: a short-wheelbase (3 200mm)

saloon capable of being owner driven, and a long-wheelbase (3 900mm) stretched version conceived to be driven by a chauffeur and with the option of a folding rear roof section. Additional body panels between the front and rear doors increased body length from the swb's already sizeable 5 450mm to an even more substantial 6 240mm. The extra space this gave



allowed for a pair of rearward-facing seats to be incorporated into the rear passenger compartment to create a boardroom-like setting for four – complete with a drinks cabinet. A sliding glass partition behind the front seats afforded some privacy for the dignitaries travelling in the back – it was an option on the swb – with an intercom provided for communication. A complex engine-driven 150-bar hydraulics system powered the suspension damping, windows, seats, boot lid, automatically-closing doors and folding roof (once sizeable interior latches had been released).

The lwb version was designated a Pullman, a name originally associated with rail travel and denoting a very comfortable carriage for sitting and/or sleeping in that was later occasionally applied to upmarket road transport too, such as luxury coaches. As already mentioned, the lwb was also available as a semi-convertible, in essence a landaulet, the origin of the word meaning a four-wheeled horse-drawn carriage with a top that may be let down or folded back and a raised seat for the driver (a landau) that subsequently became landaulet

to describe a car with a convertible top for the back seat while the front seat is either roofed or open.

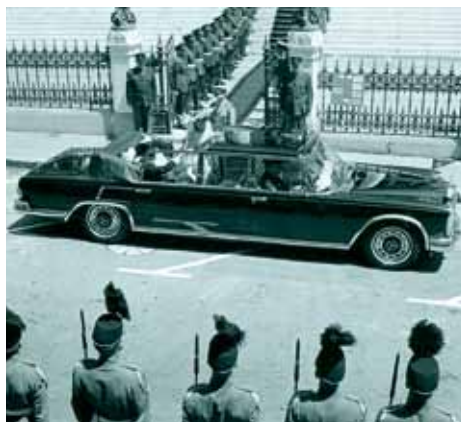
Production of the car began in 1960 and it was manufactured in limited numbers right up to 1981. Out of a total of 2 678 models produced, the swb version was by far the more popular with 2 190 units built, and of the 487 lwbs (304 four-door, 124 six-door) only 59 were Landaulets, and only 10 right-hand drive models were built, which makes the example you see here quite a rarity. As a brief aside, the factory also built a 600 coupé as a retirement gift for Dr Rudolf Uhlenhaut, an Anglo-German engineer who worked for Mercedes-Benz from 1931 to 1972 during which time he had a long association with the company's racing programme and is well known for creating the Gullwing Mercedes.

Powering such a big and heavy vehicle – the swb weighed 2 600kg, the lwb 2 770 – required a suitably powerful engine and the 600 was propelled by a single-overhead-cam, mechanically fuel-injected 6 332cm³ V8 delivering 180kW at 4000r/min and a fairly substantial 500Nm of torque

at 2800. Driving through a four-speed automatic transmission, the 600 swb had a top speed of just on 205km/h – the lwb topped-out around 193km/h although such velocities were seldom, if ever, approached during duty ... unless running away from terrorists or the law! Fuel consumption was given as 24-26 litres/100km.

However, such cars are more about ride comfort than performance and the 600 boasts adjustable air suspension with double wishbones, rubber springs and a stabilizer bar up front. But whereas lesser Mercedes-Benzes used a service-intensive and wear-prone king-pin setup, the 600 features front uprights located by ball joints. The rear suspension features a low-pivot swing axle located by radius arms, also with rubber springs and a stabilizer bar. Brakes are dual-caliper 291mm discs up front and 294.5mm discs at the back. Steering is by a power-assisted recirculating ball. Tyres are 9.00H15 whitewall six-ply radials.

Riding in the back the ambience is one of lightness and comfort. By today's standards the well-padded seats are not particularly cossetting but offer enough support to be able



to stretch out and observe the outside world in relaxed surroundings. The air suspension was playing up so any thoughts of a ‘magic carpet ride’ were not possible, but doubtless the system, when functioning properly, would be exceptional in true Pullman tradition. Spacers are provided in the toolkit to support the seats in the event of an hydraulics failure. Loose footrests are provided, and the compartment has its own air-conditioning system.

Despite the car’s length, there is not a huge amount of fore/aft space up front but the control layout is straightforward. As any stretch-limo driver will tell you, manoeuvring such a leviathan requires some forethought but with practically everything power assisted – even the air vent in front of the windscreen – once familiarised, the driving experience is not too overwhelming. Neat touches include a footwell-mounted parking brake that releases automatically when the car is put into drive or reverse via the column-mounted shift lever. And two horns, one a regular component, the other a compressed-air monster that bellows like an Oompah band.

Customers of the 600 have

included numerous heads of state and religious groups as well as a range of personalities from Elizabeth Taylor to Pablo Escobar. Examples have also appeared on the silver screen, including the Bond movies *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service*, *Diamonds Are Forever* and *Octopussy*, as well as *The Witches of Eastwick* and the popular TV series *Falcon Crest*.

This particular 600 was produced at the end of 1970 and was shipped to Cape Town aboard the German cargo vessel *Tugelaland*, arriving on 20 January 1971 for handing over to the South African Government by UCDD’s Pretoria-based training manager Herbert Cyrolies. (UCDD – United Car and Diesel Distributors – became Mercedes-Benz South Africa in 1984 when Daimler-Benz acquired control of the company. The manufacturing division was still known as CDA (Car Distributors Assembly) until 1986 when it was renamed MBSA-EL.)

Thereafter the car carried successive presidents: Jim Fouché, Dr Nico Diederichs, BJ Vorster, Marais Viljoen and PW Botha. The car was then put into retirement by President FW de Klerk. Apart from its road travel, the

600 clocked up plenty of frequent traveller miles in the presidential Hercules aircraft that regularly flew between Parliament in Cape Town and Waterkloof Air Force Base in Pretoria. The car was eventually handed to the South African Cultural Museum (now known as the Iziko Museum) for safe keeping. However, finding a suitable home proved problematic until the car was secured by former Mercedes-Benz CEO Christoph Köpke in 2001, who arranged for some restoration to be carried out under the guidance of Roy Miller at the company’s technical training centre in Zwartkops before going on display in the Mercedes-Benz Collection Museum in East London. The Collection was subsequently relocated and the 600 was loaned to the Franschhoek Motor Museum.

This grandiosely-titled ex-presidential Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullman Landaulet is an imposing vehicle set off by the illuminated emblem on the roof. Why, even the three-pointed-star bonnet ornament is roughly 20 per cent bigger than that fitted to other Mercedes-Benzes of the same era, such was the attention to style and detail. *Über* presence for sure. [Q](#)

SA'S EYE ON THE TIGER

Shoe-horning an American V8 into a British car famously shaped sports car history with the story of the AC Cobra but it wasn't the only recipient of Ford power. 50 years ago the Rootes Group did that with its Alpine and, what's more, the company built some of them right here in SA

By Graeme Hurst

Photography: Darren Epstein





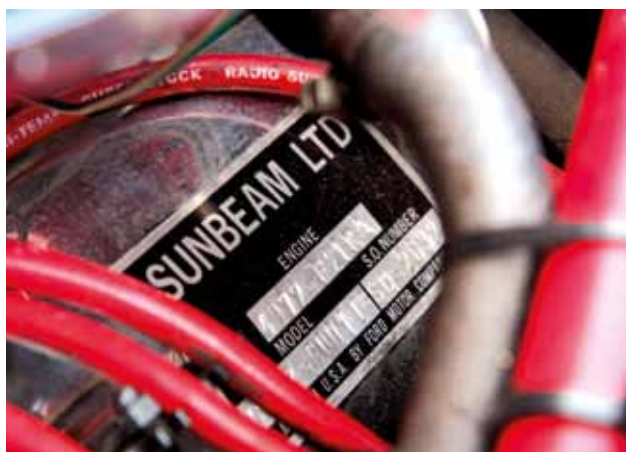
South African petrolheads have always had a deep affection for American V8 power, particularly when it's used as a recipe for instant performance. Just think back to the famous Basil Green Capri Perana or Basil van Rooyen's even more vicious Chevrolet Firenza Can-Am. And who can forget Ford's Sierra XR8 ... all famously successful local V8 transplants that bear testimony to our affection for cubic inches.

Five decades ago, Rootes – a British carmaker known for reliable-if-staid four-wheeled fare – embarked on a similar exercise to create the Sunbeam Tiger when it dropped a 260ci (4.2-litre) V8 in place of the rather puny four-pot in its Alpine sportscar. It was a move that emulated the creation of Carroll Shelby's Cobra (which used the body and chassis of the AC Ace) and was a direct attempt to urgently up the sales in any 1960s British sportscar maker's key market: the good 'ol US of A.

South African demand (back then or now) could hardly hold a candle to the scale of America's seemingly insatiable desire for performance cars, but there was enough interest for Rootes to offer the model here. And what's more, the 73 that were sold here were screwed together here too – the only Tigers to be assembled outside the UK out of the circa 7 000 built.

The Tiger story started far away from here. Or the UK for that matter. It began in California – a part of the US that's arguably always been even more in love with V8 power than we are – when Ian Garrad, son of Rootes' competition boss, Norman, hatched a plot to re-engine the Alpine to up sales in his West Coast domain. Only he didn't just present the idea to company bosses. He arranged for one of Ford's new thin-wall cast, small block V8s to be slotted into a brand new Alpine off a US dealer's floor and then had the car shipped straight back to Blighty to 'sell the idea' to the bosses at Rootes. Well that's the gist of it; the actual conversion involved two different prototypes and the backing of the great Carroll Shelby himself before the technical details were ironed out. But first, let's understand what Shelby and others were using back in 1963.

Sunbeam's Alpine was launched in 1959. Boasting signature fins and diminutive Thunderbird appearance, its looks were a sea change compared to Rootes' 1950s other rather





sit-up-and-beg styles. Power came from a high-compression version of the Hillman Minx's 1494cc engine and the body was all monocoque, based on rather humble underpinnings: the floorpan of the prosaic Hillman Husky. That meant semi-elliptic leaf springing and drum brakes at the rear, although it boasted wishbones and discs on the front. Comfortwise it had wind-up windows, a wrap around 'screen and easy-to-use soft top – all fairly novel by the standards of the late '50s.

The Alpine was a hit but its performance was lacklustre. Rootes quickly turned up the wick with various capacity increases until the Alpine V, which pumped out 92bhp from its 1725cc twin-carb engine by 1965. It could do the ton (100mph) if you kept your foot down for long enough. That all changed with Garrad's prototype which was driven back at Coventry by none other than Lord Rootes himself who gave the project the thumbs up, despite completing a test drive with the handbrake on! Suddenly Rootes had a 120mph offering that could hit 60mph in around nine seconds.

Shoe-horning is an old cliché for describing a mill swap (as the yanks coined re-engining a car) but in the case of the Tiger it's totally apt: the Ford lump needed a remote oil filter and its mechanical fuel pump shorn off to get it to fit. And it's mounted so far back in the engine bay that owners have to change the rear plugs in each bank through a hole in the footwell! And that was after Rootes ditched the steering box for a front-mounted rack and pinion arrangement to free up space. The battery was also relocated to the boot, which had the bonus of aiding weight distribution.

There were other changes too: the dual exhaust pipes had to be run through the central chassis 'X' backbone while the rear axle needed a Panhard rod to keep it in place. The axle itself was a Ford Galaxie unit boasting a vastly longer diff ratio: 2.88:1! Rather surprisingly the Alpine-spec disc brakes were deemed as being up to the job, although the radiator had to be seriously beefed up to cope with the added heat. The gearbox was a stock Ford top-loader unit of cast-iron

construction, as per the AC Cobra.

And the name? That was a tribute to the Sunbeam badge's illustrious sporting heritage, specifically the 1925 V12 landspeed record car piloted by Sir Henry Seagrave. Intriguingly, Rootes was vague about the name to start with and the Tiger was initially shown as the Alpine 260 at the New York show in April '64. It was shown at the Turin show in October too, where Rootes fitted a Perspex panel in the bonnet so that visitors could see what the fuss was about. In line with UK industry trends, some 70% of production was aimed at overseas markets – a hangover from the post-war, export-or-die reality relating to steel quotas. Of course the US was the biggest market but Rootes had a finger in all the major former colonies too, including South Africa.

Local outfit Stanley Motors had a subsidiary company called National Motor Assemblers that took care of production with four separate assembly lines at its base in Natalspruit, near Alberton: one each for Peugeot, Citroën and Rootes cars including Alpines (and later the Rapier Fastback) and another



for various American brands.

The Tiger's SA history started a year after launch with the company's then Managing Director Arthur Hutchinson (who had previously headed up Rootes' operations in Brazil) ordering a Tiger from the UK, which he collected himself at the docks in Cape Town and drove up to the Reef as part of a 'test' for local conditions. Various cooling alterations followed, including the installation of an electric fan before production got underway in 1965.

Each car arrived in CKD (complete, knocked down) form as a 'kit' in three packing cases. The body shells were packed with doors and boot and bonnet attached but in raw metal that was protected in grease. Once stripped and painted the cars were assembled although not directly on the production line: the engine installation on the Tiger was too time-consuming and complex so they were done on the side one by one. That may explain the two-digit production total although Alpine production only hit 250. Price was no doubt a factor too: *CAR* magazine's December '67 issue had the Tiger listed

(intriguingly as the Alpine 260) for R3 400. That was nearly twice the price of a Cortina GT (R1 878) or Mini Cooper S (R1 770) while the nearest V8 rival was the hefty Fairlane 500 – yours for R3 115. Alpine production ended a year before, when it was around R1 000 less than a Tiger.

Roger Wood (who also owns the E-type 2+2 in this issue) has had one of the SA cars for the last 23 years, one in Carnival Red. "I bought it from a chap in Empangeni but it was in pieces," explains Wood, who has always been a Rootes fan. "My Dad had Rootes cars and I've had Rapiers and Alpines over the years but fancied a Tiger. It's got good American mechanicals that don't leak oil, and a nice body." Roger spent a year restoring the car. "It needed some rust cut out and a re-paint." Several years of club use and various concours wins (both in KZN and at the local annual Parow-based classic car show) followed before Roger got the racing bug, following his move to Cape Town around 1999.

"Ashley Ellis was racing a Triumph at the time and I thought I'd like to have

a go." His success came after a serious amount of fettling to make it go, handle and stop. "Putting a standard road car on the track means you have to do a lot of development to make it reliable." Under the hood the 260 has given way to a 302ci (5.0-litre) lump – a very common upgrade amongst Tiger owners – with a fully balanced bottom end boasting stronger bolts. The original two-barrel carburettor is long gone too, with a four-barrel Edelbrock in its place and a high-lift camshaft from the same famous maker of go-faster goodies to capitalise on its output.

With those Hillman Husky underpinnings already on their limit with a Tiger in standard tune, it's no surprise that Roger has devoted a lot of time to make his Tiger stick to the road. "It's got stiffer springs and adjustable Koni shock absorbers as well as anti-tramp bars at the back. I've also replaced all the bushes with polybushes." And he's made sure it stops too. "The front discs are vented units off a BMW 3-series using Audi 100 calipers. The combination works well," explains Roger, who also put in



a limited slip differential. “I realised the original 2.88:1 crown wheel and pinion was identical to the one in a Jaguar XJS.” Roger has since become a regular on the Killarney grid in the Fine Cars historic series and has taken the championship once and come home second and third at least once too. “My personal best is a 1.34.”

On the road it’s quickly evident that this is one seriously sorted Tiger. Its ride is fairly firm but it feels sharp and responsive with surprisingly light steering, although having the correct original spec steering wheel helps on that front. And it’s seriously quick too. The bigger motor means it’s got plenty of clout but it’s not all top end: you can either surf the torque or wind it past 4000rpm for the cam to kick in. The long back end means the four-speed ‘box has fairly wide ratios and the gear gate is quite long. It’s identical to the one Shelby used in the Cobra, complete with the lifting T-handle to engage reverse. And that’s really what you think about when you’re behind the wheel: the deep, distinctive V8 beat is all Cobra and gives the car a totally different character to its four-cylinder predecessor. Its weight makes the car feel more planted (especially at the front) and the instant urge simply dominates the driving experience. Just as with AC’s Ace, it must have been one helluva step change in

performance back in 1964 for a driver who’d previously had the keys to an Alpine.

Interestingly, Ford had already created the more widely known 289ci (4.7-litre) variant of its small-block V8 by the time the Tiger was launched, which offered 200bhp in standard tune. Why the Tiger didn’t get it straight off is anyone’s guess – possibly the suits in Detroit needed to get shot of 260 stock, or Shelby put word out that he didn’t want competition for his Cobra which had been harnessed to 289 power after the first 75 cars were made.


Salvation came in 1967 with the MkII Tiger, which did receive the larger unit, along with a raft of subtle engineering upgrades and some distinct styling tweaks including rounded headlamp rims and an egg-crate grill. All left-hand drive (apart from a handful of right-hookers) these are highly prized as the model was short-lived: just 571 of the 7 066 Tigers made were MKIIs.

A change in company fortunes saw Chrysler – which had held an interest in Rootes for some years – take over the Coventry carmaker *voetstoots* in 1967. Having a rival’s engine under the bonnet may be acceptable today with platform sharing and all, but back then it was a corporate embarrassment. And with the Big Three player having no suitable power plant of its own to use (it had V8s but

none with a front-mounted dizzie) the Tiger was doomed and production ground to a halt in 1968.

By then SA production was over for a year. Today the B948 cars (the unique chassis prefix by which the SA-built cars are known) attract the curiosity of Tiger fans abroad. There’s even a worldwide database of Tigers within the club fraternity, with a section detailing the whereabouts of our SA-built cars. To date 43 have been tracked down, with some of the cars having turned up as far away as Adelaide in Australia and Florida in the US. At least half a dozen have made it back to the UK too.

A near 60% survival rate isn’t bad when you consider that we’re talking about a sports car that was probably thrashed off the sales lot in Jules Street. Throw in high average mileages and a scarcity of bits to mend anything that got bent and the number starts sounding impressive.

Of course there may well be others lurking around as barn finds and they do turn up; just three years ago the 32nd one made turned up in Cape Town after lying dormant for 20 years in an underground car park. And it turned out to be a two-owner car with just 11 500 miles from new! Maybe you know of one out there waiting to take to the roads and spread the word on a unique bit of SA automotive history? 



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ON THE LOW DOWN

The legendary Ford GT40, the racing car that won Le Mans with four outright victories from 1966 to 1969 is an all-American success story. Well, not quite... says **Rob Reneson**.

Photography by Paul Harmer





In actual fact this sports racer is essentially a very British racing car that began its life in the unedifying suburb of Bromley, England. After Henry Ford II was figuratively slapped in the face by Enzo, having spent a lot of time and money looking into buying Ferrari, Henry Ford set about funding a team to crush Ferrari at Le Mans.

He looked at Lotus, Lola and Cooper before deciding Eric Broadley's Lola operation would form the most successful collaboration for a world-endurance tie up, based largely on the success of the advanced Lola Mk6 which was already using a Ford V8 engine. Ex-Aston team manager John Wyer was hired and Ford man Roy Lunn was sent to England where Ford Advanced Vehicles was set up in Slough near Heathrow Airport.

The Ford GT, as it was originally known, was constructed in a number of variations, primarily racing cars in Mk I, Mk II, and Mk IV iterations with just 102 manufactured in total. This 1968 Mk III, chassis number M3/1103, is one

of just seven road cars created by Ford and went on sale with a sticker price of \$18 500 – \$2000 *more* than a GT40 race spec car – so it was not just wild-looking but also wildly expensive. Road going? Hmm, well that's a loose term, which makes the leary Ferrari F40 seem like a bean counter's sensible hatchback.

The example you see here spent years in the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu dressed up to look like a Mk I racing car. Apart from the cosmetics, close inspection revealed the GT40 was remarkably original and it had covered just 6 000 miles. The Mk I facelift undertaken in 1973 included painting the GT white with blue strips and fitting Halibrand alloys and racing tyres. The interior and mechanicals were left well alone, only the road exhaust being altered with a racing-type system being fitted. Fortunately, when recently purchased, the GT40 came with all the original parts including the lovely Borrani wire wheels, luggage box, bumperettes, original exhaust headers and the rather homemade-looking exhaust tail pipes now fitted.

Being an incredibly rare and special racing car all components on the GT40 are dated. Wheels, brake callipers, suspension components are all stamped 1966 and 1967 so it was imperative to keep everything together during the restoration. The dated brake servos were not simply replaced, they were sent back to Apple Hydraulics in the USA to be rebuilt. The original dated washer bottle was also rebuilt and the shot radiator expansion tank was reconstructed with the welds made to look as *bad* as the original! The twin Kenlowe cooling fans are original and great care was taken to paint the engine block in the exact Ford blue. The Koni dampers were rebuilt but not painted in fresh orange because the original paint was just fine.

The original funky Amaranth-coloured paintwork was found *in situ* under various pieces of trim and, once the oversized flared arches were trimmed back to the correct size, the glassfibre bodywork was resprayed in matched deep purple.

The ethos behind this project



1968 FORD GT40 MK III SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

302cu in 5-litre pushrod V8, solid lifters, Holley 4V 715cfm carb

POWER

306 bhp @ 6000rpm

TORQUE

329lb ft @ 4200rpm

TRANSMISSION

ZF 5-speed manual, sequential, transaxle

SUSPENSION

Front independent double wishbones, coil springs, Koni dampers
Rear independent lower wishbones, transverse top link and radius arm, coils and Koni dampers

BRAKES

Disc brakes all round. 11.5in, double servo

WEIGHT

1 061kgs

PERFORMANCE

0-60 5.5 secs.
Top speed 160mph

was to resuscitate as much of the original GT40 as possible. Certainly consumables like bearings, seals, hoses, brake hydraulics, valve springs, piston rings and so on were replaced but most of 1103 remains original.

So here we have a road-going version of an Anglo-American racing car that won Le Mans four times on the trot with a Ferrari-beating 1-2-3 finish in 1966, with Dan Gurney and A J Foyt victorious in the Shelby-developed 7-litre Mk IV. So what is one of just seven of the road-going versions like in the real world?

On the public roads in East Sussex, England, this Amaranth-coloured GT40 looks very small and compact. In narrow body Mk III configuration it is only 70 inches wide and of course, just 40 inches high. Without massively flared haunches the car looks lithe and elegant helped by the tasteful Borrani with their chromed triple-eared spinners picking up the chromed rear view mirrors, side window trim and door handles and overriders.

Thumb the chrome recessed door handle and the large three-dimensional door swings open with half the roof coming with it. The doors are effectively large clams so not ideal in tight spaces but at least they offer some way of clambering into the tight cockpit. The fat recumbent seats are mounted close

together in the middle of the car with wide sills on either side. These perforated leather chairs with chrome vent holes and cross-stitching look vaguely nightclub and the whole interior is very black. It is also very small, so goodness knows how driver and navigator teams compete in tough rallies like the Tour Auto in these confines.

The best way in is to put your feet on the seat squab and then let your body slide in under the steering with a flop. Getting out is even less gracious! But once in position the seat proves comfortable if very reclined and the 'Formula GT Britain' inscribed steering wheel is vertically mounted in front of you with its simple Ford GT logo on the central boss. The wooden-topped gearshift lever is centrally located – to facilitate both left- and right-hand drive options – and the puny Mowog (as fitted to original Minis and Minors) handbrake lever catches your left elbow. The cheap plastic dashboard has the Smiths Rev counter mounted right in front of you with the speedometer off to the left. A welcome sight is the cooling fan sliders mounted in the centre of the dash with air vent eyeballs on either side.

To start the GT40 you simply give the Holley four-choke carb a bit of a prime with the throttle pedal and turn the key. The big 302 cubic inch



V8 fires with a blast and then settles down to a reasonable idle. It reacts instantly to the throttle even if it is in a detuned state in the Mk III. The clutch action is moderate but short and you need to be aware it is a small twin plate racing job. The dogleg, 5-speed ZF 5DS gearshift is the challenge. Its long linkage aft means the selection is a bit hit-and-miss. This is combined with a semi-sequential selection process whereby you have to go through the gears in order and you cannot miss out any, changing up or down through the 'box. Apparently this was to prevent tired racing drivers wrong slotting the gearlever and blowing the engine.

Pulling away, first is high but allied to a light overall weight of just 1061kgs and over 300lb-ft of torque at low revs the GT40 is off and running with ease. The steering is rather dead and heavy and you have to adjust to viewing the outside world from such a low driving position. The front wings rise up high on either side of the car but you cannot see the end of the nose, nor is there much rear three-quarter vision. Taking the gearshifts slowly the Ford's lovely benign engine helps all the way, and running through the narrow English country lanes you soon relax. That's until a Range Rover comes hurtling the

other way over a blind brow looking absolutely enormous!

The GT40 requires considerable concentration, primarily due to getting your head around the obstreperous gearshift and general lack of visibility. It needs to be driven so when the road clears it's time to toughen up. Dropping down into third and adding a decent squirt of juice, the car's racing heritage comes through. The otherwise dead rack-and-pinion steering starts to communicate what the now warmer Dunlop L-section tyres (5.50 x 15 at the front and 7.00 x 15 on the rear) are doing via the very comfortably set up and sophisticated double wishbone suspension. Confidence is massively enhanced when you realise you can rely fully on the excellent servo assisted disc brakes which stop the light car dead.

The big pushrod V8 engine is gentle and reacts with measured responses. Reputedly 306bhp it feels more like a real-world 250bhp and it spools its power out in a controlled almost polite manner. The fat wad of torque means you don't have to change gear that often but the practice makes every gear change that bit easier. With every mile covered you learn that the GT40 is not actually a brutal animal. The chassis and powertrain are too sophisticated for that and soon you begin to drive the mid-engined car from the seat of your

pants like a large go-kart.

Now used to viewing cars coming the other way from wheel height you find yourself scurrying the lightweight and reactive little GT40 through the bends at ever more exciting angles where it picks up serious speed along the short straights with alacrity. Mindful this original and rare example is worth several million dollars you don't want to get carried away. With the air vents open and the fans on full blow in perfectly suitable mild weather conditions the car remains comfortably ventilated. But with the radiator water pipes running through the central tunnel and bulkhead the interior is notorious for becoming extremely hot – one Mk III was fitted with air-conditioning so that might be a good option if the car is to be used for anything more than exhilarating breakfast runs.

You can understand why this GT40 Mk III is a precursor to the Ferrari F40 as a Sixties supercar for the road. It is not as ferocious as the twin turbocharged, younger and faster Ferrari but it is much better to drive than the contemporary, admittedly awful Lamborghini Miura which is ironic because the GT40 is a racing car thinly disguised as a road-going supercar whilst the other two are pure road cars with racing car pretensions. **🏁**

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Boot Spoiler - Primed	PZ402E3470AB	Seamlessly integrates with your Corolla's streamlining to create a look of high performance.
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Model shown is an accessorised 1.6 Corolla Prestige. A full range of Toyota Accessories are available from your Toyota dealer or visit www.toyota.co.za for more information.



MISSING CATS

Jaguar has revealed the prototype of its 'new' Lightweight E-type – a further six of which will be built by Jaguar Heritage, part of the firm's new Special Operations division.



Each of the six cars will be built to a specification originated from the last Lightweight E-type produced in 1964 and will be hand-crafted at the original home of the E-type, Jaguar's Browns Lane plant in Coventry, England. The cars will be sold as period competition vehicles and all will be suitable for FIA homologation for historic motorsport purposes.

The new cars are the 'missing' six vehicles from the 'Special GT E-type' project, which originally started in February 1963 with the objective of building 18 cars. Only 12 of the aluminium-bodied Lightweight E-types were eventually built and the remaining six designated chassis numbers have lain dormant, until now. The six new cars will carry those original, historic Lightweight E-type chassis numbers.


A race winner in the hands of a variety of famous drivers during its short competitive career, the car has achieved worldwide fame and original examples are now valued in the many



millions. In recreating the Lightweight E-type, Jaguar Heritage has been able to call on the superlative skills and experience of many talented engineers and technicians already working in a variety of departments within Jaguar.

All, when offered the chance to assist with this unique project, leapt at the opportunity. Some even have an indirect link with the E-type when it was new: one master technician calculated that his family – including his grandparents, his father and his uncle – had a collective 170 years' service at Jaguar stretching back to the early 1960s.

The expertise and attention brought to bear on this recreation project is staggering, with the full resources of Jaguar being applied to ensure that the six new Lightweights will not only be authentic, but will also be built to the highest quality standards.

So the six chosen customers will each receive the rarest of things – a brand new Lightweight E-type, hand-built at Browns Lane and just as desirable as one of the originals. 

Each of the six cars will be built to a specification originated from the last Lightweight E-type produced in 1964 and will be hand-crafted at the original home of the E-type, Jaguar's Browns Lane plant in Coventry, England

Jaguar Heritage has opened a brand new workshop facility at Browns Lane, Coventry for servicing and restoration of Jaguar's classic models.

Led by Martyn Hollingsworth, a third-generation Jaguar employee, Jaguar Heritage craftsmen have a unique skillset and all servicing and restoration work completed within the Browns Lane facility (which will also be used for the restoration of Jaguar's own Heritage vehicles) will be fully warranted. Customers will be able to visit while work is in progress on their vehicles and, upon completion, they can obtain both a photographic record of the work carried out and a Jaguar-approved service logbook.

Said Martyn Hollingsworth, "The recreation of the new Lightweight E-type period competition cars has demonstrated the unique skillset within the Jaguar Heritage team, and I'm delighted the opening of our Browns Lane workshop means we're now able to make those same skills available to the benefit of our global customers."

The Jaguar Heritage workshop can collect and deliver vehicles for service or restoration from any location in the UK or, in the case of overseas customers, any UK airport or port.

MIXING POTS

Jake Venter continues his look at engine layouts and how and why certain numbers of cylinders are chosen.



16-Cylinder BRM.

When a new engine is being designed the choice of the number of cylinders depends on a surprising number of factors. Once the piston displacement is fixed it will usually come down to three or four cylinders if the engine is fairly small, four or six cylinders for a medium-sized engine and six or eight cylinders for a large engine. On luxury and sports cars the number of cylinders is often chosen on the basis of customer appeal. A V8 is acceptable but a V12 is more charismatic and a V16 is the ultimate.

SMALL NUMBER OF CYLINDERS

A small number of cylinders will be relatively inexpensive to manufacture, service and overhaul. Fewer than four cylinders would normally have introduced unacceptable levels of

vibration, but modern balance shaft technology plus the introduction of liquid-containing and even electronically-controlled engine mountings have made it possible to build car engines with three or even two cylinders. Two years ago Fiat started to sell a two-cylinder model and at present about six or seven major brands are building three-cylinder-engined cars.

LARGE NUMBER OF CYLINDERS

A large number of cylinders usually produces a very smooth power delivery, but the manufacturing, servicing and overhaul costs rise as the number of cylinders increase. The smallest number of cylinders that are perfectly balanced is six, whether in inline or flat form. A V6 is not in perfect balance, but the balance may be improved by adding a balance shaft or employing an unusual crankshaft design.

CHOOSING THE BORE AND STROKE

Choosing a suitable bore and stroke is vital. Engine displacement depends on the bore, the stroke and the number of cylinders. If we stick to a particular displacement we can make the following observations:

Undersquare engine. An advantage of having the bore significantly smaller than the stroke is that it keeps the cylinder block narrow and short. The disadvantage is that the valves have to be kept small, thus reducing the engine's breathing capacity. The long stroke will deepen the cylinder block and reduce the engine's ability rev, because an engine's internal stress is proportional to the stroke length.

Oversquare engine. An advantage of having the bore significantly larger than the stroke is that bigger or more valves can be used. This will increase the breathing ability. The big bore will tend to make the cylinder block wider and



2-cylinder Fiat 500.

longer but the short stroke will result in it being shallower. The short stroke will also increase the rev limit. This will result in an increased power output.

ENGINE CONFIGURATION

The choice of engine configuration depends mainly on two considerations. Long crankshafts are more prone to torsional vibration than short shafts, giving rise to the popularity of V-engines. Short engines are also easier to fit into the space allocated to the engine in modern car bodies.

BORE WEAR

The bore size has a definite influence on the amount of wear an engine can tolerate. Research has shown that if two engines, made of the same materials, are running under the same conditions, the rate of cylinder bore wear in terms of fractions of a millimetre per 100 hours will be the same for both, even


if the bores differ greatly in diameter. Expressing the rates of bore wear as a percentage of the bore diameter we get the following criteria:

- If the wear is not more than 0.2 per cent of the bore diameter no appreciable deterioration is observed.
- When the wear reaches 0.25 per cent of the bore diameter oil consumption will begin to rise.
- When the wear reaches 0.3 per cent of the bore diameter oil consumption will be getting out of control.
- When the wear reaches about 0.35 to 0.4 per cent of the bore diameter the deterioration in performance will be very noticeable.

WEAR RATE VS BORE DIAMETER

What does this mean in practice? If we compare two engines with bore diameters of 100mm and 200mm and assume they've run for the same length of time under the same conditions and that

they are constructed to the same design with the same material specifications, they will then have worn the same amount. Let's assume it's 0.3mm. If we now express the wear as a percentage of the bore diameter we find that the wear for the 100mm diameter bore amounts to 0.3 per cent, which is over the limit. The wear for the 200mm bore is only 0.15 per cent and this will have no noticeable effect. The rule then is: the bigger the bore, the more wear it can tolerate.

A four-cylinder engine of the same capacity as a six should then last longer, if all the other conditions are the same. A twin should last even longer and a single should live forever. How many readers remember the single-cylinder Lanz Bulldog tractor? It achieved fame due to the combination of a lusty torque output and a long engine life, but the consequent vibration levels would make a Harley-Davidson turn green with envy. 

TRACTION ATTRACTION



With some financial help from Monsieur Bibendum, 80 years ago, André Citroën introduced his Traction Avant and while it was not the very first, it certainly was one of the motoring world's foremost mass-produced front-wheel drive cars.

Words and pictures by Mike Monk

Despite being only 12 years old at the time, I can still vividly remember being enthralled watching the *Maigret* police detective series on British TV because the main character, Inspector Jules Maigret (played by Rupert Davies) drove around in a Citroën Light 15, which was pretty cool in 1960. The way he arrived at a crime scene and stepped out from the rear-hinged driver's door, hat on head, pipe clenched between teeth, was his trademark laconic entrance. In fact, the car became synonymous with Georges Simenon's fictional character, for many years being referred to by the general public as a 'Maigret car' as much as it was a Traction Avant. So, over half a century later I relished the opportunity to emulate the *commissaire de la Paris Brigade Criminelle*, especially as this year marks the trend-setting model's 80th anniversary.

André Citroën was a talented engineer and businessman whose links with the motor industry began in 1906 when he was installed as a director for the Mors automobile company where he was very successful. During WWI, with government funding, he ran a munitions factory at Quai de Javel, which afterwards he turned into a motor manufacturing plant that was the foundation of the Citroën Motor Company he established in 1919. His first car, the Model A, is claimed to be Europe's first mass-produced car.

By 1930 Citroëns were being exported on a grand scale and built in factories in other countries, but then came the Great Depression and everything went pear-shaped. Within three years production dropped by two-thirds and in 1932 the company was in dire straits (not helped, it is said, by André's gambling habits!) and struggling to finance a new model conceived to stem the tide – the Traction Avant. Citroën's main creditor was the giant French tyre manufacturer Michelin, who took over the bankrupt company in 1934 after giving the go-ahead for the factory to be rebuilt to facilitate production. This task was completed in a remarkably short five months.

Designed by André Lefebvre and Flaminio Bertoni, the Traction Avant – as the French wording implies – was a front-wheel drive car that followed a trend pioneered



THE CHEVRON MAN

André-Gustave Citroën was born in Paris on 5 February 1878 to a Dutch father, Levie, and a Polish mother, Macha. Levie was a diamond merchant who committed suicide when André was six years old, apparently after failure in a business venture in a diamond mine in South Africa. It appears that André grew up inspired by the works of Jules Verne and had witnessed the construction of the Eiffel Tower, which inspired him to be an engineer. He graduated from the *École Polytechnique* in 1900 and shortly afterwards visited Poland (Macha had recently died) and there he saw a craftsman working on a set of gears with a fish bone design that proved to be less noisy and more efficient in operation than conventional straight-cut gears. Citroën bought the patent for very little money, developed the double helical gear arrangement and in 1913 set up his own gear-making company. Later on, this design was reputed to be the inspiration for Citroën's double-chevron logo. André died on 3 July 1935 suffering with stomach cancer, in time to see his brainchild in production but without knowing just what a success it would be.

by Alvis in 1928, Cord in 1929 and DKW in 1931, but it did lead the way by virtue of having a steel monocoque body, a construction process yet to achieve universal popularity amongst the world's automakers. A benefit of the process was that the overall shape could be relatively low-slung and the need for running boards eliminated, making for a fairly aerodynamic shape, a styling trait adopted by practically all subsequent Citroën road cars.

The Traction Avant's highlights did not stop at styling. Engineering-wise, the back-to-front powertrain layout – the gearbox is at the front of the car separated from the in-line engine by the final drive – is novel, and, initially, CV joints were used but these did not work well and were replaced with universal joints. Engines were mounted using springs and rubber blocks between the motor and the bodywork. The rakish bodywork resulted in a low centre of gravity, which, combined with independent torsion bar/wishbone front suspension and a well-located solid rear axle, offered exceptional road holding for its day. The brakes were hydraulic, another advanced feature for a mass-produced car.

Steering was initially worm and roller but this was changed to rack and pinion in 1936. An auto transmission was envisaged but it never reached production, a three-speed manual with a dashboard mounted 'bent lever' shifter being standard.

The first Traction Avant was built on a 2 910mm wheelbase with a 1 303cm³ four-cylinder engine and tagged 7A – the 7 denoting the French tax-determining fiscal horsepower rating, or 'CV'. However after a couple of months production, a 7B model was introduced with a motor enlarged to 1 529cm³, which was followed shortly thereafter by a 7C with a 1 628cm³ engine, both of which fell into the 9CV tax rating but the model's numbering was not changed. The engines featured loose sleeves that could be easily replaced when necessary. Later models included the 11 with a 1 911cm³ engine and available in short-(BL) and long-wheelbase (3 090mm) versions, and the 15 with a 2 867cm³ six-cylinder motor (which actually fell into the 16CV tax bracket). A 3 270mm wheelbase was also available for the 9-seat 11 and 15, the absence of a transmission tunnel helping to make the interiors very spacious. Production facilities were set up in other countries



including Slough, England, where right-hand drive examples were produced, the 11 dubbed Light 15, the lwb 11 the Big 15 and the 15CV the Big Six, all of which were specced higher than the austere French versions.

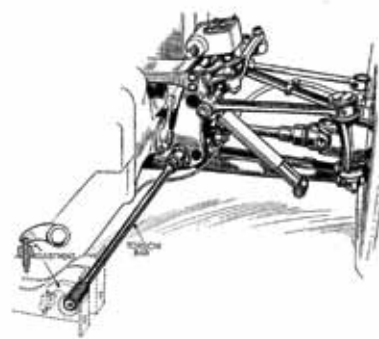
Early cars had no boot lid – but dual fuel fillers! – which was rectified for the 1936 model year with an opening rear panel to incorporate a proper boot. Production was suspended throughout the war years, during which the factory was hit in a bombing raid. The car also benefited from the availability of Michelin's new-technology 'X' radial ply tyre, developed in 1946 with Citroën's Traction Avant and 2CV in mind.

Stepping through the door of this 1954 Light 15 was a nostalgic moment. The car is not pristine – some cracked paintwork, slight tears in the leather seats and suchlike – but carries plenty of patina. Turn the key, hit the button and the motor fires immediately and settles into a totally unstressed idle. Depress the clutch, select first from the metal-gated H-pattern gearshift (the mechanism of which was locked when the mechanical clutch was engaged) on the rich wood dashboard and pull away to the accompaniment of willing revs. With around 42kW available at 4250r/min, the near-1150kg Light 15 was never a sprinter

but the long-stroke four offers enough mid-range torque to facilitate unfussed progress. In 1951, UK's *The Motor* magazine recorded a 0-96km/h time of 29.7 seconds, a top speed of 116.8km/h and a fuel consumption of 11.2l/100 km.

Characterful and comfortable, the Traction Avant is a breeze to drive from the bench front seat that, thanks to an under-dash umbrella handbrake, the positioning of the gearshift and the flat floor, makes the car a reasonably practical six-seater. Sidelight pods on the flowing front fenders are visible from the driving position, the view out is excellent, and simply aiming the long, louvred bonnet towards the horizon adds to a sense of well-being, an attribute Jules would have appreciated as he contemplated his current case.

When production ceased in 1957 about 760 000 units had been produced. Apart from a four-door, the Traction Avant was also produced in two-door coupé and cabriolet body styles, each with a rumble seat, and even as a hatchback *Commerciale*. It is easy to see why there is a strong following of enthusiasts around the world for this once ground-breaking car that was superseded by the 'Goddess' – the also cutting edge ID/DS series. But for now, the Maigret car is alive and well. Happy 80th! 🇫🇷



THE MICHELIN MAN

Michelin's emblematic Monsieur Bibendum was introduced in 1894, five years after the company was founded, making it one of the world's oldest trademarks that is still used today and commonly referred to as 'The Michelin Man'.



Stephen Line blasts around Killarney in 1978 with an Upton Manx. Photo: Chris Gray.

FIELD OF MEMORIES

Stephen Line, ace karter and race-mechanic, passed away in California on 19 August 2014 aged just 62. **Greg Mills** remembers the man.

Stephen is probably known, if at all, to just a small sliver of the SA racing fraternity. His modesty would have preferred it that way. But from the time of his arrival from his native Nottingham in 1976 until his departure little under a decade later for the United States, where he forged a career in historic race-preparation, he made a big contribution to the South African racing scene all the way from its karting nursery to the grand heights of its then top formula, Atlantic. More than that, however, his sporting eminence says something about how racing was back then, and how it has evolved – or perhaps, more accurately, devolved.

I first raced against Stephen in 1977 when he stepped down a class to compete in the 100 stock event at the Port Elizabeth round of the then-regular biannual GB-SA ‘test’ encounters. While I was embroiled in a day-long tussle for third place with the local hero Cedric Parker, my brother Roddy, then the reigning SA class champion, and Stephen were miles out ahead battling for the lead. Stephen’s Barlotti was equipped with a novelty for ‘Class One’ karts: front-wheel, hand-operated brakes, which were to become a hallmark of his various chassis.

At my father’s urging, Stephen moved

from PE to Cape Town in 1978. It was little surprise he was so fast, having just enjoyed a pretty successful first (and as it turned out, only) run in the 100cc World Championships.

To understand the significance of the world karting championships at the time, there were two such international events: for 100cc and 250cc categories. The former usually produced the drivers that went on to greater things (with the exception of one Nigel Mansell who raced 210 Villiers-engined karts) partly as the 250s did not have a proper world champs until the early 1980s, their so-called ‘World Cup’ being a one-off annual event held at Heysham near Lancaster in the UK. The bigger gearbox karts did not also apparently lend themselves as well as the direct-drive high-revving 100s to the finesse required as one moved into cars, but I am, of course, biased.

The men who raced and won in the 100 international reads like the ‘Who’s who’ of motorsport: four-time F1 Champion Alain Prost, 1974 100cc champion Riccardo Patrese and his main sparring partner that year Eddie Cheever, 5-time Le Mans winner Emanuele Pirro, F1 regulars Andrea de Cesaris, Elio de Angelis, Corrado Fabi, Stefano Modena and Stefan Bellof, NASCAR star and ‘78 100cc World

Champ Lake Speed, and perhaps the most famous of all, Ayrton Senna, who burst onto the scene at the 1978 Champs at Le Mans. Senna, the 1977 South American champion came frustratingly close but never won the world event, with his team-mate Terry Fullerton usually at least his match on similar equipment.

SA had its own 100cc stars, notably Brian Davey, Derick Irving and Carlheinz Peters, all of whom reached the (usually) 26-grid finals in the 1970s. Carlheinz, who had moved to SA from Germany late in 1972, finished third in 1973, the year won by Fullerton, the man described by Senna as the best driver he had ever competed against. The three-time F1 champion added: “He was very experienced and I enjoyed very much driving with him because he was fast, he was consistent. He was a very complete driver.” Senna may, in saying so, have been deliberately attempting to belittle and out-psyche his peers, notably arch-rival Prost, but Fullerton is generally held, even today, to be the best karter of all time.

Getting into the SA team for the World Champs was thus a big deal back then, and it could be done on talent and not just a cheque book. Personally I never had more than three new sets of (sticky, Dunlop or Bridgestone)



Line in his Barlotti-BM at Killarney, 1978. Photo: Courtesy Elly Faden.

tyres per season, which involved the CIK meeting, usually two SA Champs rounds, and a full diary of Western Province Championship races. There was no spare chassis, and usually just one spare engine. Today a driver can use, easily, three sets of tyres per meeting.

Stephen had been racing karts already, by then, for ten years. Tuning and driving ability, not money, were the valuable premiums then, which was why the sport and success was accessible to a working-class lad.

Colin Fox met Stephen and his father in 1969 at Fulbeck kart track “when we were thinking about starting karting. He took me under his wing and my dad bought our first engine from him.” Similarly John Hird started karting at Fulbeck in the seventies. “My dad and I were very new to kart racing. Steve and his dad spotted that we were like fish out of water and came across to give us some much needed help. From that moment on we became friends and racing rivals, when I could keep up with him. They were different, but both were excellent engineers.”

Stephen was an apprentice at Raleigh cycles in Nottingham after leaving school, “but,” remembers fellow karter Chris Gray, “couldn’t abide the notion of hum-drum life in ‘Nottinghamshire, England’ till he died of boredom. He

and his dad used to drive to all the old legendary kart tracks around England and Europe in a beaten-up old Ford van. It takes real dedication,” notes Chris, who first met Stephen at the ‘old Ster-Kinekor track’ at Zwartkops, “to compete in a European winter.”

Stephen’s eclectic choice of a Barlotti chassis in SA, where the German Taifun marques ruled thanks to Carlheinz’s connections, reflected doing things his own way, tweaked to suit, a trait emphasised by his use also of an Upton Manx engine, an unfashionable English attempt to break into the European-dominated market.

For the 1977 World Championship it was not a question of going out and buying a new chassis or two, a batch of the latest engines, truckload of tyres, and hiring a transporter and mechanic or two. It was a simpler, infinitely more naïve time. Senna described karting of the period as ‘pure racing’. There was also a greater diversity of equipment. Paging through contemporary karting magazines reminds us of the manufacturers long disappeared: Blow (with a quaintly denoted range including Gemini, Victor, Invader, Hustler, Meteor, and Gnat karts), Sisley, Star, Dart, Taifun, Swiss Hutless, Deavinson Sprint, Lane (run by David and Alan Lane, who had finished third

in the ‘75 World Champs, and for whose ‘shop’, run out of a mouldy terraced house in Streatham, London, I was a works driver back when) and many more including the powerful DAP concern, Senna’s mount, along with stalwart engine brands BM/Sirio, Komet, Saetta, McCulloch, Hewland, and DAP again. Even the omni-powerful Zip Kart has today morphed into essentially an accessories business.

The same has happened in more ‘senior’ formulae of motorsport, of course. Just one customer formula manufacturer remains – Dallara – where there were previously scores. Think March, Ralt, Brabham, Chevron, Argo, Spartan, Royale, Tiga, Hawke, Dulon, Reynard, and many more, now even the great Lola name which recently went into receivership. Gone seemingly are the days of the small guy thinking he had a good idea and making it happen with the aid of a few friends, brazing torch and hacksaw. Now it’s carbon, epoxies, autoclave vacuum ovens, FIA homologation, computational fluid dynamics, wind-tunnels, and money, lots and lots of it. Globalisation might have opened up access and increased the scale of markets world-wide, but it has shrunk diversity. Call me an old romantic, but I am not sure we have made progress in every respect since.



Line-up for the World Championship Finals at Parma in 1977.
Photo: Courtesy Elly Faden.



It was also a racing world more accessible to the small man. In addition to regular participation at the world events, even though SA was politically isolated, between 1981 and 1985 there were regular CIK international meetings held at Zwartkops, featuring all the international stars such as Fullerton, perennial World Championship runner-up Lars Forsman of Sweden and Austrian Toni Zoersel, along with a sprinkling of then up and coming names such as Michael Schumacher, Heinz-Harald Frentzen and future DTM star (and Zakspeed F1 driver) Bernd Schneider, winner of the '83 CIK All-Africa event.

The CIK event was an opportunity, remarkably, for SA drivers to test themselves against the best in the world in their own country on an annual basis. We were spoilt rotten. This exposure became more important as the World Champs moved, for no apparent logic, to 135cc engines from 1981, ensuring a Komet benefit show at the top-end of the sport for the next decade.

For the 1977 world event in Parma, Italy, Stephen bought a second-hand BM from Cape Town's Ed Razzano who had used them in the '75 Champs held at Paul Ricard. He boldly additionally commissioned two DAP T81 short-stroke engines from an old friend,

workshop-based tuner John Mills (no relation) – a brave move at a time when the karting world was moving to longer-stroke types. Tuned for power in different places, Stephen christened these new acquisitions the 'green' and 'red' variants based on a suitable daub of paint. With money now short, and the only sponsorship evident in the Castrol leathers organised by the mercurial Arthur Abrahams, Stephen convinced Bill Sisley, the mentor later of one Johnny Herbert and long-time proprietor of the Buckmore karting centre in Kent (whose investors include John Surtees), to loan him two of his unfashionable Kestrel chassis and off he set for Northern Italy.

John Hird was Stephen's spannerman for the event. "We had a fantastic week or so travelling through Europe to Parma. Steve was very dedicated to his racing - he went to bed early every night. I was just the opposite down in the bar with Fanie, one of the SA mechanics. On the way down to Parma we stopped overnight on the side of the road to get some sleep, only to be dragged out of the van in the early hours of the morning by German police, searched, and having to take everything out of the van before being sent on our way."

At the end of 2010, Stephen wrote to me with details of the '77

Championships, providing unique personal insight into the challenges of racing on such a big stage.

The South African team, he recalled, was made up of Carlheinz as team manager and Rob Coetzer as his assistant, with drivers Irving, Graham Blankfield and Barry Taylor (all using Taifun chassis with Peters-tuned Komet K78s), Willy Fink (Taifun-Davey K78), Ed Murray (Taifun-K78) and Stephen. With over 100 drivers entered, the track opened Monday afternoon, all-day Tuesday and Wednesday for practice.

As John indicates, Stephen approached the Championships seriously. The seemingly endless permutations were tested exhaustively, all recorded diligently in Stephen's little black book. Different chassis with various settings and the three engines on a variety of gearings, exhausts, and carbs. Finally, the 'red' engine was deemed quickest, though it offered little over the two-year-old BM K96/3.

Time-trials took place on the Thursday, the top 30 getting a bye until the Saturday. All the six SA drivers raced the three heats, which eliminated Taylor, Blankfield and Murray, while Stephen squeezed through via the last-chance repechage into the last 64, no mean feat given the last four in that race made it through from forty-odd

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Scrutineering at the 1977 World Champs.
Photo: Courtesy Elly Faden.

scrapping drivers.

The Saturday morning saw another time-trial for the remaining 64 drivers, by which time the SA drivers had shuffled some of their equipment: Irving obtained a factory Sirio engine, Fink moved to a Swiss Hutless chassis with a HeliBrandhofer-tuned Parilla, and Stephen loaned Ed Murray's Taifun. After breaking a rod in the first heat and missing the second while changing engines, Stephen decided to call it quits, realising that qualification for the finals was unlikely. No South African made it through to the last 34 drivers in the finals, save for Alan Gates (a Brit racing under an SA flag of convenience in 1980), who did so thereafter in the 100cc International World Champs.

The year was the third in a row dominated by BM karts and engines, and the second won on the trot by Felice Rovelli, the son of a controversial Italian industrialist. 1977 proved a watershed in other ways, as this was the first year Japanese (Bridgestone and Dunlop) tyres appeared, being worth about two seconds a lap in Stephen's estimation over the until then ubiquitous Goodyears or Continentals. "Up to this point," he wrote, "I would rate the driver as most important, followed by the engine, chassis and tyres. From 1978 onwards,"

he contended, "it became driver, tyres, chassis and engine, in that order."

Once in Cape Town Stephen's presence lifted the standard of the local scene, just as Carlheinz's had done for Johannesburg's. With his Barlotti in Mark de Nobrega's hands (which the Capetonian used to win the stock class title in 1979), Stephen upgraded to a new DAP-DAP combination and became the guy to beat. By 1978 my brother, Roddy, had made it into the SA team for the World Champs in Le Mans, using the same DAP T81 engines purchased from Stephen, and tested at his home track in Fulbeck on the site of an old air force base in Lincolnshire under the eye of his parents Arthur and Irene.

We secured the engines from John Mills one evening by an international trunk call, the first-ever in our home, which we had excitedly booked the day before. How times have changed! Sadly the T81s proved little more competitive at Le Mans than they had with Stephen the Championships before, with the smaller bore DAP T70 proving the engine to beat in the hands of Senna and Fullerton, though the first two places were taken by the then revolutionary two-bearing axle Birel-Parilla outfits of Speed and Zoersel.

I remember the elder Line, a retired lorry driver, bringing along some tools

to Fulbeck to help us on our way, including a set of short knives-cum-hacksaw blades, carefully sharpened from discarded bits of the latter. It was a different era, affected by post-war austerities and frugalities, a long way from the excesses of contemporary consumerism and a concomitant disposable culture.

By 1979 in addition to Stephen, three more Capetonians (Guy Lanfear, my brother and myself) were in the SA team. In 1980, at my urging, such is the temerity of youth, Stephen left his job as a machine-fitter at SA Nylon Spinners and took one preparing Tommy Dunn's ex-Ian Scheckter March 79A Formula Atlantic. Tommy, a Killarney star in various Minor Motors Group One Alfas, had raced our karts after meeting my brother at a Western Province awards ceremony. I would often sneak away from university classes and travel out to the Pioneer Oats facility off Bofors Circle to help as he fettled the March wing-car and the spare ex-Sportsman Lager racing March 77B.

The season was a success, with Tommy finishing second overall in the SA Drivers Championship behind the Chevron B45 expertly pedalled by Tony Martin.

As Tommy recalls, "Stephen was a great help during that 1980 Atlantic



Ayrton Senna da Silva in his world championship debut, Le Mans, 1978. Photo: Denis Mills.



Tommy Dunn's Pioneer Oats/ Bokomo Racing March 79 Atlantic in the Killarney pits in late 1980. Line is with the long hair with his back to the camera. Photo: Peter Ellenbogen.

season, not only with the car but also trucking it around the country in a pretty large and fairly clapped-out Ford transporter. In the days that I knew him he was very reserved but that did not stop him from taking a great interest in two pretty girls visiting our pit at Roy Hesketh during practice. On my out lap, as I braked for the first corner, the left front wheel flopped over. With one eye on the girls and the other on the car, Stephen had tightened the wheel with the mounting pegs next to the locating holes, not in them. But I cannot recall Stephen's follow up with the girls!! Together we had a reasonably good season, unfortunately only the one, as our sponsor said they had sold less oats in 1980 than the previous year!"

With the end of the Bokomo support, Stephen was off to Jo'burg, and the serious karting resumed, though he remained in the Atlantic game, preparing cars for Peter Haller until the German emigre's death in an accident at Welkom in March 1984 when his home-built space-frame car went airborne after a tangle at the end of the straight.

Stephen finished tenth after the heats in the 1981 CIK All-Africa event (one place behind a certain G Mills using the unloved 'green' DAP), won overall by Zoersel, a tough old pro, from Forsman.

In 1982, while I was paying for my sins by writing a supplementary Latin university exam, Stephen finished sixth in the CIK meet won by the sublimely talented Irving from Fullerton, Forsman, Zoersel and Schneider. And in 1983 he finished the third SA driver behind Jeanette Wingels (6th) and yours truly (7th) in a field numbering 50 entries with 23 foreign drivers. The one title he desperately wanted, and made few bones about, remained, however, tantalizingly out of reach when I pipped him by just one point in a ding-dong SA Championship in 1983, the first time the 100 international crown had been won by a driver from outside Jo'burg.

It took Stephen a long time to forgive me, by which time I had moved to England to race a bit before furthering my studies, and he had moved to the States. It was ironic that the man who had helped me to lift my game, had lost out in the process.

Stephen returned to the UK a week after Haller's accident to visit his father who was ill with a brain tumour. When he returned to SA after his father's death that May, he went to work for Dorbyl at the nuclear enrichment plant at Pelindaba. In April 1985 he left SA for the US, initially working for Essex Racing in Atlanta before moving to

Long Island, New York the following year, where he was crew chief on SCCA Formula Atlantic cars for the next decade, achieving some 20 national race-wins. After a move over to vintage restoration work, he changed coasts to a race preparation firm at Sears Point, now Infineon, race-track, which included running an F1 Embassy-Hill. At the time of his death he was focused on restoring and repairing Cobras and running two TransAm historic race-cars.

And he returned inevitably to karting, to the growing historic category of the sport. From his base in California Stephen restored a 1963 Fox Flyweight/Mc9, and a 1974 Bug Wasp with, of course, a choice of Upton Manx, Komet K77 and DAP T81.

Stephen Line was an accomplished engineer, very quick driver, and tough competitor. His success was due to his varied talents, undoubtedly, but was also down to the era, when a little guy could still make it. I am pleased to have raced then, and proud to have raced with him. 🏁

Dr Mills would like especially to thank Derick Irving, Roddy Mills, Karting Magazine's Mark Burgess, Tommy Dunn, Bill Sisley, Chris Gray, Jack Pienaar, and Stephen's friend Elly Faden for their help in the preparation of this article.



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1993 BENTLEY CONTINENTAL R

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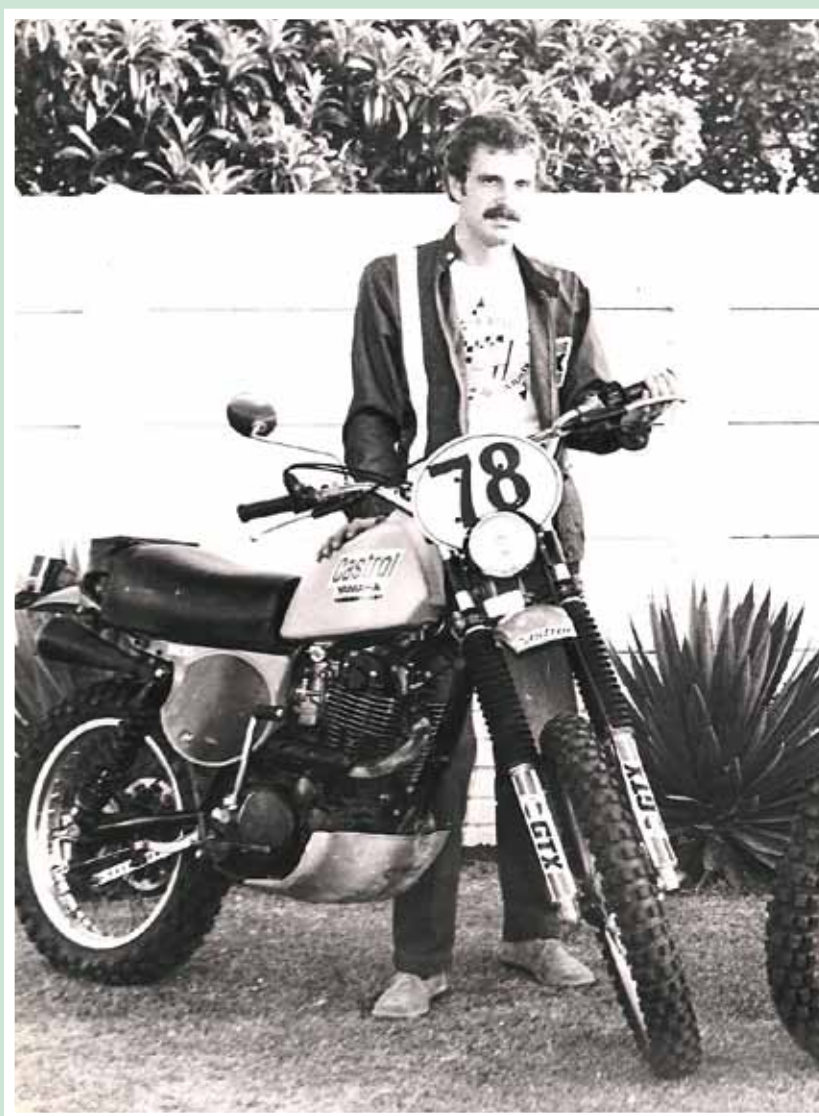
R85 000

1969 MG GT

123 000 Miles, full original interior, mechanically sound, drives like a dream, been in one family all its life.

BIKES TO BENTLEYS

The recent successes enjoyed by the reborn Bentley Motors, both in the marketplace and on the racetrack, are to a large extent attributable to the efforts of South African mechanical engineer Brian Gush. **Gavin Foster** catches up with the Bentley Motors' Director of Chassis, Powertrain and Motorsport.



Gush and his Yamaha TT 500 ready for the 1978 Roof of Africa.



Two of Brian's favourites – Blower Bentley and Lotus Elan.

Brian is also a keen classic motorcycle buff who spends his leisure time rebuilding and racing elderly British motorcycles, which is pretty much the way he spent his afternoons and weekends when he was a scholar at Port Elizabeth's Grey High School in the late '60s and early '70s.

"I think that rebuilding motorcycles from an early age gave me a hands-on approach to my work," says Brian, a chartered mechanical engineer who

qualified in Cape Town in the '70s. "If you've done things yourself it's very much easier to direct a group of engineers working on a project. I still enjoy it, and

there's no conflict between running a high-tech race team on the one hand and having a hobby where you have to do everything yourself in your workshop, on the other."

So what path did Brian take on his way to what would be any petrolhead's dream job? Did he plot a course and stick grimly to it until the blocks all fell into place? Apparently not. "I never had any great vision that I was going to get across here and into motorsport," he tells me on the phone from his home in Congleton, 30km south of Manchester. "You just keep pushing forward, taking one step at a time, and taking your opportunities as they come."

Brian has been at Bentley for 15 years, having moved across from his post as head of engineering at Volkswagen South Africa a year or so after Volkswagen AG bought the prestigious British brand. Prior to that

"I think that rebuilding motorcycles from an early age gave me a hands-on approach to my work," says Brian, a chartered mechanical engineer who qualified in Cape Town in the '70s



Brian alongside a Continental GT.



Gush racing Gavin Foster's AJS 500 at Coega near PE in 1970.

he'd worked for Ford in South Africa, and was involved with the motorsport divisions of both companies, with his first major motorsport project being the development of the Ford Sierra XR8 in the mid-1980s.

"When I got to Bentley I was responsible for reorganising the engineering department," he says. "I was also given the opportunity to put the motorsport department together and then develop a prototype to go back to Le Mans with. To do that, then take it through the three-year process and win Le Mans was the absolute business!" Indeed it was. Bentley had won Le Mans in 1924, and then again every year from 1927 to 1930, before Rolls-Royce bought the troubled company in 1931 and shut down the racing department, a state of affairs that lasted for 70 long years. With Brian overseeing the project for the factory the results were extraordinary, with the three-year campaign harvesting the factory team a third position at Le Mans

in 2001, a fourth in 2002, and both first and second places overall in the final year.

Bentley then withdrew from motorsport once again until this year, when the factory four-litre twin-turbo V8

Bentley Continental GT3 took to the tracks in the USA and Europe. In the European Blancpain endurance series the Bentley drivers, Guy Smith, Andy Meyrick and Steven Kane, have so far this year scooped a fourth and two wins from three starts. "We also have a car competing in the Pirelli World Challenge in the USA," says Brian, "and our next step is to run a car in Asia – either in China or in Saudi Arabia."

But back to where it all began, with the old bikes. I was friends with Brian in about 1970, and used to hang out with him in his folks' garage in Port Elizabeth working on motorcycles – at one time I acquired an AJS 500 scrambler for R20, the first bike I ever owned, and stored it there because my mother would have killed me if she had found out where my pocket money had gone! Brian worked non-stop, restoring various ancient bikes with Villiers two-stroke engines, a BSA Bantam, and a 1950s Norton Dominator 500. He did all the work himself, and used to do his spray painting with an old flit pump like my gran used for floor polish, achieving remarkable results.

So what jewels does the man who spends his life making decisions about some of the fastest and most expensive cars in the world have in his home workshop today?

"I still have the Dominator – I've rebuilt it about three times and I take it out for a blast every year. I also have a Norton 750 Commando, a Triumph

"I was also given the opportunity to put the motorsport department together and then develop a prototype to go back to Le Mans with. To do that, then take it through the three-year process and win Le Mans was the absolute business!"



Gush and the car Bentley took to Le Mans.



Brian on his Norton Commando.

Trident, a Bonneville and a Greeves scrambler that I recently rebuilt with a Triumph 500 twin-cylinder engine as a replica 1970s enduro bike,” he says. Brian was a regular midfield motocross and enduroracer back in South Africa, and competed in the Roof of Africa where he lay 13th until he picked up a flat tyre in 1978. Today he races his old bikes in vintage motocross and enduro events whenever his race schedule at Bentley allows. He also rides in the annual DJ Rally between Durban and Johannesburg every year he can.

On the car front, Brian has a beautifully restored 1966 Lotus Elan that’s helped him form bonds with a number of other South African engineers who’ve done extremely well in British and international motorsport. “Andre Verwey (of Gemini Transmissions fame) did the cylinder head for me,” he says. “The Elan was designed by Ron Hickman, who came to England, worked as a designer for Ford and then went to Lotus Engineering as chief engineer. While I was rebuilding my Elan he came to see me, autographed the steering wheel and invited me to Jersey. I went across to see him just before he died in 2011, and it was great.” Hickman, born and raised in Greytown, also designed the folding Black & Decker Workmate workbench that subsequently sold 30 million and made him a fortune. Then, of course, there is Durbanite Gordon Murray of McLaren who also has an Elan. “I spent

an evening with him at the end of last year, reminiscing about Lotus Elans in South Africa and elsewhere.”

One has to ask the question: Does Brian get to drive any of the Bentley race cars that he’s responsible for? “I drive all the cars that we produce,” he says. “I’ve driven all the Speed 8 Le Mans cars and I’ve driven our GT3 race cars. I have to do it. It’s great to drive the car that you created, and it gives me enormous respect for the professional drivers we employ to race them – they really earn their money! I go out and have a blast around the track but I’m nowhere near quick enough to count.”

Then there’s the absolute cherry on top – the Bentley Blower. “I’m responsible for the Bentley heritage fleet and I recently drove a Bentley Blower – the number two car that Sir Henry ‘Tim’ Birkin raced into second place behind Woolf Barnato and Glen Kidston at Le Mans in 1930 – from the factory to the Classic Le Mans and back. That was the ‘hare’ in the 1930 race with the Mercedes SSK that then broke down, allowing Bentley No. 1, the ‘Old Number One’ Speed Six to win again. I did a lap at Classic Le Mans and then drove it back. That was a bit of fun.”

I’ll say! 🏁

On the car front, Brian has a beautifully restored 1966 Lotus Elan that’s helped him form bonds with a number of other South African engineers who’ve done extremely well in British and international motorsport

SCANDINAVIAN FLICK



Local Volvo enthusiast **Howard Bates** takes his 144 to its motherland and enjoys a hassle-free spin up to the northernmost part of Europe.

Why this article to *Classic & Performance Car Africa*? Well, I have a 'classic', I injected her with 'performance' and then did an 8 000km road tour in Europe.

Back in 2012 the SA Volvo Owners Club met up with a Dutch group of classic Volvos in Pretoria. These guys had just completed a 6 000km tour from Cape Town, up the West Coast into Namibia through the Caprivi, back down through Botswana and ended in Durban. Models on the run included Duetts (210), Amazons (122) and 'The Saint' (P1800). But what grabbed my attention was the mention of a tour through Scandinavia scheduled for 2014. It was to be organised by the Dutch Club as part of their 44 years in existence celebrations. The bug bit. I joined the *Nederlandse Klassieke Volvo Vereniging*, who by the way, has over 3 300 classic Volvos registered within Holland.

I had to have our 1970 Volvo 144 at the start in Gothenburg for the 5 500km tour by 25 May 2014. A bit of work was required as the engine was original but tired, the suspension was original but horrible on country roads and the only mechanically sound part was the gearbox with factory overdrive.

Suspension was lowered on heavier coil wire, a bit of caster was added, shocks and all suspension rubbers renewed. Next was to upgrade the sealed beam headlights and remove the original B20 engine. Here I big-bored the block, stroked the crank, re-sized the rods, verniered the cam gear, re-profiled the cam, changed the valve seats, installed larger valves, fitted twin 42 Weber carbs, saw to electronic ignition and had Maurice Rosenberg dial in a real good torquey performance engine on the dyno.

March 2014. The now rejuvenated 144 headed down the N3 from Johannesburg to Durban harbour and was 'containerized' for the trek to Rotterdam.



May 2014 arrived and we set off in the 144 from Den Dolder, Holland (about 50km outside Amsterdam) for the Baltic Sea, driving through Germany and on to our Gothenburg destination. With its overdrive being used to the fullest, the Volvo proved a dream on the autobahns.

25 May 2014. The roads were wet as 83 classic Volvos departed Gothenburg, Sweden heading north for the land of the Midnight Sun - Finnmark, Norway. Filling the 56-litre fuel tank was the first surprise with fuel costing almost double to that back home. The second earth-shattering experience was that most of the open road speed limits were pegged at 100kph. The roads up through Sweden were excellent, even the unpaved sections were a dream. Day 2 brought out the sun and temperatures became bearable.

With smooth gravel roads being a little dusty and featuring plenty of loose stone, it is obvious to see why this country churns out world-class rally drivers. Day 3 took us from Arvidsjaur, Sweden and through the Arctic Circle to Rovaniemi, Finland. Roads were nearly all paved and although snow was everywhere to be seen the skies were

behaved beautifully.

Day 5 saw us finish a 565km stage ending up at Kirkenes, Finland, virtually on the border with north Russia, a stone's throw away from the Barents Sea coastline. Latitudinally, we were further north than Iceland. Again the weather was perfect.

Up to this stage we had been averaging about 600km per day, which sounds quite a bit, but when you have between 20 to 24 daylight hours, it is a walk in the park. Of the 83 classics that departed from Gothenburg, 83 arrived at the top of Finland with 2 379km under the belt. The organisers had assembled 2 support crews both in V70s, and apart from one rear axle assembly change, the odd generator bearing swap and exhaust repair, all the entrants excelled. Not bad for cars ranging from a

May 2014 arrived and we set off in the 144 from Den Dolder Holland (±50km outside Amsterdam) for the Baltic Sea, driving through Germany and onto our Gothenburg destination. With its overdrive being used to the fullest the Volvo proved a dream on the autobahns

clear and the ambient temperature sat around 19°C. This time of year the sun disappears for only a couple of hours each day and it doesn't really get dark. The old girl, the 144 Volvo that is,



1957 Volvo 444, to Duetts, to many, many Amazons and of course our faithful 144. Our car hadn't used a drop of oil, coolant or missed a beat.

Back to the surprises though - the third was that the further north we drove, the more expensive beer became. R90, no that's not a road identification number, but the price of a single glass!

Day 6 had us arriving in perfect weather just 30 kays from Nordkapp at our overnight stop on the Friday evening, where the following day was the scheduled visit to view the Midnight Sun and official photo

shoot. Seeing the weather was brilliant, a few of us decided to do the last 30km that evening, reaching the view point just before midnight with

crystal clear skies to witness the sun dipping across the horizon.

What a view at 00:13, 31 May 2014, it was at Nordkapp – the northernmost point of Europe and just 2 100km from the North Pole at 71°10'21"N/25°47'40"E.

Good thing we did that because overcast, wind and snow conditions brought the temperature down dramatically the next day as the planned photo shoot got under way. All the equips, including the service and film crew vehicles had arrived.

Gravel and icy roads had not prevented the 83-strong group achieving their goal and celebrating 44 years of the *Klassieker Volvo Vereniging*.

Leaving Nordkapp, down the Norwegian coast and the impressively beautiful fjords, we headed for Tromsø on a 670km stage. The stages through Norway included the famous Atlantic Road, a network of island-hopping and amazing bridges to the Trollstigen (Trolls' Ladder or Trolls' Path) built in 1936 with its switchbacks, amazing scenery, death defying drops and picturesque views.

Only too soon were we entering Oslo and the home stretch to Gothenburg. Here we scheduled a rest day after 5 600km of day-to-day stages with only three rest days in between. Of course we had to visit the Volvo Museum and have our 144 picture taken as the first South African Volvo 144 to ever park outside the entrance. We did a bit of island-hopping using the ferries before heading south from Gothenburg through Germany back to Den Dolder.

In total we covered 7 945 kilometres, of which 102km was in tunnels. The 144 drank 671.44 litres of fuel (11.83km/l – 8.45l/100km) and we never had to use the toolkit.

So what now? Do we bring the old 144 back home? Yes, for sure, but only after the twin Webers have growled around Nurburgring for a few laps. 🏁

In total we covered 7 945km, of which 102km was in tunnels. The 144 drank 671.44 litres of fuel (11.83km/l – 8.45l/100km) and we never had to use the toolkit

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DREAMS

Fourteen years ago when I met Arthur Wassenaar he spoke about doing the Mille Miglia. In 2010 I asked him what he was waiting for and better he makes a plan, and that was exactly what he did. He spent hours researching eligible cars and doing sums. Italian cars were completely out of reach, so it was between an Austin Healey and Triumph TR3.

By Mandy Di Nicola

Fast forward a year or two and he finally found a suitable TR3 in Johannesburg. After much convincing the car traded hands because the passion Arthur showed twisted the reluctant seller's arm. The relationship with the owner didn't end there though as Arthur spent many a weekend with him preparing the car for the gruelling event.

The Mille Miglia receives over a thousand applicants each year and with only 450 cars being accepted it was a nerve-wracking experience paying the exorbitant entry fee and waiting for acceptance. We were told we'd know by the end of December, then February and then March. On 3 March while sitting

drowning our sorrows an email came through and Arthur started screaming and turned his phone to me. There was the official letter: Arthur Wassenaar, Triumph TR3 – accepted.

After two and half months of frantically organising paperwork, insurance and transport for the car (by air, as it was too late to ship her) we loaded 'The Green Car' for Zurich. The plan was to then drive to Italy the next day – with a romantic night on Lake Como squeezed in before three nights in Brescia to prepare for the race.

11 May saw us leave Zurich but 15km later disaster struck as smoke poured from the car. Art stuck his head under the bonnet. I sat on my suitcase and called on St Anthony for help. When I



NIGHTMARES

lose something I call on this saint but this time uttered: "St Anthony, I haven't lost anything, but I'm not sure who the saint of broken down cars is!"

Art called the TR club in South Africa, who called the Triumph club in England, who called the Triumph club in Switzerland, who called a Triumph specialist. Soon afterwards said specialist Robert Ernst arrived in his white TR6, the 'White Lady'. He took one look and towed us to his home, where I was banished to the care of his wife Margrit. Hours passed and it was made clear to me my romantic night in Lake Como wasn't going to happen.

"She has lost a piston," Robert said. A piston was sourced from another Triumph fanatic, who removed one

from another car. The following day the boys worked all day while Margrit took me into Zurich to shop. By the end of the day the repair was complete. Margrit made us *Raclette* for dinner and we returned to our hotel, our hopes of doing the race re-ignited.

We woke up and headed unhindered to Brescia. The hotel concierge Googled Mille Miglia registration and car wash for us and we planned our day. Words can't describe the emotions when we drove through the doors of the Brixia Expo to register and were pushed into place amongst hundreds of the most beautiful cars. The penny finally dropped that this was really happening. We were there and our little 'Green Car' was considered an equal to the

world's best.

Traditionally the race day starts in Piazza Vittoria. Cars assemble for the all-important sealing, which is when a thin metal wire is fixed around the steering wheel of the car. In the old days, this was to ensure that the car you started the race with, was the same you finished in. Today a GPS tracker is fixed to your car, so this is pretty pointless. But those who have their cars sealed in the Mille Miglia never remove the seal - a bit of a status symbol I am told. That all done, and thereafter the collection of your Chopard watch with your race number, ours being 421, and it was off to the Mille Miglia museo for the last supper.

Too nauseous with nerves to eat, we strolled around and ogled all the other



cars. The waiting started to become unbearable and we went to sit in the car. Art thought it might be a good idea to study the road book, which I had briefly looked at the night before. Chinese, as far as I was concerned and I started to worry when the occupants in the Oldsmobile next to us were furiously paging through it with a calculator at hand.

8:45pm. Waiting in line for our 9:00pm start time the people cheering was overwhelming and children asked us to sign autographs like rock stars. We slowly pulled up onto the ramp and they thanked us, the one and only car from South Africa, and wished us well. With that, Art put his foot flat and the next 10 minutes were a blur. I remember screaming around the Castello, getting to a traffic circle and not knowing whether to go left or right, already not knowing what page we were on in the road book. Thank goodness for the spectators who indicated us to the left when we hesitated. I had no idea of the speed of this race. I was under the impression vintage cars go slowly and was anticipating a relaxing drive

through the Italian countryside.

We had to keep up with the cars in front of us, as the road book was proving to be quite an issue for me, chief navigator from hell. I yelled, "Just go and don't dare lose those cars in front." We kept on speeding down little country roads on the white line at 140km/h, in and out of villages, getting our stamps and miraculously arriving at our scheduled stop outside Padova at 2:30am. Bed at 3:45am.

We had just over 2 hours of sleep and nobody seemed to know where the start was. Finally we found a marshal and got into line. We were off to a great start with no wrong turns or being forced to follow other cars. Our sector time for the first leg to San Marino was 5 hours and 30 minutes. At the 4 hour 15 mark I noticed a sign for San Marino only 20 kilometres away. Thinking we'd gone too fast we stopped for a coffee. The drive up the hill into San Marino was spectacular and again, because we were completely overwhelmed by the people, cameras and scenery, forgot to get a stamp from the marshals.





We proceeded to the parking lot, and parked next to a Jaguar driven by Bruno Senna and Martin Brundle. Art attended to the exhaust and that was when I realised we didn't have a stamp, so we rushed back to the stamping point. Everyone else seemed to have the same idea and we met a massive queue. We were hungry, and decided we would stop to have a pannino and catch up. We thought we knew what we were doing by then. Bad move, as on our return we found no cars and we'd missed the instruction about the changes to the road book. Obviously we got horribly lost and went up and down the mountain numerous times before finding an official who directed us towards the other cars. We lost about an hour and the day got worse when we missed a stamp in Pesaro.

I had to beg a police car to escort us to the right place to get it, which they did with sirens blaring. Luckily being Italian I can speak the lingo. Then a breakdown. Apparently a bolt on the steering fell off, resulting in half an hour delay. Back on the road but

lost in Ancona we finally found the stamp area, which had closed for the day. Desperation started to set in. We needed to be in Rome at around 10pm, but were a good 4 hours behind.

The rain started as we crossed over the mountain toward L'Aquila. 80 kays of winding roads, in the dark and cold, was extremely scary. We were the only car on the mountain other than a very sick Maserati, and one or two military vehicles also competing. Occasionally the event sweep car came up behind us probably indicating we were stone last.

Art wanted to get on to the autostrada and go directly to Rome, prior to getting on this damn mountain, but I told him absolutely not – that would be cheating. We were there to do 1 000 miles and that was exactly what we were going to do. I was also concerned we would be disqualified if we took the highway (apparently not the case). We finally arrived outside L'Aquila. I saw two old cars so we followed them. They too were clueless and we couldn't work out how to get into town. It turned out that the Porsche was being driven by Ferdinand

Porsche (Porsche's grandson). Art had to push-start Ferdinand, as his starter motor was dead.

We drove around some more in circles and eventually one of Ferdinand's mates came to find us and we got our stamp. Getting out of L'Aquila proved to be even more trying, some more circles and back to where we started. I began screaming at one of the officials stamping the Army vehicles. I explained that my family was from this region and I was embarrassed.

At Rieti, the stamp officials had shut up shop. Even though it was 2:30am, one of our convoy decided to find the man's house and wake him up to get a stamp, unsuccessfully. Art and I were exhausted and bordering on hypothermia. Our entrance into Rome was not what we had imagined. We were both looking forward to driving past the Colosseum, Castello and into Piazza San Pietro, instead we entered on the ring road lined with Roman prostitutes.

Art spotted the 'end of the race car' behind us, which meant we are still



in the race. Stone last, but still in. A man jumped into the road waving a Mille Miglia flag and indicated to us to turn right into a small airport. A temporary stamp tent had been set up for us and our card was stamped. We made it to Rome; the time was 4:00am. We finally got into bed at 4:45am, and slept for 1 hour and 15 minutes.

The relief of being able to continue the race, that and the first wrong turn out of Rome, losing us 45 minutes, woke us both up. We calmly found our way back to the right road and miraculously joined up with all the other cars. I didn't make any more navigation mistakes and the day went perfectly, racing through some of the most beautiful parts of Italy. The sun was shining, the crowds cheering and the previous day's nightmare forgotten. This is why the race is called the 'most beautiful race in the world'. Art says 'The Green Car' woke up and realised it was a race – eating up the open winding roads of Tuscany.

We arrived in Bologna spot on time at 10:30pm but did then manage to lose the 100-strong police bike motorcade. Doing the scenic route on pedestrian-only roads, we finally found our way

to the square in the centre where the cars were parked for the night. With no Mille Miglia officials in sight, I managed to find a security guard who explained how we could get to our hotel. Again speaking Italian was vital, considering the complete lack of organization. Art says it added to the uniqueness of the race. We got a good 5 hours sleep after our dinner of Pringles and water, raided from the mini bar.

The next morning disaster struck when the car wouldn't start. Art says I actually turned green. I tried to push-start the machine but nothing happened. The thought of not finishing with only 250 kays to go was too much to bear but then Art remembered he'd forgotten to turn the fuel pump on. And *voilà!* with another push, she started. The starter motor had died, but the engine was running and we were able to continue. After calming down, we had another perfect day and I even had cars following us, I was navigating so well.

We drove through Modena and Reggio Emilia and the beautiful Mantova with the bells ringing. Our car loved the speed but 20 kilometres outside Brescia, I asked Art to slow

down and he yelled back, "When am I ever going to be able to drive this fast again? Let me enjoy the last few minutes." I decided to stop back seat driving and leave him to cherish the last section.

We arrived in Brescia half an hour too early (now I knew why I had seen so many competitors stopping for coffee) so waited patiently for our turn to drive onto the podium. We finished the 4 day race bursting with pride. We made it in 4 days, 43 hours of driving, 8 hours of sleep and very little food, as number 368. It took nerves of steel, determination and dedication along with a passion for racing. I didn't know I had it in me, but am now hooked. The best 4 days of my life! I know Art will be doing it again and again, and I hope one day to be invited back to sit in the navigator's seat.

Our Mille Miglia is not just a story of beautiful scenery, cars and fast driving. The experience was made possible by so many special people: our families, friends, Triumph Club network and Saint Robert. And last but not least, the thousands of car-mad Italians who lined the streets. Your cheers will ring in our ears forever. 🇮🇹



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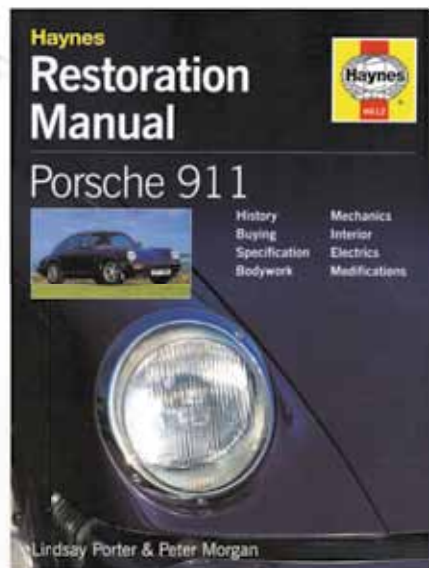
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MOMENTUM!

Words by Adrian Burford Images by Oliver Hirtenfelder and Adrian Burford

Thanks to Cornrights the wheels are painted, the engine bay touched up, and refabricated transmission tunnel properly sealed and repainted. It almost looks like a car from here ...

I'm between a rock and a hard place: James has got his licence, but hasn't got a car. If we had bought a Polo, Figo, or Brio some months back, he would've been merrily on his way, but instead Clever Dick here decided to build him an affordable classic....

Just for starters let me tell you that affordable classic is like military intelligence – mutually exclusive. Old cars, whether you're going to use one as a daily drive or as a genuine collectable, are always a WIP, or work in progress. They do need (and deserve) more pampering and attention, especially if you leave them exactly as they are.

That's why they needed more frequent servicing back then ... tappets to adjust, dwell angles to set, jets, carburettor pumps and needles and

seats that required regular adjusting, and engines which dirtied their oil more frequently. Some of those we can overcome – two worthwhile tweaks for any classic which will be used regularly (in my humble opinion), are electronic ignition and an electric fuel pump.

The good news, apart from the success on the licence front, is that the lad's passion for Project 2002 has been reignited in the last couple of months. Not only has he spent a few intensive sessions in the Evolution 2 workshop taking guidance and instruction from Alec Ceprnich's band of merry men, but he begs to drive *my* 2002 at every opportunity. That's a promising sign indeed. While the pace relative to the man-hours seems slow, there's been big progress.

The front suspension is powder-

coated and reassembled, and it should be sweet thanks to high density polyurethane bushes throughout and the Bilstein dampers/H&R spring combo. Replacement ball joints, tie rod ends and strut top bushes mean everything is new. It is all a very custom set-up now, and the radius arms head backwards and locate against the chassis rails, allowing unfettered space from the rack down to the steering arms. Correcting any possible bumpsteer issues we may have had as a result of the lowered suspension, is a set of beautifully-made spacers from Ireland Engineering in California, which fit below the strut and incline the angle of the steering rods downward. A 19 millimetre anti-roll bar, made just for us by Supreme Spring, has finished off the front.





The M44 engine has been fitted far back in the chassis to achieve clearances between the sump and the steering rack, which necessitated a complete redesign of the transmission tunnel. Once this was done it was back to Cornrights to have the metalwork refinished and make the necessary touch-ups in the engine bay. We're now ready to line it all with Thermo-Tec heat insulation and noise suppressant sheeting.

Working on cars can be therapeutic – as long as you don't do it for a living! In fact, that reasoning applies to many things, and as a person who spends his day at a keyboard, the opportunity to grab some spanners and get busy is incredibly fulfilling.

One of those fulfilling – and demanding tasks – was a complete rebuild of the heating and ventilation

system. While that sentence rolled off my keyboard effortlessly, it doesn't tell the entire story: in the end, three heater units were required to make a single good one, which now has at its heart a re-cored radiator.

Overhauling and revamping all the controls and the fan motor will hopefully mean air – at the right temperature and volume – will head effortlessly in the desired direction when instructed to do so, and the system will be as efficient as it was when new. Once again, careful assembly and attention to detail pay dividends. Or so we thought: a day after finalising everything, which included a strengthened mounting for the hot water valve (they're prone to break), the main casing of the heater box cracked, and then basically split in two.

Miraculously, we found a third casing in our parts stock and started again, and I can only reach the conclusion that the brake fluid I used to help insert sealing grommets around the radiator inlet and outlet attacked the plastic causing a crack which then went walkabout.

As we went to press the power plant was about to go back in for the final time and in preparation had been dressed for the occasion with service items courtesy of Autobarn, and a new belt tensioner and drive pulleys courtesy of Schaeffler (who also supplied our LuK clutch). Now to get Gavin Ross from Norbrake to trek across from the Far East and make a call on the brakes and boosters... 📺

Follow our progress on our Facebook page: BMW 2002 Youth Project.



Van Breda chasing Jon Ekerold on another Suzuki 500 twin around Hesketh.



Old race bikes don't die – they just change owners a lot and, if they're lucky, end up in the hands of enthusiasts who look after them better than the champions who raced them.

Gavin Foster tells the story of a very well-travelled Suzuki TR500 twin.

TRACKING RECORD

The first air-cooled 500cc Suzuki factory racer – called the XRo5 – made its debut at Daytona in 1968. Using a Norton Featherbed-inspired frame, it could reach about 220km/h in a straight line, but inspired terror in the hearts of those who tried to ride it fast around corners. Still, the bikes – then still relatively mildly tuned versions of the Suzuki Cobra street machine – proved reliable, finishing 5th and 8th out of a field of 80 at Daytona that year. By the end of 1972, when the bike shown here was offloaded with another at Durban harbour, horsepower had been upped from 63.5bhp to 71.5, and top speed was just over 240km/h. The lucky riders to whom the two factory racers were allocated were future World Champion Jon Ekerold, and Les van Breda, who had won the '71 SA 1000cc championship on an older version of the same machine, and finished second to Kork Ballington's fearsome Kawasaki triple in '72.

"The first time I rode the earlier 1970 ex-Gillie Cruse bike was at Killarney in

Cape Town," remembers Les. "There was a factory memo saying that there was a problem with the pistons, and they needed to be machined around the gudgeon pins. I was never told about this, though, and the bike kept seizing. I kept jetting it richer and richer but it still seized. Eventually I was told what the problem was, after about a dozen rebuilds, and we fitted new barrels and new machined pistons." The newer bike was perfect from the word go, though and things went well; Les won the SA Formula 750 title on the air-cooled Suzuki twin in 1973. "Ekerold broke his wrist mid-season and lent his bike to Ballington, but I'm glad to say that neither of them ever beat me on it!" he remembers.

The Suzuki duo's real moment of glory came in the international South African Tourist Trophy series that same year, though, when Les tested his and its mettle against the best that the world had to offer – Giacomo Agostini, Barry Sheene, Yorkshireman Mick Grant and John Cooper were just a few of the Grand Prix stars who headed south to

compete. The first race, at Roy Hesketh in Pietermaritzburg, was preceded by a shorter race that saw all of the TT entrants line up on the grid. "I passed works rider John Cooper around the outside at Angels on the second-last lap and won ahead of Ekerold, who passed him near the end," Les remembers. "I don't know what happened to Agostini – I think he fell off. Then in the TT I had a terrible start but got past Ago on the 7th or 8th lap. I was leading by a long way until the back end of my expansion box fell off – I'd scraped through the metal in the corners, and the bike wouldn't rev any more. Mick Grant got past me a couple of times and on the last lap he passed me on the straight, leaving me with a second place." The second and final round was at Kyalami, and Ago led that race from start to finish, with Les taking another second. "I won the series overall and was presented with the Dickie Dale trophy because of my two second places," he remembers.

Les took delivery of a new water-cooled Suzuki 500 for 1974, and the old air-cooled machine changed hands a

couple of times before ending up in then Rhodesia, where it was campaigned by local champion John Warburton in 1975 and '76. Warburton and his family left the country in '82, when they realised just how bad Mad Bob Mugabe would be for the country, and the Suzuki went with them.

"I first heard rumours of an old Suzuki racing machine lying under a cover in a dusty corner of a garage in Gaborone, Botswana, from a friend who was a travelling salesman", says Philip de Gruchy, who years later bought the bike. "At first I thought it was just a modified T500 production machine similar to the one which I had ridden in Classic racing events from 1987 to 1990, but from the description I was given I felt sure this might be the real thing. I negotiated for the bike and bought it without actually having seen it, and it was subsequently smuggled across the border back into South Africa and delivered to my Johannesburg home in June 1992. It was in rather a sad and neglected state, but at least it was complete and mostly original - it even came with spare barrels, heads, pistons, clutch plates and the factory parts list." The bike, which has a welded frame that Les remembers being necessitated by a fracture caused by vibration, still has the Ceriani front brake that he fitted in an attempt to get it stopping better. De Gruchy got to work, and three years after the bike came home the restoration was complete. It's since moved on, I believe to a collector in Europe.

There's an interesting story attached to the way the Suzuki found its way into Zimbabwe. Clive Strugnell, who used to run the Suzuki racing team in South Africa, says that after Les took delivery of the new water-cooled 500 he entered it in a race in Salisbury, and Clive went along for the ride. So did the old air-cooled machine. "Les had started campaigning his new water-cooled TR500, and I was to race the air-cooled model later owned by Philip. In practice the water-cooled bike ran

its crank bearings, and Les, myself and Mickey Chalom, a Suzuki dealer from South Africa who went with us on this weekend race trip, fitted a new one at the deserted circuit by the light of our car's headlights." Les van Breda remembers the occasion well. "I was the only one who was technically qualified to do the job, and we finished at about 4:00 a.m., so I was pretty tired on race-day," he says. "In those days your mechanics were your buddies who just went with to get pissed and help pay for the petrol. If you asked them to change a tyre they got annoyed because you were interfering with their drinking time!"

"I had never even sat on a racing two-stroke, never mind having raced one, but I loved the air-cooled TR, and



Les van Breda aboard the Suzuki TR500.

rode it as much as I could during open practice," continues Clive. "The circuit in Salisbury was brand new and very abrasive, and I used up the only set of slick tyres we had before the official qualifying practice, so we fitted a set of Dunlop TT100 tyres from Les's production racing Suzuki GT750. To tell the truth, I couldn't really feel the difference between them and the racing slicks, and qualified third behind Les on the water-cooled six-speed TR500 and the Rhodesian champion at the time, Geoff Downing, on a factory Kawasaki H1R 500. In the race itself I made a complete mess of the start, which was a push start, and by the time the bike fired I was almost a full lap behind. Anyway, I had a wonderful

time making my way through the field, and finished about fourth or fifth. Les won, and Downing was second. All the local riders were really interested in our two Suzukis, and regarded them as factory exotica!"

"About a year later I received a phone call from one of the Rhodesian riders, Roy Hill, who wanted to know if I would find out from Van Breda if the air-cooled TR was for sale. Les was only too glad to be able to sell it, and a deal was agreed. The big problem was how to get the bike into Rhodesia, which was subject to trade sanctions from the West and also had a very strict import policy. As the country was technically at war, luxury imports were completely banned. I was competing in the South African national motocross championship at the time, so I took the Suzuki and packed in the back of a caravan as spare parts for a Honda CR250 Elsinore MX bike. In order to fit the two bikes into the caravan and convince the customs that I had only one bike in the back I stripped the Elsinore completely and packed it into the caravan cupboards. I then took the Suzuki decals off the TR and replaced them with the Honda winged decals! This plan worked completely, and the buyer, Roy Hill, got his TR500. Things have now gone a full circle; the bike's back in SA, I later owned the water-cooled TR500, and Roy Hill now lives in South Africa just two blocks away from me in a Benoni."

As in most ancient items of historical interest, there are a few grey areas in the Suzuki TR500's provenance. Les van Breda's bike was raced, crashed, blown up and rebuilt more times than he'd care to remember, and somewhere along the way a fair number of parts may have been replaced and swapped with bits and pieces of the earlier model he still had. Still, in its heart and soul remain distant memories of epic battles with some of the best riders in the world on state-of-the-art works machines. As track records go, that's hard to beat. **Q**

WINGS



Peter Kernick (Maurer MM82).



Mike Ward (Reynard 863).

Single-seater racing saw the change of season at the Kyalami SCC Spring Races on 23 August, with the Knottsberry Foods Formula Libre/Monoposto grid housing 30 cars of all descriptions.

By AJ Kernick
Images by Dave Hastie

In a testament to months of background work we also saw the second round of the Wings and Slicks (WAS) series taking to the legendary circuit's black stuff. New to the class were the Formula Atlantic Chevrons of Colin Frost – ably driven by single-seater doyen Bernard Tillanus and the experienced Neil Lobb. Having undergone full rebuilds back to period specification and colour schemes this pair exemplify what the purpose of preservation the WAS group sets out to do for Formula 5000, Formula 2, Formula Atlantic, Formula 3, Formula Ford 2000 and similar cars from pre-1986.



Neil Lobb (Chevron Formula Atlantic).



What it is all about - Wings and Slicks.



John McKurcher (Modus Formula Atlantic).



Bernard Tilanus (Chevron Formula Atlantic).

The balance of the field had former Formula Atlantic Racer Mike Schmidt reunited with his former ride – the Pretoria Brick Ralt RT4 now owned by Barry Scott. Peter Kernick had his ex-Bepe Gabiani/Tony Martin Maurer MM82 Formula 2 on track, while Colin Ellison drove an imported Ralt RT4, and Mike Ward and Michelle Scott piloted a pair of Reynard 863 Formula 3s. John McKurcher was there with his Modus Formula Atlantic along with Kevin Oldfield in his Pilbeam FF2000. Sean Harrington's DAW MK2 Formula GTi, possibly one of very few still running added to the spectacle.

Reg Anderson raced his Swift

Formula GTi as his Maurer MM83 Formula Atlantic is still undergoing restoration. John Maurien and Paul Schultz were the balance of invited drivers in their Formula GTis.

Sadly this splendid field was to fall foul of 'newly rebuilt and untried cars syndrome' with engine maladies spoiling the party, however going forward the list of Formula 2 and Atlantic cars being restored at the moment should see the field burgeon during 2015. And there are some exciting machines like the McLaren Formula 5000 of Rennie McRory, a seasoned Formula Ford racer of the '70s and '80s.

The Formula Monoposto race saw some excellent racing with a mix of Formula GTi, Formula Ford/Zetek/Duratek, Formula Vee and to add some class, Historic Air-cooled Formula Vee cars. The Formula M brigade was there with a selection of classes A, B and C cars.

At the end of the day, after some really close racing this testament to Northern Regions Club Single Seater racing demonstrated the 'Fast but friendly' slogan of Knottsberry Foods Formula Libre Racing with a pit housing just shy of 50 single-seater cars, with former racing legends reminiscing at the sight of their old race cars. 🏁



Patrick Gearing (Alfa Giulia) leads the pre66 field around a very wet Phakisa Freeway.



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Du Toit and Lindenberg Daytona Cobras making rooster tails at the front of the pack.



Franco Scribante (Porsche 911) tip-toeing in unseasonal weather.



Theo van Vuuren (BMW 2002) hunting down Kobus Britz (Porsche 911).





RISEN FROM THE GRAVE

Regular reader **Mick Russell** recounts the interesting history of a rare 1968 Triumph TR5 that resides in the Eastern Cape.

Currently owned by East London resident Geoff Kriel, this is one of only three still on the road in South Africa, which is not surprising when you consider that only 1161 right-hand drive versions were built by the Standard Motor Company in England.

The chassis and elegant streamlined body, designed by Giovanni Michelotti, houses the 150hp 2.5-litre straight six engine, which with a trio of side draught carburetors, makes it a real pleasure to drive. And it is still capable of achieving 190km/h, although at current petrol prices you don't want to go there too often. Currently valued at R730 000 in concours trim, it's not surprising that


Geoff makes every effort to keep the car in pristine condition.

This particular car was dug out of the mud after the Laingsburg flood disaster in 1981, was then stripped and rebuilt in Johannesburg over a three-year period. It won Gold in the d'Elegance section at the Triumph National Concours competition in Plettenberg Bay in 2012 and was bought shortly thereafter by Geoff.

The only components required to bring the car fully up to its original factory configuration are a Lucas fuel injection system and a 4-speed overdrive gearbox. These are neatly stored in the workshop but an original steering wheel seems to be almost impossible to find.

No stranger to rebuilding Triumph

motorcars, Geoff won the Concours d'Elegance event in 2008 with his 1969 TR6 in Bloemfontein and then, again with the same car, won the Concours at the Drakensberg Nationals in 2010. A Triumph GT6 Mk11 rebuilt by him also won 'Most desirable car on show' in a concours event in 2012.

He is currently also working on a 1956 TR3. With no further plans for entering competitions at present, he will continue to just enjoy cruising around the countryside in his Surrey-Topped TR5. A Surrey Top is the name given to the roof system where the rigid centre panel is removable. Launched on the TR4 in 1961 this beat Porsche and its Targa by five years to being the first production car fitted with such. 

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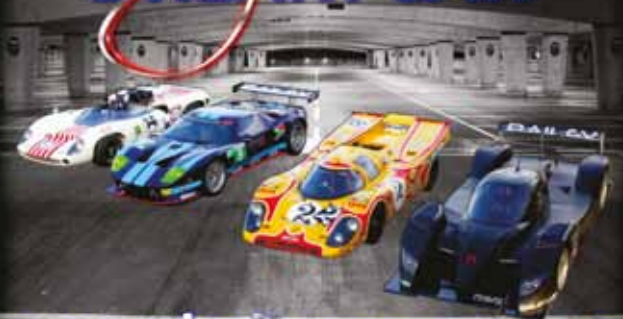
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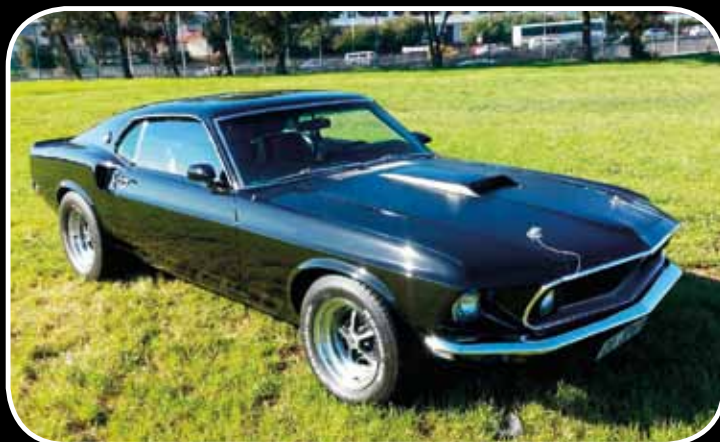
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same silver centre with 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 round the dial in the same size numbers in white. I need this to complete my restoration. Ken Dugmore 083 7234594
sunnydalesalt@gmail.com.

1968 BMW 2002 front windscreen. Contact; Dave van der Westhuizen. At dave@dalgen.co.za or 082 870 2291.



HARRIS 4 SURE

I must add my support to Bruce Hall's suggestion in his letter published in the June/July issue to interview Charles Harris when you finally make it to East London. Hopefully you can twist his arm to do an article on the awesome Harris 4. In the 1960s when the biggest Japanese bikes around were the two-cylinder 350 Yamahas and the 350 Hondas, he stole a march on the Japanese by building a 500cc four cylinder two-stroke using Yamaha TD1 components. Here are some photos taken at the East London GP circuit. Number 84, with Ian Scheckter at the helm is a later photo with twin front

discs fitted. May your magazine go from strength to strength.

Kind regards

Enrico Contardo

Thanks, Enrico. I have added Charles Harris to my now extensive list for an Eastern Cape expedition. As I mentioned before, it might be a long visit and in all likelihood will only just scratch the surface. But keep the suggestions coming. We love them!

Stuart

SUPER STARS

I enjoyed the piece on my late old mate Leon Baillon, viz. East African Safari. I was wondering if you guys managed to get hold of Sally March, wife of my other mate Nick March (sadly Nick passed away week before last). I spoke to her and she was keen to help and has a lot of photos of Nick's rally days. Nick was a very good driver in his day, contracted to the Peugeot works team.

Interestingly Nick's brother in Wales was a hillclimb specialist and had two Bugattis that he campaigned. I am not sure what his first name was, but interestingly I recently saw a Tony March interviewed on *A to Z of Motorsport* on TV; it may well be the brother.

I was sorry you guys were not told of Baillon's experiences with Eric Carlson, the works Saab man (married to Pat Moss) on the Safari. I am not sure

whether Leon was hired to do recce with Carlson or navigate the whole Safari. He recounted terrifying stories of rolling three cars in practice, and of Eric's alarming style of weaving the steering wheel from side to side even at 100mph, and when asked by Leon why, remarked, "I like to keep the car light so that I can lift the left or right of the car over any obstacle that may crop up on the road." Very alien to the Kenya boys of that era.

I can remember going up to the SA Grand Prix at Kyalami in the early '70s with Nick and Leon (Nick being my neighbour when I was farming in Greytown) leaving very early in the pouring rain, Leon nonchalantly smoking his pipe and Nick sliding on the tar at 80/90mph with the lights shining onto the armco and myself speechless with terror in the back. I met many famous names with the two of them, like Vic Preston and

Paul Hawkins – a great mate of Leon's was Innes Ireland.

I don't know if you know of old man Frank Cope, a great eccentric character in SA motorcycling, who lost his life eventually at 75 years of age after a crash at Hesketh? His old works 250 Norton has just been sold for a large amount at a Bonhams auction, and quite a good history of bike and rider was told. I remember going to the PE 200 with the late Eddie English who came rushing into the pit lane on his BSA Goldstar in practice. The pits had not been swept yet and were full of gravel, people were picking up bikes and running away when Ed went down the road. Old Uncle Frank was at the end warming the Norton and never flinched, let the Norton die, and looking down at Ed, now lying at his feet said, "You'll break your crown, my boy." He was much loved by all the riders in

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those days and I remember guys running to help him offload the Norton from the trailer behind his Austin Princess. He won a handicap race at Hesketh aged 73 - must be a record for longevity in motorcycle racing. He came out here after his competition licence was allegedly withdrawn at the age of 53 in the UK. He was a veteran of the TT. I think it would be an interesting story, don't you?

Lost another good mate the same week as Nick March - Martin White from PMB. He was the wild man of motocross who shared the 500cc title with Charlie Tissen. Some very funny things come to mind: He arrived in PE having just got a works Yamaha ride, got off the plane and was taken straight to the track to ride the new bike. The organisers were pretty miffed when he jumped right over Jimmy Aird out from the UK, hitting him on the head with the back wheel. Aird refused to ride with madmen and buggered off.

Martin went on to ride enduros and was unbeatable for 9 years pre-the Alfie Cox era. He and I, along with Glen Bavistock and Keith Packett, founded the WFO enduro club, still very strong after about 30 years. I used to set the Greytown enduro, a 150km one lap. The first one had heavy rain the night before where Martin White won out of a field of 120-odd riders after riding the whole course with a flat back tyre - good traction but scary on the fast sections. I remember invited Transvaal rider Kenny Scholdhamer (newly crowned Roof of Africa winner) throwing his mount down on being passed on an impossible section by Martin saying: "How can you beat that?"

Ja! Stuart, old age is a bugger, when all you have left are the memories.

Keep up the good work. I really enjoy your magazine.

Ian Hardman

Hi Ian. Thanks for the kind words and entertaining memories. I haven't made contact with Sally March yet but will be sure to do that. I will also follow up and get our bike man Gavin Foster to look into the other story ideas you mention. From your letter it seems like we could fill the magazine for years to come. Personalities are what make the old banger bikes and cars come to life.

Stuart

CLASSIC TIMESHARE

Ever since I was a little boy I was a Ford Cortina fan with a preference for the Mark 1 versions. I did grow up and became an Alfa fanatic but yet still with a lingering longing to own a classic Cortina. However, my ownership ambitions are limited not by finance but rather by my mechanical knowledge as well as time constraints that would not allow me to do justice to mechanically maintain the vehicle.

This then brought an idea into play: Is there not a place in the classic car community where somebody like me could buy a share in a classic Cortina? Thereby, the owners can share the capital outlay, maintenance, restoration, insurance and running cost. The 'mechanical shareholder' would then be compensated for work done to the vehicle. A similar approach could obviously work for many classics and enthusiasts.

Regards,
Albert de Beer

Hello Albert. Not a bad idea at all. I know of some supercar clubs that offer exotic cars to members for a monthly fee so perhaps it could be applied to the classics. I also know of collectors

out there who have more cars than they can drive, so it could well be an idea for them to adopt to give their cars a regular run. Classic cars like to be used. As and when I hear of anything like this I will run a snippet in the magazine.

Stuart



3 HOUR BIKES 9 HOUR CARS

Keep up the good work at CPCA. You clearly love your job.

I enjoyed your recent article about your bicycle restoration. About five years ago I found an old DHC (Deale & Huth Cycles) tandem that was made in SA in the early 1970s. I restored it and then a mate and I 'raced' it in the 94.7 and, although we had to stop briefly to alleviate butt pain (we only practised once before the event), we still scraped

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in in just under 3 hours.

Since then the bike has been in storage. If you want to do another article on a classic bike in the future, please feel free to buzz me and I shall dig it out. The DHC story is an interesting saga, although a die-hard car enthusiast might not like you giving too much coverage to bicycles though!

On the subject of classic cars, I have discovered something very interesting that you may want to research and run an article on for your readers of our generation (and younger). Some time ago you suggested that it would be good idea if more great South African racing cars from our past were recreated. This got me thinking because I had an old Renault R8 in storage. I have subsequently started work on recreating the 1968 Kyalami 9 Hour, Class A winning (and first Touring Car for that matter), Renault Gordini that was driven by Scamp Porter and Chris Swanepoel.

In researching the livery for my project (and the other cars that raced in that era, especially from 1967 to 1972) I have noticed something interesting that the older generation (that is, the fellows who were adults at that time) will take for granted but which our generation have no clue about. I have seen that all the cars appear to have been fitted with decals/stickers that are the same. In other words, they appear to have been supplied by the organisers/sponsors of the event. The most common stickers, which are all identical, are (1) Shell, (2) Firestone and (3) Champion.

What is most interesting is that the drivers' name stickers are also all identical (size and colour, that is) on the various cars from year to year. In 1968 the name stickers were all green with yellow font. The colours seemed to have changed every year. In 1972, for example, they were red with white font. With many of the photos from that era being black and white, it is difficult to spot this if you don't know about it.

I came to pick this phenomenon up by



MILITARY MOTORING

Thank you so much for the write-up on Brian Ferreira. It brought back a few memories and was a sad day when he died.

I was in the army with him (CT Highlanders) in the early '60s. A bunch of us were the drivers of our platoon: Brian drove one of the officers around in a Land Rover, I drove a Bedford.

The enclosed picture was taken one Saturday afternoon at our camp in Walvis Bay. The dog wandered into the camp and befriended Brian so he decided to dress it up. It was quite happy and had a pair of army issue 'santamarias' on as shorts.

During one of our three-week camps in Oudtshoorn we needed to be transported to the vehicle park to collect our vehicles - our transport was a 3 ton Ford truck, Brian was the elected driver. He drove this thing cross country like he was on a World Rally Championship event. Everyone in the back was standing and hanging on to the railings but we all knew that Brian was in control.

The next year our three week camp was at Tempe outside Bloem. Brian rocked up in the Mini which he was

busy building up. I seem to remember that he had been 'up north' somewhere to do some development work on it and was still running it in. It really was a good-looking machine with its green and gold stripes on each side of the bonnet, and at races it was always immaculately turned out.

He was lovely person.

Thank you again

Regards
Michael Guy

P.S. Brian von Hage was also with us at the time; I remember well his Anglia. The last I heard was that he had gone pig farming.

*Hi Brian. I can't take the credit for the article on Brian Ferreira - those honours go to Ryno Verster, a serious Mini collector and the man behind the book **Thanks for the Mini Memories - A South African Mini Story**. The Ferreira story is an excerpt from another Mini book he wants to publish about Minis and Mini drivers in local motorsport. Thank you for the support.*

Stuart

examining pictures of models of famous cars that raced in the 9 Hour. So, for example, if you look at the pictures of the two models attached, you will see that two of the Ferraris that raced in 1968 (a P412 and a P350) both had the large green and yellow stickers with the names of the drivers that appear to have come from the same supplier. (It's a good way of dating pictures, especially if they are in colour.)

Notice that the Hawkins/Love P350 has the standard Shell and Champion (with spark plug) stickers as well. The 1968 Porter/Swanepoel Gordini had the same Shell and Champion stickers, as well as the Firestone stickers. (You have a photo of it in your October/November 2013 edition which clearly shows the same stickers and the large name stickers that take up the whole front door.)

On my Gordini we have fitted 7-inch wheels at the back and made some changes to the rear suspension. Some photos of the engine are also attached. As the saying goes: 'Slowly, slowly catch the monkey.' I want this car to look good as a tribute to Scamp Porter's achievements and at the same time I'm trying to keep as much of the patina on the car as I can so that it doesn't look like it just came out of the factory. When it's finished, it will be fitting that you do a track test/photo shoot and run an article on it, seeing as the idea had its genesis with you. (On condition that you don't drive it as fast as you drive your Merc 280!)

Kind regards

Philip Pritchard

Hi Phillip. It is interesting that I often have to remind people that for the large part I picture the 9 Hour in black and white because I have only really been exposed to old photos. It is worth going onto www.motoprint.co.za to see the era you talk about in colour. David Pearson has managed to date and identify his massive collection which aids research. We will wait for a response to this letter

as to who supplied the stickers and how the colours were determined but I would guess the organisers handed them out. I will definitely take you up on the Renault test, having bought an R8 years back to do the same as you, but resources meant flogging it before it ever turned a wheel in anger.

While researching the Rudge bicycle, I realised we have a large bike industry and a number of manufacturers. I am sure the car guy will not mind the odd

insert on this, especially when you see how many top racers excelled in pedal-powered competition – the likes of Jan Hettema, Andy Terlouw, Mario Lupini and Geniel de Villiers spring to mind and I think Prost competes in the Epic now and then. Franschoek Motor Museum took over a number of bikes from the Heidelberg Museum, which must be worth a look at.

I will be in touch.

Stuart



HARD CHARGING MG

I am the owner of the last of the three South African MG Specials built by Harry Pierce, which I race with the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association in the UK and Europe.

Obviously, the car has an XPAG engine and, equally obviously to me at least, the car would probably have run in period with a supercharged engine because supercharging XPAGs then was so common and an easy way to get more power, especially given the altitude of many of the circuits in South Africa.

The problem I have is a complete lack of evidence (written or photographic) that the car had a supercharger, but I am still looking!

The attached page from *Classic Car Africa* magazine in November 2001 has an editorial comment which refers to an article in the November-December 1989 edition of *Fine Cars* which might give a potential lead but I have been unable to track down a copy.

Also, I was told some time ago that Harry Pierce's family still has his

scrap book, which could have relevant photographs in it, but I have no idea who to contact.

Any help in establishing more of the history of this car, and if it was supercharged, would be very gratefully received. As for the car, she had a great run at Zandvoort in Holland last weekend, until the head gasket cried "Enough!" halfway through the second race.

Best regards

James Willis

*It is brilliant to hear that one of our local cars is still carving up the tracks and giving the exotics a tough time, James. Although I am aware of the Pierce cars I could not comment on whether or not a supercharger was ever used. I have forwarded your mail on to the local MG Special gurus for comment. In the meantime I will pull out the old *Fine Car* magazines and see what I can find. All the best with making it a real giant killer.*

Stuart



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