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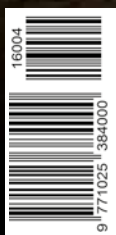
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THE SPICE OF LIFE

2016 has got off to a flyer with classic racing across the land and car shows and meets almost every weekend – and it is set to continue as we head into autumn. To plan your motoring diary, view our classic calendar on page 8. If there is an event not listed please feel free to drop us a mail with the details and we will add it to the ever-evolving calendar. A brief outline and image is also welcomed to run as a news snippet on our website.

Our April/May issue is an eclectic mix of machines and ages across the spectrum. Mike Monk looks at an often forgotten Opel Olympia of 1950 before jumping forward in time to the technologically-advanced Honda NSX of the early 1990s. Graeme Hurst gives away his age as he recalls catching a glimpse of a Mercedes-Benz R107 SL on the TV show *Dallas* in his story on the iconic drop-top Merc. He then gets his research skills racing with a look at the fascinating South African-built Jennings Porsche racer, which featured a desirable 4-cam engine in the rear during the period. Having been sidelined for years, this car is now



undergoing a restoration and Graeme will keep us in the loop as to how the project progresses.

Our cover story features some muscle in the form of the Chevrolet SS and Holden Monaro pairing. Of course the Holden hails from Australia, and because the South African Chevy SS is based so closely on the Holden, the South African cars are sadly leaving SA at a scary rate as the value of our currency plummets. We did manage to find a car that could well have originally been sold in Australia but somehow found its way here – a Honda 1300 Coupe 9. Nope, we'd never heard of it either but the ingenuity and styling had us wanting more.

To keep the eclectic theme going I took a Triumph Vitesse cabriolet for a summer-loving spin and then got to work behind the wheel of a proper workhorse – a Model AA truck. Variety is the spice of life, that's for sure. Putting the articles together made for a fun-filled few weeks and we hope you enjoy. Feel free to contact us via email, snail mail or the 'Submit your ride' tab on www.classiccarafrika.com.

Stuart

SEFAC & A1

The Southern Equatorial Ferrari Automobili Club (SEFAC) recently invited members to a visit to FMM for lunch, a museum tour and an introduction to a proposed new single-seater racing series planned for SA. No less than 29 *Cavallino Rampante* from around the country were given an opportunity to exercise their thoroughbred nature and the sights and sounds were impressive. Adding to the colourful setting, two Ferraris from FMM's classic collection were put on static display. As part of the proceedings, a special presentation at the gathering was made by Afrix Motorsport, a South African organisation that has acquired all the cars, parts, jigs, etc of the international A1 Grand Prix racing series that took place between 2005 and 2010. The cars are effectively the 2004 Ferrari F1 car, which was designed by South African Rory Byrne. For the new series, they will be powered by a race-tuned version of the 4.5-litre Ferrari 458 engine. A number of races are being scheduled for November 2016 to March 2017 (the European off-season) and it is



hoped the series will attract both local and overseas teams and drivers. At present, races have been pencilled-in for Kyalami and Phakisa with a street circuit in Port Elizabeth and events in Durban and Botswana also being discussed.

Updates on progress of this exciting endeavour can be obtained by registering via the www.afrixmotorsport.com website.



SUN AUTHOR STILL SHINING

While on a short visit to Cape Town with his wife Jenny, Ken Stewart, co-author of the bible of SA's early racing history *Sun on the Grid* as well as founding co-editor of *Classic Car Africa* and *Fine Cars*, visited FMM for a guided tour of the exhibits. Ken is a world-renowned Maserati aficionado as well as a leading authority on pre- and early-postwar cars and motor sport in South Africa. The octogenarian's memory has not dimmed,

and his knowledge and personal recollections of many of the older cars shown to him by museum curator Wayne Harley were impressive, and he happily signed the museum library's copy of *Sun on the Grid*. Ken and Jenny, who typed the manuscript for *Sun on the Grid*, live in Port Elizabeth where Ken continues to attend EPVCC functions and still busies himself with automotive research.

SIMPLY RED

Currently on view in Hall D are 20 of the museum's sportiest red machines. The exhibits are: 1937 Maserati 6CM, 1947 Alfa Romeo 6C, 1948 Maserati 4CLT, 1950 Jaguar XK120 Lightweight, 1955 Moretti 750S, 1955 Aston Martin DB3S, 1956 Maserati 150S, 1956 Austin-Healey 100/4, 1960 Ferrari 250GT Nembo Spyder, 1961 Ferrari 250 SWB, 1965 Porsche 912, 1966 Ferrari 275 GTB Long-nose, 1967 Ford GT40, 1969 Alfa Romeo 1750 GTV, 1971 McLaren M6 GTR, 1984 Ferrari 288 GTO, 1987 Ferrari F40, 1991 Alfa Romeo SZ, 1995 Ferrari F50 and 2002 Ferrari Enzo. The display will be on view for the next couple of months.



CRUYWAGEN CALLS



Celebrated Afrikaans television personality and voice artist Riaan Cruywagen and his family recently paid a visit to FMM and made the most of their time at L'Ormarins. A guided tour of the exhibits included sitting at the wheel of the 1956 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing. Riaan has been associated with the SABC since 1975 and made over 7 000 news broadcasts before signing-off in November 2012. Riaan is also well remembered for his voice-over role of *Haas Das se Nuuskas*.

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, log on to www.fmm.co.za. The Franschhoek Motor Museum is situated on the L'Ormarins Estate along the R45 in the Franschhoek Valley in the Western Cape. Opening hours are: April to November – Monday to Friday 10h00 to 17h00 (last admittance 16h00), Saturday and Sunday 10h00 to 16h00 (last admittance 15h00). December to March – 10h00 to 18h00 (last admittance 17h00) every day. The museum is open on most public holidays except Christmas Day. Admission prices are R60 adults, R50 pensioners and motor club members (with membership ID), R30 children (ages 3-12). Guided tours are available upon request at no charge. An on-site delicatessen offers refreshments and tasting of L'Ormarins estate wines is also available.

CLASSIC

CAR AFRICA

Classic 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 bring back the memories of

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MAKE A — DATE —

We will continually update the 2016 events calendar. To submit your club event for publication in the magazine as well as on our website (www.classiccarafrika.com) please submit details along with an image or two to stuart@classiccarafrika.com.

APRIL

3	Angela's Picnic	Delta Park
9	Midas Historic Tour – Zwartkops Raceway	Pretoria
9	Keith's Picnic - Supertubes Park	Jeffreys Bay
24	Liefie Bosch Memorial Trial	Port Elizabeth

MAY

1	Potch Motor Show	Potchefstroom
1	Knysna Classic & Sports Car Show	Knysna
6–8	Jaguar Simola Hillclimb	Simola, Knysna
8	Buick, Oldsmobile, Pontiac Show	Johannesburg
14–16	Centenary Car Club KZN Meander	Pietermaritzburg
15	Pietermaritzburg Cars in the Park	Ashburton
20	Fragram Natal Classic Motorcycles	Drakensville
22	Kolonnade Cars on the Roof	Kolonnade Retail Park, Pretoria

JUNE

4	Mampoer Rally	Pretoria/Cullinan
4	Midas Historic Tour – Dezzi Raceway	Port Shepstone
12	Milligan Time Trial and Tour	Port Elizabeth
12	DJ Remembrance Run	Johannesburg
16–18	MacGregor Maluti Meander	Fouriesburg
18	Vryheid Old Car Show	Vryheid
19	Lowveld Cars in the Park	Nelspruit
25	Cars at the Mall	Rustenburg
26	Blairgowrie Toy Fair	Blairgowrie

JULY

2	Midas Historic Tour – Phakisa Freeway	Welkom
2–3	1000 Bike Show	Germiston
12	Goodwill Run	Krugersdorp
17	Scottburgh Classic Car Show	Scottburgh
24	VVC Parkhurst Street Scene	Parkhurst
31	POMC Cars in the Park	Pretoria



AUGUST

6	Midas Historic Tour – Kyalami Racetrack	Midrand
9	Old Auto Club Welkom Cars in the Park	Bloemfontein
10-13	SAVVA & Magnum National Rally	Mpumalanga
28	Ferdi's Swap Meet	Midrand

SEPTEMBER

3	Wheels at the Vaal	Vanderbijlpark
10	Midas Historic Tour – Phakisa Freeway	Welkom
18	Piston Ring Swap Meet	Modderfontein
24	SAVVA National Drive It Day	National
25	Whales & Wheels Show	Hermanus
25	Blairgowrie Toy Fair	Blairgowrie

OCTOBER

2	Classics in the Bay	Hout Bay
8	Midas Historic Tour – Zwartkops Raceway	Pretoria
30	Studebaker Show Day	Irene

NOVEMBER

6-8	Fairest Cape Tour	Cape Town
19	Midas Historic Tour – Kyalami Racetrack	Midrand
27	Blairgowrie Toy Fair	Blairgowrie

MONTHLY MUST DO EVENTS

1 st Saturday of the month	Classic Motorcycle Club of Natal	Bluff, Durban
1 st Sunday of the month	Classic Motorcycle Club Johannesburg	Germiston, Johannesburg
2 nd Sunday of the month	Pretoria Old Motor Club	Silverton, Pretoria
3 rd Sunday of the month	Piston Ring	Modderfontein, Johannesburg
3 rd Saturday of the month	Cape Vintage Motorcycle Club	Parow North, Cape Town
Last Sunday of the month	Vintage and Veteran Club	Athol Oaklands, Johannesburg
Last Sunday of the month	Southern Cape Old Car Club	Glenwood, George
Last Sunday of the month	The Crankhandle Club	Wynberg, Cape Town
Last Sunday of the month	The Veteran Car Club of South Africa	Kloof, KwaZulu Natal



100 YEARS OF SHEER DRIVING PLEASURE

Early March saw BMW turn 100 years old. To celebrate a century of existence the company revealed a concept car known as the 'Vision Next 100' which, while paying homage to the past, focused more on the future and promised both autonomous and manual driving options. To you and me that means a car that drives itself. Or if you still get your kicks from being at the wheel,

that option remains. Will the slogan change from 'Sheer driving pleasure' to 'Sheer driven pleasure'?

Back from the future, classic fans can celebrate with BMW the featured marque at the 2016 Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion, which will take place from 18 to 21 August at Laguna Seca in California.

CARS RACING TRAINS & PLANES

In the spirit of the Bentley versus the Blue Train race which blasted through France in March 1930, the Vintage and Veteran Club will stage its own car against locomotive battle. Starting at high noon on Saturday 4 June a bevy of the VVC's finest cars will take on one of the Reef Steamers vintage steam trains and the Magaliesburg mountain range. If this was not enough of a thrill then add in a bunch of Tiger Moth aeroplanes to the mix and feel the goosebumps coming on in full force.

A 2 kilometre stretch of the R24 that runs parallel with the railway will allow for amazing photography before the cars join the loco at Magaliesburg Station for a breather. From there the train heads home while the cars drive through to join the bi-planes at the Orient Airfield.

For more information log on to www.vintageandveteranclub.co.za.



LOWVELD LOVING

Join *Classic Car Africa* as we make our way to the Nelspruit Cars in the Park this June. We leave Johannesburg on 17 June and head for Mpumalanga, exploring some of the best roads and scenery South Africa has to offer, before booking into the Hazeyview Protea Hotel for the night. Saturday 18 June is a day of exploration and classic car driving in your own time or as a group. We will have route guides to take you to the likes of Long Tom Pass, Schoemanskloof Pass and God's Window. All of these are outstanding drives with quality tarmac, numerous photo opportunities, eateries, curio shops and historical significance. For sundowners and dinner we head back to the Protea Hotel. The plan for Sunday 19 June is to get an early start, toast all the dads on Father's Day and trundle into Nelspruit for the Cars in the Park classic car show. Having kicked a few tyres, filled stomachs and enjoyed the Lowveld classic car scene we will head back to Gauteng at our own pace. Protea Hotel is offering a package deal on the accommodation but space is limited, so it is worth booking as soon as possible.



CLASSIC CARS FOR SALE:



1927 Bentley 3 6.5



1974 Alfa Montreal



1956 MGA Coupe 1500



1993 Alfa Spider S4



1962 Alfa Berlina 2600



Alfa Romeo 1600 Normale Project



1927 Rolls Royce



Jaguar XK150

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The South African Regularity Rally Association (SARRA) once again hosts the popular MacGregor Maluti Meander in June. The event, which takes place from 16 to 19 June, runs through the eastern Free State and uses the Fouriesburg Country Inn as a base.

Cars and motorcycles of all ages are allowed but participants are encouraged to enter in classic vehicles, which for purposes of this event refers to vehicles 25 years and older. Classing for the rally will be done by an open and sealed odo system, as well as age categories. Kick off on 16 June will be from the Historic Green Lantern Inn, located at the top of Van Reenen's Pass, with competitors then heading to Fouriesburg for check in and a short night stage, followed by dinner and some warming *glühwein*. Day two sees a full day of rallying, while the third allows for a bit more socialising, with a slightly shorter stint behind the wheel.

While there is an obvious competitive element to the event, it is designed to allow sufficient time to socialise and engage in sightseeing in this scenic part of the country. All roads used on the event are tarred and the average speed required over the 500km of competitive stages is within applicable speed limits. Entry fee is R5 500 per team of two, which includes the rally entry fee, three nights' accommodation on a dinner, bed & breakfast basis and the prize-giving dinner for the crew.

Book your spot early by contacting Larina MacGregor on 084 949 0937 or larina.macgregor@gmail.com.

Alternatively, enter by using the entry form on www.sarra.co.za.

DIVERSITY AT THE 20TH GEORGE SHOW

After two decades the annual George Old Car Show continues to deliver a fantastic array of classic cars, as this year's 13-14 February event proved. With everything from early Ford Model Ts to the latest BMW i3, the 900-strong turnout at the PV Botha College made for a fantastic family day out – despite the Valentine's Day clash.

The local chapter of the Mercedes-Benz Club put on a fine display of some heavy metal, including Andre Fourie's 300SL Roadster and the Mercedes-Benz 1979 450SEL 6.9 saloon of Derek Gouws. Not to be outdone was the Borgward Club, which featured more than half a dozen cars from local collector Graham Davies, including a rare 1958 Pullman and a 1959 Lloyd Alexander TS.

Other standouts included Capetonian John Haresnape's 1958 Rolls Royce Silver Wraith. Bought by the City of Durban for the mayor in 1958 for the princely sum of £5 805, it was shipped on the *Pretoria Castle* to Durban at the time.

There was a strong turnout of Jaguars including two XK150 coupés – one belonging to local resident Gwyth Grundy and another owned by Ed Hillary, who drove down from Limpopo for the show. And there was plenty of home-grown fare too including Jannie Zeman's '71 AMC Rambler Hornet 3.8 SST, at least one Ford Sierra XR8, a Ranger SS and Gavin Grierson's Datsun 160 U SSS Coupe built as replica of the car in which Sarel van der Merwe won the SA Rally Championship back in '76.





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CLASSICS AT J-BAY



Jeffrey's Bay Classic Car Club has the world-renowned Supertubes as its home base and the legendary surf spot is the ideal place to host the club's annual motor show – Keith's Picnic.

Keith's Picnic has been held for the last 5 years in honour of Keith Marsh, the club's oldest member. Sadly Keith passed on in October 2015 but the show and his name continue in 2016 on 9 April.

All clubs and individuals are welcome to display their classics or special vehicles. Entrance will be free to the public, braai fires will be on hand and the relaxed atmosphere will be aided by Johnny Viljoen strumming out some golden oldies on his guitar.

For more information contact Johan Marais at johan@jbccc.co.za, find Jbay Classic Car Club on Facebook or visit www.jbccc.co.za.

MOTUL KEEPS CLIMBING

Automotive lubricant specialist Motul has joined an exclusive list of partners as the official lubricant brand for the seventh running of the Jaguar Simola Hillclimb, which takes place in Knysna from 6 to 8 May 2016.

As one of the world's leading lubricant manufacturers, Motul has a rich motorsport history, and is a headline partner to preeminent motorsport categories and events around the world. Involvement in extreme motorsports link directly to product strengths and the effort put in by drivers, teams and the machines over the 1.9km course mean that the Hillclimb is a perfect synergy with the French brand.

Linked to its partnership, Motul will have a stand in Gasoline Alley throughout the weekend while maintaining its support for championship-winning motorcycle and car racer Jade Gutzeit. The brand also lubricates the NXGen team Mitsubishi Lancer Evo of Geoff Mortimer and Reghardt Roets in an explosive 1 200hp Nissan GT-R. For the classic fans Brian Bruce flies the flag in a Ford GT40 replica.



LONG-SERVING VOLKSWAGEN

On 1 April 1969, Julia Potgieter walked into work at Volkswagen South Africa for the first time. This year, 47 years later, she retires from her position with her head held high. Loved and respected by all her colleagues, she is the longest-serving woman at VWSA and currently the longest-serving employee. A career spanning almost half a century, all of which was spent in the Finance Division, has left Julia with many wonderful

memories, such as going for a swim at lunch time in the company pool and the introduction of the computer. The Managing Director of the day was Albert Theunissen, VWSA was building the Beetle, the 411 and the T3 and total production volume for the year was a mere 34 133 units compared to the 2015 figure of 120 000. Julia says that she has always enjoyed working at VWSA and walks away having made many friends.





BENTLEY GETS WINGS

Bentley has entered an exciting new era in South Africa, following the announcement that Toby Venter (CEO of LSM Distributors and the man steering Porsche locally) has secured the distribution and dealer rights for this luxury vehicle brand in South Africa.

“We were inspired by Bentley’s rich heritage, from their numerous racing triumphs, to the passion and craftsmanship that goes into making each individual car. However, the clear contemporisation of the Bentley brand in recent years has also been a great attraction to us. We are convinced that Bentley will complement the existing portfolio of business interests within the LSM Distributors Group”, said Venter.

A new home for Bentley is being established in Melrose Arch at the corner of Corlett Drive and Melrose Boulevard. Bentley will add to the Continental, Flying Spur and Mulsanne ranges in April with the all-new Bentayga; the fastest, most powerful and luxurious SUV on the planet.

Bentley customers can expect superior service levels and added benefits, such as a 3-year/100 000km Drive Plan (which covers all maintenance for the defined period), included in the retail price of every new Bentley sold from the 1st of March 2016.

FAREWELL SANI PASS & DEFENDER

In a fitting farewell to the Land Rover Defender, Kingsley Holgate retraced the tracks of the first ever vehicle to conquer the treacherous Sani Pass connecting KwaZulu-Natal to Lesotho.

Not only did the legendary Holgate and his crew recreate the journey that saw a Land Rover blaze the trail 65 years ago, but he also completed the entire trip in a Series I Land Rover – made possible thanks to cooperation from classic Land Rover owners who allowed their rare, collectible vehicles be used to traverse the extreme inclines and rocky surfaces of Southern Africa’s most famous mountain road. With the route set to be tarred later this year it was also a wave goodbye to the Sani Pass we all revere.

The Sani Pass was first developed in 1913 as a trade path between South Africa and Mokhotlong in Lesotho. At first, pack mules were used to transport heavy loads along the narrow dirt paths lined with steep cliffs on one side and sheer drops on the other. In 1950

Alwyn Bisschoff volunteered to serve as an agricultural officer in Basutoland. Bisschoff was given the opportunity to test a Land Rover – at that time just two years into production – at high altitude, and told to test the extreme limits of the vehicle’s capabilities.

With no way to transport the vehicle between South Africa and his new post, he elected to drive it along the dirt path that had only been used by mule trains and their human minders. The long drive saw Bisschoff ascend slowly, climbing 100 metres in elevation for every 500 metres travelled forward. At the end, Bisschoff and his Land Rover had conquered the 1 332 metre climb in 6.5 hours.

Not only did the expedition conquer the route but it also stopped at remote villages, handing out reading glasses to those who struggle with poor vision as part of the Rite 2 Sight project, which has given more than 100 000 people the gift of improved sight over the last seven years.





EASY AS 1, 2, 3

Can you believe it the Mercedes-Benz W123 celebrated 40 years in January? Not only is it a leading light in the ranks of bullet-proof mules but is now a highly respected 'Youngtimer' in the classic world.

At its launch in January 1976, the Mercedes-Benz 123 model series offered a persuasive combination of elegance and multiple technical innovations. The saloon was the first model to become available. The range was expanded a year later by the Coupé and, for the first time, an Estate model. Over the course of the next ten years almost 2.7 million vehicles were built and locally the model had waiting lists at all the showrooms.

It all started between 22 and 28 January 1976 at the Paul Ricard Circuit in southern France, where 33 variously appointed and equipped vehicles from the 123 series made their public debut to the motoring media. The response was consistently positive – for the car's engineering as well as for its design. And their verdict was confirmed by the customers, too: the first year's production sold out completely shortly after the launch of the W123, with early second-hand models often selling for their original price within that first year of production.

Happy Birthday W123, here's to many more happy and reliable miles ahead.



POMC SEES STARS... & STRIPES

On Valentine's Day, the Pretoria Old Motor Club (POMC) hosted its second get-together of the year at its premises in Silverton. The theme of this get-together was American cars and bikes, and according to Frik Kraamwinkel of the POMC, it was the largest gathering of vehicles to date (except for Cars in the Park) at the POMC clubhouse.

Star of the show was a 1923 Dodge Brothers, owned by Craig Jeannes. This car took three years to restore and of interest on this particular model is that there are no front brakes. It is still fitted with its original low mileage engine.

A 1937 Packard Super Eight, owned by Kobus Mostert, was also a crowd puller. Known to be only one of two right-hand drive versions in existence, the car was initially owned by Mr. P M Anderson, the chief executive of Union Corporation in

Johannesburg. Optional extras including a radio with a concealed antenna, a rear luggage rack and parking lights mounted on the front fenders make it extra special and rare. Mostert bulked the show up with some more vehicles from his private museum including a 1956 Chevrolet Bel Air, 1958 Plymouth Belvedere and a 1992 Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham, one of the most recent cars on display.

Hennie Rautenbach stole the most deceptive honours with his 1958 Chevrolet Apache that looked original – until you popped the hood. There sat a modern 5.7-litre Chevrolet LS 1 V8 engine straight out of the Corvette C5. A brilliant mix of Americana and a top day out.

For more information on upcoming POMC events and themes visit www.pomc.co.za.





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Austin Healey BN 2 restored to M Specification R 550 000

D-TYPE ADDENDUM

Historical research never ends, and I can attest that it especially applies to old cars. Regular readers may recall the story I wrote on the Franschoek Motor Museum's Equipe Nationale Belge Jaguar D-Type (chassis XKD 573) in the August/September 2015 issue of *Classic Car Africa*. Well, while in conversation with local classic car buff Ken Stewart (co-founder of the original *Classic Car Africa*) he mentioned that a story on the car had appeared in *Motor Sport*, and, sure enough, in the February 1998 issue the car was indeed featured.

Although the article did not go deep into the car's history, a number of interesting factors emerged. At that time the car was owned by John Coombs and had the UK registration number YSU 740, which is the number it still carries today under Woods Trust ownership. However, a picture of the car in the pits at Le Mans in 1957 shows it was registered NKV 479, so, unusually for race cars of the period, it has been re-registered at least once.

That same picture also shows the car had a black stripe running over it and a full width windscreen. The latter became mandatory at Le Mans in 1956, so at some point the car was restored to its original 1955 specification with a narrow wraparound 'screen in front of the driver and a fixed metal tonneau over the passenger seat. The article also commented on this in the caption to a photograph. Presumably, the bodywork was all yellow at that time.

Finally, there was a fascinating reminiscence by Paul Frère who co-drove the car in the 1957 Le Mans with Freddy Rousselle. They finished fourth for the third Le Mans in a row but Frère reckons they could have won the race were it not for a freak glitch. At 07h00 on the Sunday the car was second behind the eventual winners Ron Flockhart/Ivor Bueb 3.8-litre D-Type when Rousselle stopped at Mulsanne with a dead engine. Far from



accepting his fate, Rousselle examined the engine and upon opening the distributor found that one of the platinum points on the contact breaker was missing. He somehow effected a repair – a Belgian *maak 'n plan* – and drove back to the pits where a new contact breaker was fitted and the car sent back into the fray. However, by this time the car had dropped to fifth place – it lost 80 minutes in total over the 24 hours, compared with 13 minutes for the winners – and determined drives saw them haul in and pass the Scuderia Ferrari 315S, but they were unable to catch the three D-Types at the head of the field, although on average they lapped quickest of the four Jaguars.

Regards
Mike Monk

*Thanks Mike,
The continual evolution of a car's history and how facts from the past continually crop up is what makes our job so interesting. History and its preservation is key as it makes each vehicle unique, adds a bit of financial value and more importantly has an emotional connection as it triggers long forgotten memories.*
Stuart

MAKING VOLVO

I'm researching a bit on Volvo's foreign assembly plants for the 120-series ("Amazon") and am wondering if you might have any information on the assembly under Motor Assemblies Ltd in Durban. Information, pictures, contacts – anything would be of interest as information seem to be scarce. I have some information that Motor Assemblies

Ltd started production of Volvo 122S in March or April of 1961. This would mean not only that South Africa was the first Volvo production country outside Sweden but also that the early two-tone cars with the B16 engine were assembled abroad.

Many thanks in advance,
Fredrik

*Hi Fredrik,
Some very interesting research and the bit about South Africa potentially being the first production facility outside Sweden is particularly fascinating. I will forward the request on to the Volvo experts and pass on any correspondence I get from readers with regard to this.*
Stuart

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DOGLEG DOG BOX

Thank you for the article on the 40th anniversary of the BMW 3 series in the December/January issue, which brought back many memories of my years owning and driving various 325iS models (including being hijacked in my Evo 2 version). Just one point of correction, namely that the 325iS never had a dogleg first gear as standard fitment – it had the conventional double-H shift pattern. The dogleg gearboxes were first found, in my experience, in some of the E12 535i models. However, I am sure they were also present in some of the earlier sporting BMWs, which I am happy to say were before my time! I owned a 1983 535i, which I am sorry I sold, and it had a dogleg gearbox. At the time the 535s had either a dogleg Getrag gearbox or the so-called

‘overdrive’ gearbox which had a conventional shift pattern. The dogleg box had lower ratios and quicker acceleration, and the overdrive gearbox allowed more relaxed cruising (as if that was needed on a 535i).

A similar situation applied at the time to the 635 CSI, as they were also available with different gearboxes. As far as I am aware, the 333i was the last BMW in South Africa to have the dogleg gearbox as standard equipment.

Thanks for a great magazine, and I look forward to future issues.

Regards

Gary

You are spot on, Gary. All the hopping in and out of the cars on the photoshoot meant that I confused myself and that mistake snuck in. The ‘Dogleg’ box was only standard issue in the import E21 323i and the 333i. The 325iS sported a traditional pattern. Thanks for pointing out the error and for all the support and kind words.

Stuart

SORTING THE GREMLINS

Many thanks to you, Stuart, for your positive attitude in extending my subscription for two months after not receiving my copies (2 issues) of *Classic Car Africa* – without hesitation you took the blame, though I am

of the opinion that the Post Office may be the culprit.

I’ve been a subscriber now for six years and I am very happy to inform you that I have received my Feb/March 2016 issue on 11/02/2016.

Thanks also for an excellent magazine, your articles are very interesting and of very high standard and bring back many good memories. Keep up the good work and thanks once again to you and your staff for the hard work to let us have a great magazine.

Kind regards

Francois Vermeulen

Hello Francois

Thank you for the patience and understanding. The good news is that the postal service seems to be operating a bit smoother and with a new man in charge it should recover to full efficiency. I was shocked to receive two ‘return-to-sender’ magazines this week – they were originally posted over a year back. Although it is not the same as reading a hardcopy magazine we have also introduced a digital version, which is available from www.classiccarafrika.com. Thank you for sticking it out – your support is what has made the magazine what it is today.

Stuart

CLASSIC CONTRIBUTOR & RACER

Baie geluk met die ‘anniversary’ van *Classic Car Africa*.

Jy sal seker onthou, dat ek ook vir die eerste 10 jaar betrokke was by die tydskrif en ek het dit baie geniet, om Killarney se *Classic/Marques & Finecars* se “Race-report”, punte en uitslae, asook van my versameling fotos, te kon deel, met die lesers. Ek dink dit is ook net reg, om op hierdie stadium vir die persone, wat die oorspronklike tydskrif begin het, krediet te gee en dankie te se, vir dit wat hulle aan ons as lesers, gegee het.

Ek dink spesifiek aan Rob Young, Jannie van Aswegen en ook Andrew Reed. Te veel om al die name te doen, maar ook dankie aan almal wat bygedrae het tot *Classic Car Africa*.

Nog ‘n ‘anniversary’ was my eie “Car/Driver Combination”, wat 25 jaar (26 seisoene) voltooi het met

dieselfde, getroue BMW 2002! (Het ook selfs teen Stuart en sy Pa gejaag!)

Voorspoed vir nog’n klomp *Classic Car Africa* uitgawes, vir die toekoms.

BMW Groete

Johan Pretorius (JayBee)

Dankie JayBee,

I remember your reports well and think that with Killarney Fine Cars back in a good place it might be time to reinstate the coverage. And yes, thanks must go to this magazine’s founders, who cemented the brand in the hearts of the readers and gave us a platform to grow.

Congratulations on your racing anniversary. I remember chasing that 2002 in both my 1965 Ford Cortina GT and the Protea Triumph. It is crazy to think that that was circa 1996 and I have now raced historics for 20 years. All the best and here’s to many more BMW miles.

Stuart



MG A TWIN CAM HELP

Thanks for a great magazine, eagerly awaited every couple of months.

I am wondering if some of your readers have any history and information on an MG A twin cam that I have recently bought which has had some odd modifications and history. The car has been off the road since being given to its previous owner in about 1969 and needs a full restoration. I bought it to use for spares for another coupé project, but it is restorable.

It was in Kimberly at the time, and the number plate that came with the car reads CA 239-834. The local twin cam register (courtesy of Bo Gierson) says it was a South African-built car, was red and built in 1959. The car has at some stage been converted to LHD and back again to RHD. It was originally a roadster but has been converted to a coupé, which in itself is unusual as conversions are normally the other way round, tin top to rag top... and why LHD? Makes me think that perhaps it has lived part of its life as a track car...

It no longer has the twin cam engine but is fitted with an MG A 1600 motor and 1600 suspension and back axle and a mighty assortment of wheels (including TR), but



still has the correct gearbox, chassis, body and other identifying features. My plan is to convert it back to a roadster and restore to as original as possible (fortunately the coupé top has been tacked on without cutting the roadster cowls) and some history and background on the car would help enormously. Obviously it would be a huge bonus to find the original twin cam suspension and brakes, body parts and of course the twin cam motor. If anyone out

there can help, I would be most grateful.

Regards

Mike Jewitt

Hi Mike

An interesting purchase indeed and one I am sure the numerous MG readers will be able to help to identify and hopefully also help to replace the odd hard to find correct part. Keep us in the loop as to the developments.

Stuart

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MOTUL

THE BENTLEY BOYS

BY STUART GRANT



The Bentley Boys were a close-knit group of wealthy British motorists who drove and raced Bentleys and were always ready for a challenge or a glass of champagne; extraordinary playboys whose racing antics and larger-than-life adventures of the 1920s and '30s inspired a whole generation of Bentley drivers and admirers. I once stumbled across a modern-day bunch of Bentley Boys.

Following the Spa 6 Hour in Belgium a group of us thought it best to show our cultured side and try out some real fine dining by hunting down a Michelin-starred restaurant. Google revealed that just down the road from the circuit there was such an establishment and a booking was made. Unfortunately time was a bit tight so we arrived in our rental station wagon without showering or changing. The *maitre d'* raised an eyebrow but grudgingly ushered us to the table closest to the bathroom (virtually in the bathroom, in fact).

A five-course meal, some good wine (South African wines were on offer but we declined) and a vile-tasting aperitif meant we were handed a bill equivalent to the GDP of a small African country before we headed back to our hotel. This meant a midnight run through the misty Ardennes forest, a beautiful sight in its own right, but made even more spectacular by the sight of three monstrous headlights coming at us at full chat, accompanied by screeching tyres and hoots of laughter and cheering. As the headlights blasted past, the awesomeness of the moment really came to life: behind the three headlights was a 1920s Bentley Blower. The screeching came from the tortured tyres, as the driver wrestled with some over-steer, and the hoots from as many men as you can fit in a Bentley, leaning out to counterbalance the weight shift.

With the iconic low-revving exhaust note fading out, the Bentley disappeared from view as the mist swallowed up the last of the red on its taillights. It was a moment not to be forgotten, burned into the grey matter like the images conjured up while reading *The Wind in the Willows* as a kid.

Waking the following morning was a heavy affair, with the aperitif still hanging around in our heads. Suspicions were confirmed when the French-speaking breakfast waitress informed us that the Euro-heavy aperitif was made from the dregs of the local harvest and that we'd overpaid. We argued that it was 75 years old and therefore should be expensive, and in reply she quipped that the only reason it had stayed on the shelf for 75 years was because nobody else would drink it. One or two cups of coffee later it was back to the Francorchamps track to watch a whack of sprint races for historic saloons, '50s sportscars, single seaters and vintage machinery while curing the hangover with the equivalent of a boerie roll and a few waffles.

The lower paddock was packed with the vintage racers – marvellous machinery like Rileys, Bugattis, Alvis, Talbot, 3-wheeled Morgans and even the odd aerial-engined monster on cable-operated brakes. And here the Bentley crews lurked too. It seems as if patina is a crucial element to these illustrious racers, with most sporting battle scars and paint fade admirably. One displayed a Sports Car Club of South Africa 100mph Club badge on its dash. Chatting to the owner revealed that this actual car had spent time in SA and was even raced by a Francis Spencer in the fledgling days of the Historic Racing Car Register. While talking to this Bentley lad the conversation worked its way to the sight of a Bentley Blower being pressed hard the night before and who was behind it. "Guilty as charged"

came from a guy sitting under a gazebo about 5 metres away.

It was a shock to the system. Our perp wasn't a double-breasted blazer-and-cravat-wearing vintage car stereotype; instead a sub-fifty-year-old, sporting a sleeveless vest and anchor tattoos on his forearms. His reason for the midnight mayhem was simple: together with his mates they'd decided to do the old Spa road circuit. Like Le Mans the original 1921 track was a road circuit. It measured in at 14.9km and linked the towns of Malmedy, Francorchamps and Stavelot and proved one of the fastest circuits on the planet. In 1939 it closed for the war and was slightly revised after the conflict but world championship racing halted in 1978, with the course deemed unsafe. A 7km track was opened in 1979 and, except for a few minor changes, is the one used today.

But back to our Popeye-like Bentley Boy. He clearly had come into a bit of money – I mean, he had a Bentley he raced, after all. He got chatting, showed us his Bentley in detail and showed us the custom redline on the rev counter that simply said 'BANG'. He then showed us his tow vehicle and unloaded the Bugatti he'd raced at a historic event in the Algarve a week before.

This Bug was meant to be in action at Spa but a mechanical failure had meant he had to pull out his spare car – the Bentley. "No worries though," he said unperturbed, "as fitting five of us into the Bugatti for a midnight lap of the original circuit would have been a bit of a squeeze." Mind completely blown we wondered off to Eau Rouge to watch these vintage racers lap at seriously impressive speeds with the pilots barely managing to stay in the seats as the cars squirmed their way through Eau Rouge and up the other side.

Vintage racing cars are alive and well and so too are the new breed of Bentley Boys. 🏁



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HOLDEN

TIGHT TO YOUR DREAMS



With the brutal Holden Monaro and Chevy SS machines leaving our shores, and heading down under faster than they accelerate from zero to 100km/h, **Stuart Grant** tracks down a pair of these Australian-derived South African legends before there are none left to see if they live up to the hype.

Images by Henrie Snyman



The early 1970s was an exciting time in South African motoring with local tuners shoving hulking great V8s into family cars, transforming them into track and open road tarmac-eating machines while retaining factory or dealership warranties. Of course we got the likes of the Capri Perana in 1971 and Chevrolet CanAm in 1973. In Australia the theme of big power in relatively decent handling packages appears similar, probably as it aids reliably chewing up the miles of wide open expanses found in both lands, as well as the penchant for motorsport. The Holden Monaro, like Australia's Ford Falcon GT (Ford Fairmont GT here in SA), could not only pull the caravan to the beach in record time but also excelled on the mountainous Bathurst 500 race track at Mount Panorama.

For the Holden Monaro, General Motors Australia initially used its HK Model sedan as a starting point but dressed it in a coupé body style. The 1968 Base model saw a 6-cylinder motor while the excitement kicked in with a Chevrolet 5-litre V8-powered GTS and 5.3-litre GTS 327. Late in 1969 the face-lifted HT model replaced the HK version, with beating the Ford Falcon at production car racing a major goal. The HT also saw the dropping of the Chevrolet-built power units as in-house Holden 4.2 and 5-litre engines filled the gap. Only a year later the Monaro was revised again, albeit very subtly with the removal of some brightwork, minor trim and decal changes.

As the HT and HG enter the mix so South Africa joins the party. In essence, thanks to an export programme that saw the Monaro being shipped to Port Elizabeth in CKD form for assembly, we got the monsters here. HT versions were sold as Holden Monaro GTS and as GMSA decided to focus its

In Australia the theme of big power in relatively decent handling packages appears similar, probably as it aids reliably chewing up the miles of wide open expanses found in both lands, as well as the penchant for motorsport

marketing on the Chevrolet brand, the later HG items were slightly tweaked and rebadged as Chevrolet SS from 1971. With a unique front treatment featuring quad headlights and large indicators, the SS is therefore yet another proudly South African machine. While the local Monaro initially used a Holden 5-litre as its power source it gained a Chevrolet 5.74-litre when the SS hit the shelves. This meant both cars could be bought in 5-litre or 5.74-litre guise and the records show that 1 828 Monaro and 1 182 SS units hit the country's roads. Power went to the rear wheels via a 4-speed manual or a 2-speed dual-range Powerglide auto, which quickly evolved to the 3-speed Trimatic unit in the 5-litre cars of 1971. Trimatic cars, welcomed in power-steering as standard, and the likes of a limited slip differential, sporty steering wheel, rally wheels, red band 6JJx14 tyres and rev counter were on all versions of the Monaro and SS.

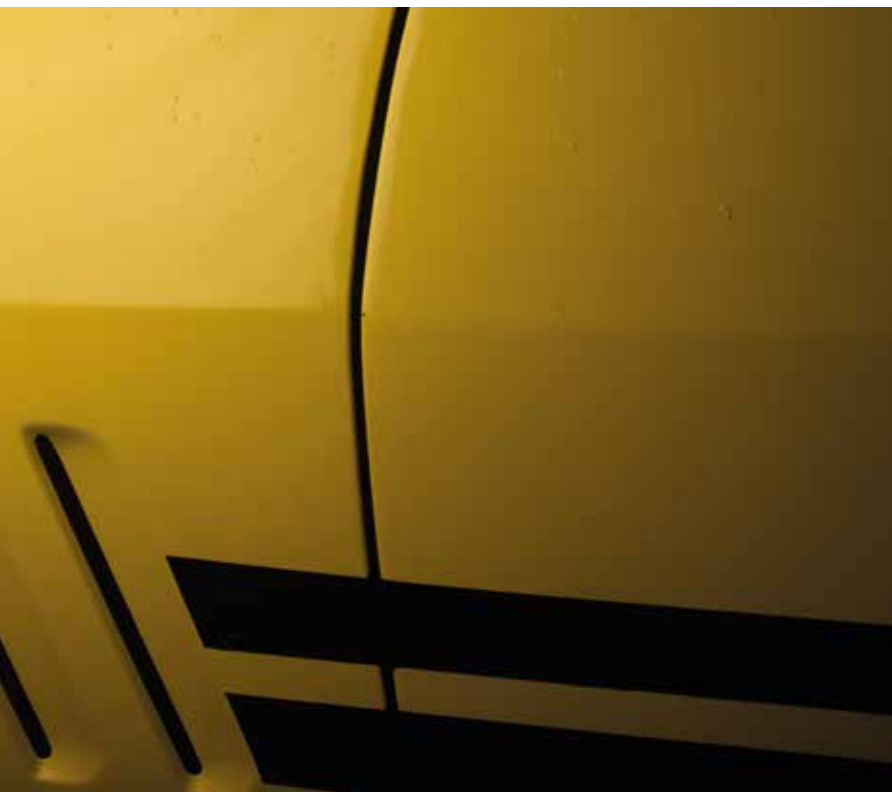
Despite weighing in at just over 1.4 tonnes, the automatic 5.74-litre galloped to 100km/h in just under 8 seconds while the 5-litre was good for just over 9 seconds and a top speed in the region of 110 miles per hour. In either engine format they pulled the caravan well with the 5.74-litre churning out 224kW and 515Nm at 3 200rpm while the smaller lump thundered out 179kW and 427Nm of torque at 3 000rpm.

And thunder they do. Climb behind the sporty steering wheel of either, turn on the ignition, stab the accelerator pedal once or twice to get the juices flowing in the Holley carb and crank the key... WHAAAMM! The V8s spring to life with a serious bark before settling down to a thumping idle. It is no surprise though when you see that a dual exhaust system passes through a singular shared free-flow silencer and then exits the tail via a quartet of big bore pipes.

Subtlety doesn't seem to be in the GM products' vocabulary with bright red, yellow or orange paint colours most requested by buyers. Add to this factory bonnet stripes, contrasting vinyl roof, side sill stripes, shark-like gill vents, chrome sill and arch trim and bonnet scoops and they weren't exactly stealth machines. Fearing that the stripes were too much, the option was given to order the cars without stripes but in reality it seems that most GTS or SS owners liked a bit of a show with the go, staying with the decals.

Peering over the 3-spoke sports steering wheel your eyes follow the black bonnet lines, egging you on to chase the horizon.





POWER RANGER

With the Monaro whetting your 1970s appetite for a sporty GT-like 4-seater, but the budget not agreeing, you had options that gave the looks, lost a little in performance but lost a lot in price. Sadly for you the majority of these came from Ford with the 3-litre Capri (R3 351), 17M RS (R2 465) and 20M 3-litre (R3 199). But mid-1970 GM offered a lifeline to its fans. It was not a Holden though, or not even a Chevrolet, but rather the Ranger SS.

Thanks to its Opel Rekord Sprint origins the Ranger SS is a sporty-looking coupé and given the GM family ties, looks surprisingly similar to the Chevy SS and Monaro GTS. And like the Opel, the Ranger SS was powered by the tried and tested GM South African-manufactured 2.5-litre 4-cylinder. By fitting a twin-choke Weber and tuned exhaust system, the horsepower figure increased by 18bhp to 108 while torque climbed from 206Nm to 212. It looked the part with rally-style wheels, vinyl roof, black sills and a black waistline pinstripe. Oh yes, and a Monaro-style steering wheel framed some round gauges including a rev counter. Also unique to the Ranger SS, when compared to the rest of the Ranger line-up, was the driver-focused centre console, which housed oil pressure gauge, electric clock and other racey bits. The result was a sporty-looking package that did a decent job in performance. Zero to 100km/h came up in 11.3 seconds and speed topped out at 165km/h. Fuel consumption at 100km/h impressed at 8 litres per 100km.

The Ranger tale is an odd one, made even more bizarre by the GM marketers using the tag 'South Africa's Own Car'. Odd, because the Ranger is essentially a rebadged Vauxhall Ranger. With the late 1960s announcement that local GM dealers would be selling the unloved Vauxhall brand in SA there was plenty of dissent in the ranks. To combat this, GMSA's man in charge, Bill Slocum, decided it best to drop the Vauxhall tag and use just Ranger. In order to meet local content requirements, the Ranger sported lots of SA-made bits like body panels, axles and engines. Does this badge engineering make it a South Africa's Own Car? I'm not sure, but has a little bending of the truth ever stopped a marketing department?

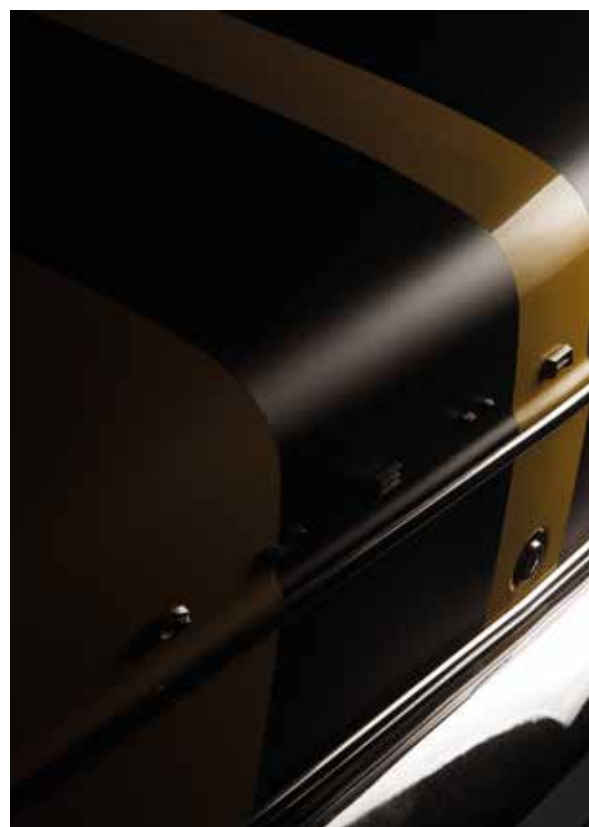


The seating, although regarded as buckets back in the day, offer very little side support and padded squab puts you high up in the car. Blip the throttle and the car rocks side to side. Gauges are well laid out with the massive circular tachometer and speedo dominating a wood-look fascia. Hook a gear and the GMs will comfortably trundle off the line without even breathing on the loud pedal. Steering in this Monaro was not power-assisted and after an arm-aching 3-point turn it became clear as to why the high-specced SS received power-assistance.

Once on the straight and narrow a stab on the gas results in a glorious exhaust bark and squeal from the rear tyres. Automatic gear ratios make initial acceleration a touch slower than you'd expect from vehicles with such cubic capacity under the hood but once up and running the pair pull incredibly strongly. Overtaking ability is at the sharp end of the '70s car spectrum and at almost any speed kickdown is not needed for overtaking. Stopping power is not half bad either thanks to servo-assisted discs at the front and 10-inch drums at the rear.

More impressive, or perhaps defying the

predetermined idea of all big V8 machines being boat-like, is the steering response and directness. With 3.5 turns lock to lock relatively small movements get a reaction at the front wheels, which also results in decent high speed stability – crucial for those cross-Karoo blasts. Ride across the vast expanses would be comfortable too with decent firmness achieved without being harsh or choppy. Standard setup is an independent coil guise at the front and 3-blade leaf with live axle at the rear. Although we didn't have a Jurgens to hitch up and tow test this time around, loading





the boots with weight showed that the suspension would be well up to the task when pulling a few kilograms. And these extra kilograms may well need to be a fuel bowser as in the pre-oil crisis days of the early 1970s it seems General Motors was not afraid to drink petrol. On open roads at 60km/h the 5-litre gulped gas at 11 litres per 100km. Double the speed to 120 and the consumption figure bolted to 16l/100km. With a 75 litre tank that would be good for a 468km trip. Prod the gas pedal a few times for a laugh and you'd be beached between garages.

In 1971 a 5-litre automatic Monaro GTS would set you back R4 036 (R3 842 for a manual) while in 5.74-litre format you'd need to cough up R4 764 for the auto. Ford's Fairmont GT beat the GM price coming in at R3 989 for an auto and R3 167 for manual. You are either a Ford fan or a GM fan so making a decision as to whether the Fairmont is better or worse than the Monaro/SS is one point that could be dangerous to discuss here and therefore not worth making. Two facts are worth mentioning though. The first is that the Holden Monaro GTS and Chevrolet SS are well worth the

legendary classic status. The second is that they are so good, and so iconic, that the Australians want them back to belt the Fords around town and in historic races so the rate of export is high. The words from Men at Work's 1981 hit song *Down Under* keep ringing as I cross my fingers and hope that we in SA hold on tight to our General Motors SA classics. 🇳🇿

Do you come from a land down under? / Where women glow and men plunder? / Can't you hear, can't you hear the thunder? / You better run, you better take cover.



UNDERSTATED



Honda's first supercar was brilliant straight out the box as the Japanese firm got the NSX right the first time but as **Mike Monk** discusses, was it too good for its own good?

A little over a quarter of a century ago, Honda – at the time cementing its reputation for engineering integrity powering both Williams and McLaren to Formula One manufacturers' championship titles – took a shot at the supercar world with a vehicle called an NSX, the acronym for New Sportscar eXperimental, with the Ferrari 328GTB firmly

PERFORMER



in the cross hairs. The project had begun in 1984 with the 2-litre V6 HP-X (Honda Pininfarina eXperimental) concept car, which was developed to challenge the V8 Ferraris of the time. Created by a team led by chief designer Masahito Nakano and executive chief engineer Shigeru Uehara, the NSX benefitted from advanced aerodynamics and styling partly inspired by an F-16 fighter jet cockpit and, in the closing stages of

development, by input from the late F1 World Champion Ayrton Senna, who was then contracted to McLaren-Honda.

Launched at the 1989 Chicago Auto Show, the NSX went on sale the following year and was the world's first mass-produced car to feature all-aluminium bodywork, said to have saved around 135kg over a steel equivalent. Powering the NSX was an all-aluminium 3-litre V6 engine



Transmission options were a five-speed manual and a four-speed SportsShift auto, which were attached to the end of the engine as opposed to being underneath, taking drive to the rear wheels

mounted transversely amidships. It featured Honda's then still new but now famous VTEC (Variable Valve Timing and Lift Electronic Control) system, and with a compression ratio of 10.2:1, the fuel-injected 2 977cm³ quad-cam 24-valve motor pumped out 20kW (191kW for the auto) at 7 300rpm and 285Nm of torque at 6 500 – the rev limit was 8 000. Transmission options were a five-speed manual and a four-speed SportsShift auto, which were attached to the end of the engine as opposed to being underneath, taking drive to the rear wheels.

The mainly aluminium suspension featured double wishbones, coil springs and an anti-roll bar both front and rear, and all-round disc brakes boasted four-channel ABS, the industry application of which was still in its infancy. Rack-and-pinion steering operated on cast alloy road wheels, 15-inch with 205/50 tyres up front and 16-inch with 225/50s at the back. Manual NSXs did not have power steering, whereas autos had electric power assistance, which was another of the car's technology advances.

Wind tunnel testing helped develop the car's overall shape that featured a faired-in full-width wing across the tail. Apart from necessary engine air intakes in the rear flanks, the NSX's shape is fuss-free and smooth, which may have worked against it though, because while being airy, spacious (it even boasts a usable boot), solidly built and easy to drive – collective rarities in 1980s supercar attributes – it lacked the visual drama and, at the time, the cachet of a Ferrari. Though it performed, rode and handled as well as, if not better than the (now 348) GTB, it did not have the marketing impact it should have. This was Honda's first supercar, remember...

And even Ferrari could not boast road car design input from an F1 champion as Honda could with Senna. In February 1989, a McLaren test session coincided with an NSX test and, after driving the car, the Brazilian master suggested that the car flexed too much so Honda's engineers went away and dialled-in 50% more torsional rigidity in a remarkably short time. In the run-up to



production, Senna continued to help develop improvements to the car's dynamics.

Once on sale, the NSX received critical acclaim from all who drove it. Honda had pioneered the affordable, user-friendly supercar – 'as easy to drive as a Civic' – to the extent that Gordon Murray was said to have benchmarked the NSX when he was designing the McLaren F1 road car, while Ferrari quickly set about replacing the 348 with the F355. Today, it still looks good and the Franschoek Motor Museum's metallic purple Targa-topped auto example is quite stunning. With just under 18 000km on the odo, it is as fresh as the day it was built. Incidentally, it is said that each car was assembled by a hand-picked team of 200 people, each with a minimum of 10 years experience, and that the paint process alone had 23 steps.

Stepping down into the cockpit, it oozes solid build quality. The seats offer plenty of legroom even for my 1.86-metre frame and the ample, F-16-influenced glasshouse offers an all-round vista. Two control-laden

arms protruding from the steering column seem a little at odds with the rest of the cabin layout, which is clearly labelled and easy to operate. Complementing the S mode on the floor console's gearshift, manual override of the SportsShift transmission is via a single small lever mounted just behind the steering wheel on the left (paddle shifters had yet to become the vogue). Irrespective of selection mode, gear changes are effected by a typical '80s/'90s torque converter smoothness rather than razor-sharp engagement. But the NSX is more than anything a Grand Tourer, so the lack of racecar-like immediacy is hardly a criticism.

Typical of VTEC engines, the V6 thrives on revs and the NSX's V6 is no exception. The resultant rasp from the twin exhausts is muted by supercar standards – it certainly does not invade the cabin – until the tachometer needle attacks the red line, heralding a bark that does finally exude menace. Despite the extensive use of aluminium, the NSX is no lightweight, tipping the scales at around 1 370kg. Performance-wise, the NSX was

THE NEXT NSX

The second-generation of this iconic sports machine was unveiled at last year's Detroit Auto Show. The New Sports eXperience NSX is a hybrid sportscar powered by 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 engine and three electric motors, two of which form part of an SH-AWD four-wheel drivetrain. Transmission is a 9-speed dual-clutch semi-automatic. As with the original NSX, the body structure is a class-leading design, a spaceframe made from aluminium, ultra-high strength steel and other rigid and lightweight materials, some of which are the world's first applications. It was set to go on sale in South Africa in the middle of this year but, sadly, this has been cancelled as the decline in the rand's value has pushed the car's price up to an unviable level.



Yet for all its engineering excellence, total NSX sales were reported to be less than 20 000

credited with numerous 0-100km/h times, with 6 seconds being a realistic average, which it delivers with admirable ease. Top speed was given as 270km/h. Combined with a firm but not harsh ride, benign handling and solid, communicative steering, the NSX set a benchmark in user-friendly superperformance that did not cost a fortune to experience.

Initially available as a coupé, a lighter (by around 120kg) Type-R with a blue-printed engine was made available in 1992, the Targa-top version was introduced in 1995,

and in 1997 the manual version's powertrain became a 3.2-litre V6 coupled with a six-speed gearbox. A facelift took place in 2002 but the model was discontinued in 2005. In America, the car was named the Acura NSX and marketed as the halo model for Honda's fledgling Stateside brand.

Yet for all its engineering excellence, total NSX sales were reported to be less than 20 000. This has to be one of performance motoring's best kept secrets: a car that set a few trends 26 years ago yet is not out of place today.

EXECUTIVE CARS



POA

1958 MG A ROADSTER

Absolutely sublime styling makes this model, arguably the finest creation to come from MG. This example has just come out of long term gentleman ownership and has obviously been extensively restored. A sweet driving 1500 cc sports car from the '50s for you to enjoy.



R125 000

1968 TRIUMPH VITESSE

Extremely rare 4-seater classic British cabriolet. Triumph's 2-litre straight-6 engine is a gem and in this case made even more usable by the fitment of a modern 5-speed gearbox. Loads of woodtrim give the tidy cabin a classy punch. Only a handful in South Africa.



R85 000

1968 MG B GT

Beautiful classic GT from the '60s, the styling of this model is only just beginning to be appreciated after decades of standing in the shadow of its roadster sibling. Fine classic touring car. Stunning interior, excellent wire wheels, paintwork the only room for improvement in my opinion.



R395 000

1971 TRIUMPH TR6

Left hand drive. Everything, including carpets and upholstery original and in pristine condition. Comes with factory wire wheels hard top. A real tourer with overdrive manual gearbox. You'd have to go back to 1971 to find an engine bay as clean as this one.



R75 000

1975 VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE 1600

Time warp 2 owner from new example with a reputed 78000kms. The vehicle defies accurate description such is its originality. Everything is original, it even comes with its instruction manual, original brochure and original invoice [R2470 inclusive].



R 275 000

1975 ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER WRAITH

Rare example with 70 000 miles from new. Elegance personified. These cars are going to rise in value dramatically in the next 10 years. 6.75-litre V8 automatic drives with all the smoothness you'd expect from such a grand machine.



R350 000

1989 BMW Z1 ROADSTER

140 000km. One of the rarest and most collectable offerings from BMW. Limited production run, innovative approach to design and basic mechanics made this refreshing approach to the true sports car. Very, very few in SA.



R125 000

1984 MASERATI BI-TURBO 2.5

62 000km. A time warp car. It's rare, its exotic and it has its place in history in both design and engineering. This vehicle is in entirely original condition. It appears as new, some parts of the interior have their original wrapping on them. Possibly the lowest mileage, best condition Bi-Turbo around.



R125 000

1985 MERCEDES-BENZ 380SEC AUTO

228 000km. Excellent example of the SEC model which has been restored to superb order with imported wood, new upholstery and paint as well as mechanical work where necessary. These are becoming increasingly rare and desirable.



R199 000

2007 BMW Z4 M COUPE

137 000km. Unique styling, sublime performance, unquestionable engineering from one of the finest engines ever made in my humble opinion. Classic 3.2-litre 6-cylinder rear wheel drive sports car with feel. A future classic, mark my words!



R629 000

2011 BMW 6 SERIES 640 F12

40 000km. Twin turbo, heads up display, balance of motorplan. At last a good looking 4-seater convertible. Let's be honest, the Chris Bangle school of origami styling did an injustice to the previous 6 Series with its over exaggerated rear end. Superb ice white with saddle brown interior.



R285 000

2011 BMW 135i COUPE EXCLUSIVE

74 000km. BMW has hit the sporting sweet spot with the 135 offering sublime performance that is manageable, controlled and combine it with a legendary handling package. This example has been cherished and has all the extras you could wish for.



R345 000

2012 JEEP WRANGLER SAHARA UNLIMITED 2.8CRD

58 000km. New spec, leather, satnav, hard and soft top warranty extended to 60 months/100 000kms. Superb utility vehicle offering a unique look, superb off road capability and great taxi scaring presence. Almost R700K new, so it must be viewed as being a relative bargain.



R375 000

2009 PORSCHE CAYENNE S TIPTRONIC

93 000km. Superb original example of the Mighty Cayenne, this model is fitted with every conceivable extra and is finished in navy blue with tan two tone leather interior. It has benefitted from a full Porsche franchise service history with the most recent one being at 90 000kms.



R415 000

2012 MERCEDES-BENZ ML 350CDi

86 000km. Beautiful example of the range topping V6 ML, the Grand Edition. Extras include the chrome pack, running boards, tow bar, glass sunroof, xenon lights and sound option. Mobilo plan is valid until 2018 or 120,000kms. The car is immaculate, you simply will not find a better example anywhere.



R465 000

2012 BMW X5 iDRIVE 40D M SPORT

87 000km. 225kW version of the top selling model in the range, the very capable, good looking and sporty X5. This example has always been on motorplan hand has the balance up to 100 000km still outstanding. Msport kit and sunroof.

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SPEEDS

Triumph's Herald is a cute little car. Penned by Giovanni Michelotti, it looks the part of a promenade cruiser, but with its power coming from either a 998cc, 1147cc or 1296cc 4-pot it leaves a little to be desired in the sporting ranks. For fans of the look though, there was a silver lining, with Standard-Triumph's silky 6-cylinder motor coming to the party in 1962. **Stuart Grant** puts a Vitesse (which in French means 'Speed') through its paces.

R&X SOUND





Thanks to Executive Cars (011 781 0300) for the use of this Vitesse.

Without a single cloud in the Johannesburg sky, there was only one option for the test of this 1968 model – and that was to go topless. It's an easy job, with the roof conveniently folding up and snuggling under a tonneau cover. Even more impressive is that fact that the Vitesse is a true saloon-based cabriolet, so you can actually fit passengers in the rear. That is not where the practicality ends though, with the boot dimension perfect for that weekend away luggage, proper wind-up side windows and full width windscreen. Wooden dash facia and trim brings a touch of class, which is further spruced up by a whack of chrome-bezelled, circular black Smiths gauges. Fighting the urge to don a captain's hat, I

Clearly a step up the hierarchy from the Herald, the Vitesse 6 sported wood facia dash and door tops, and power came from a 6-cylinder engine borrowed from Standard-Vanguard Six but featuring a slightly smaller bore to make it 1596cc

crank the ignition key.

The Vitesse fires into life without hesitation and quickly settles into a perfect idle; there are few engines, old or new, that rival the Triumph 2-litre in the smoothness department. It shows its regular saloon heritage: there are no clever sports car tricks like fly-off handbrakes, lumpy camshaft or button clutches, so you just select first and release the regular-weighted clutch and cruise into the sunset. And it cruises very well, with 95 horses on tap, and swapping cogs is no problem thanks to a full-synchromesh gearbox. Top speed was claimed at 100 miles per hour and, while not break-neck fast, the sprint to 62mph (100km/h), in the region of 12 seconds, impressed.

Suspension is comfortable – again not overly sporting – and more focused on

cruising than racing. This wasn't the first car to carry the Vitesse title though, with Austin first applying it to a model built between 1914 and 1916 and cycle car manufacturer Godfrey & Nash also

used the name for one of its vehicles in 1922. Standard-Triumph also jumped onto the bandwagon and applied the name Vitesse to a pre-war model between 1936 and '38.

But back to the Vitesse at hand: within 2 years of Herald production Triumph set about sporting up the saloon with a 6-cylinder engine. Michelotti again put pen to paper in the styling department and unsurprisingly almost all the Herald panels remained, with the biggest change clearly visible at the front end – here the Vitesse 6 (as it was known) got a set of quadruple headlights set at an inward-pointing slant instead of only two circular units. Like the Herald the Vitesse came in saloon or cabriolet format, and while a coupé version was planned, it never made it past the drawing board.

Clearly a step up the hierarchy from the Herald, the Vitesse 6 sported wood facia dash and door tops, and power came from a 6-cylinder engine borrowed from Standard-Vanguard Six but featuring a slightly smaller bore to make it 1596cc. The Standard-Vanguard gearbox was also employed, and as an option those keen to hit the long road could specify a Laycock De Normanville overdrive setup. With overdrive the Vitesse proved an economical tourer, which was



clearly part of the plan for the car, with a larger fuel tank fitted when compared to the 4-pot Herald. Discs featured up front, drums handled the rear and while the rear solid swing-axle transverse-leaf system as used on the Herald remained, the front saw beefed up springs to handle the weight of the new engine. In hindsight some re-engineering should have been done to the rear suspension before the Vitesse went on sale as the Herald was unable to cope with the additional *oomph*, and road tests slammed the handling as wayward – no surprise when you see that camber changes of up to 15 degrees occurred under varying driving conditions.

If the rear suspension inadequacies were highlighted by the Vitesse 6, then the introduction of the Vitesse 2-litre must have been akin to a teacher pulling out a red pen and highlighting all your errors in that physics exam. Triumph marketed the 'new' machine as the 'Two Seater Beater' and along with the extra grunt, the 'new' Vitesse 2-litre got bigger front brakes, synchro in all gears and stronger diff, but was still a bit iffy in the handling department.

It took Triumph just under two years to 'sort' out this handling issue. It did this in

October 1968 when it launched the Vitesse Mark II, which kept the rear transverse-leaf spring but dumped the swing-axle in favour of a lower wishbone and divided halfshaft design. While this significantly improved the handling by reducing the camber variation from 15 degrees to 5, it by no means put the Triumph into the league of the proper sportscars of the time.

The Mark II also got a power increase thanks to a new head design with better porting and increased valve sizes. As a result the Vitesse was now good for a sub 11 second zero to 100km/h sprint and a top of over 100mph (160km/h). Cosmetic changes included a new grille and Rostyle wheels, and the separate-chromed 'TRIUMPH' letters on the bonnet and the boot lid were removed.

To many this was the ultimate Vitesse, the one that could give the likes of the MB G Roadster or Sunbeam Alpine a run for their money – this while seating four occupants when the others only squeezed in two. Across the three versions of Vitesse, made between 1962 and

'71, 47 710 units left the works. Of these 22 814 were Vitesse 6 Saloons, 8 447 were 6 Convertibles, 7 328 were 2-litre Mk1 Saloons, 3 502 were 2-litre Mk1 Convertibles, 5 649 were 2-litre Mk2 Saloons and 3 472 were 2-litre Mk2 Convertibles. Unlike many other Triumphs, the Vitesse was never assembled here at Motor Assemblies so South Africa only received a handful of cars. The register currently lists four Vitesse 6s, two 2-litre Mk1s and four 2-litre Mk2s.

Despite this rarity, spares supply and club support is impressive making it a viable, alternative entry into British sportscar ownership. It is a comfortable cruiser for the whole family and thanks to that silky 6-pot, sounds the business too. 🚗

In hindsight some re-engineering should have been done to the rear suspension before the Vitesse went on sale as the Herald was unable to cope with the additional *oomph*, and road tests slammed the handling as wayward





UNSUNG HERO

Mike Monk climbs behind the wheel of a little-known car that broke new ground in the German auto industry.





Stepping into any old automobile always creates an element of anticipation. How good is it? How easy to drive is it? Does it flatter to deceive? Is it better than it appears? No matter how old exactly, these are just some of the thoughts that pass through my mind when approaching a vehicle from the past – veteran, Edwardian, vintage, post-vintage thoroughbred, classic – that I am fortunate enough to have been invited to drive. Naturally, anything with a history that has gone down in the record books as significant heightens any expectations, but no matter what the vehicle's provenance, there is always something to be learned from experiencing a car from the past:

from the earliest horseless carriages to modern day classics. In some instances they represent milestones in a motor manufacturer's progress, forming part of its DNA not always recognised at the time but apparent today. Like the Opel Olympia...

In 1935 – four years after General Motors assumed total control of the company – Opel introduced the first-generation Olympia, named in anticipation of the 1936 Olympic Games to be held in Berlin. Launched at the 1935 Berlin Motor Show, it was a ground-breaker: Germany's first mass-produced car with an all-steel unitary body. Manufacture at the Rüsselsheim site began later in the year and necessitated some new production methods, including spot welding, that were patented by Opel. Using advanced types

of steel, the weight-saving monocoque construction resulted in the car being some 180kg lighter than its predecessor. (As a brief aside, in 1935 Opel became the first manufacturer to build more than 100 000 vehicles in a single year).

The compact, family-sized car – which was available in two body styles, an LZ two-door saloon and a CL two-door cabriolet – was powered by a 1.3-litre four-cylinder side-valve engine that produced 18kW. Transmission was a three-speed manual and the car had a top speed of 95km/h. Suspension was independent up front with a live axle supported on semi-elliptic leaf springs at the rear. Production lasted until 1937 by which time a four-speed 'box had become available. A total of 81 661





units were produced.

The second-generation Olympia – designated OL38 – appeared in 1937 and was manufactured during both pre- and post-war periods. Completely redesigned, it was a bigger car all round than the outgoing model, measuring 4.05 metres long, 1.5 metres wide and 1.6 metres high, with a wheelbase of 2.4 metres. It weighed around 920kg. An LV four-door saloon was added to the model line-up. The motor was all-new too, a 1 488cm³ overhead-valve inline-four that developed 34kW at 4 000rpm and 97Nm of torque at, unusually, the same revs. Compression ratio was a remarkably low 6.6:1. Opel reverted to a three-speed gearbox and top speed was raised to 112km/h. The underpinnings, with

drum brakes all round, were essentially a carryover.

Production came to a halt in late 1940 and during WWII the Rüsselsheim plant was severely damaged by Allied bomb attacks. After reconstruction, production of the essentially unchanged OL38 Olympia restarted in late 1947 but only of the two-door saloon, and by the end of 1949 a total of 25 952 had been produced. In 1950 the body was facelifted and the saloon was joined by a two-door cabriolet once more and, for the first time, a two-door station wagon.

The Franschoek Motor Museum's 1950 two-door sedan was built at GM's plant in Port Elizabeth. It was previously part of the Bertie Bester collection and is thought

to be one of only two still in the country – Olympias are not a familiar sight, even at overseas classic car shows. This car is in remarkably good condition, its glistening green paintwork and bold, upright stance lending it a period elegance that is all the more becoming because of its rarity. A bold grille, set-back and faired-in headlamps, bonnet-side louvres, stylish strips of chrome trim and white-wall tyres are just some of the body's stylish features. Admittedly, the truncated tail with its exposed spare wheel does look a little at odds with the Olympia's otherwise flattering looks, but from any angle it catches the eye.

Inside it is no less appealing. The front seat has leather-upholstered cushions and squabs on an otherwise minimalist





framework that offers adjustment from barely enough to practically nil. The split backrest allows entry to the rear but the limited rearwards movement does provide some reasonable legroom for rear-seat passengers. The car's only real downside is if you have to carry goods, in which case the rear seat backrest has to be pulled forward to access the boot as there is no exterior opening. For the driver, the painted metal dashboard houses two big dials for speed and fuel/oil pressure, trendy white knobs, warning lights for amps and 'winkers' and the ignition switch.

Ah, starting the car was a mystery at first until a button in the passenger side footwell (similar to but larger than the one on the driver's side for dipping the headlamps), was depressed to bring the engine into

life. Engage first with the column-shifter, release the stout handbrake under the dash to the right and away we go. The engine is surprisingly willing given its modest power output, while the gearbox proves to be an absolute delight, with second an elastic 'do anything' ratio from walking pace up to near cruising speed. The top two ratios boast synchromesh and the shifter moves with surprising precision, helped by a comfortable clutch action.

The brakes had just been completely redone and a hard shove on the middle pedal brought about reassuring stopping power. Tired dampers helped provide a slightly floaty ride while the big, thin-rimmed three-spoke steering wheel required only modest muscular input at slow turning speeds. Otherwise, cruising along, the

Olympia surprised with its quiet, stable gait, excellent view out and even a bit of bling with its chromed pointed bonnet mascot pointing the way ahead.

Around 160 000 OL38 Olympias – still with the 1.5-litre motor introduced in 1937 – were sold before it was replaced by the more modern Opel Olympia Rekord in 1953, which was the precursor to the 1957 Opel Rekord. The Olympia name was used in 1967-1970 for a luxury version of the Opel Kadett. But it was the first- and second-generation models that had the most impact, especially as the original set a new German motor industry standard and the popularity and reputation of its replacement did much to help Opel re-establish itself after the war. The Olympia is an unsung hero in Opel's history. **C**



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WHEN A BOER MADE A FOUR-CAM PLAN



Bill Jennings working on the Porsche engine.

South Africa has a rich history of F1 fixtures, fielding some of the most famous drivers in racing history in the '60s and '70s but our grids weren't limited to international cars or drivers. In fact they boasted a few talented local racers who were as skilled at making their own version of a mainstream F1 car as they were at piloting it on the track, says **Graeme Hurst**.

Photography Graeme Hurst, Crossley & Webb and Jennings collection



Jennings powering his Porsche special in the 1960 South African Grand Prix.

'n Boer maak 'n plan. It's a colloquialism that so aptly captures our ability to make things happen. To find a solution, sort something out, make it work. Usually the end result is creative and, almost goes without saying, completed on a shoestring. Call it invention out of necessity or simply a culture nurtured out of living on the tip of Africa where we couldn't get what we needed easily... either way, South Africans are inventive.

And the 'can do' attitude applies to many aspects of our history but none more so than motorsport, where there was both a rich vein of engineering talent and the will to create and excel in home-grown racers. Budgets were limited but it didn't stop guys dreaming big. Really big. Big enough to see themselves on a Formula 1 grid, in the case of Bill Jennings back in the early '60s.

A well-known Capetonian club racer and South African champion at the time, he famously had the grit and determination to procure a four-cam Carrera GS engine direct from Porsche in Stuttgart and, inspired by the Porsche works 718 GP cars, engineered his own racer to fit it into. What's more he campaigned his Jennings-Porsche, as the car became known, in a race with none

other than Stirling Moss and Jim Clark! But to understand how he pulled that off we need to understand the man and his racing career, made famous by a Riley-engined creation of his own.

The late Bill Jennings (he passed away a few years ago) grew up in Griquastad, where his parents farmed. He developed a deep love of motorsport following a visit to the Kimberley 100 when he was just 11 years old. In the late 1930s he took up an apprenticeship as a mechanic at a Cape Town garage before being mobilised for the war effort, serving in Italy.

Once back in the Mother City he took up racing in 1948 in a special he knocked up out of a Wolseley 8 chassis, parts of a Fiat Topolino body and a 1100 Riley engine. Another special followed with the same 1100 engine, this time mounted transversely behind the driver (as Honda would later do with its V12 RA271 racer) but the Riley engine's two bearing crank struggled to handle high revs. Learning from his experience, his next effort was a lot more accomplished: a two-seater sports car based on a 1500cc Riley TT engine that had reputedly won the 1935 and '36 Tourist Trophy races in England.

The chassis Jennings fabricated from

Bill found himself in Formula 2 and in fact campaigned it in the sixth South African GP at East London in January 1960, where he finished 11th overall. And that was after driving the car from Cape Town

four scrapyard propshafts selected for their size and weight. The car used torsion bar suspension, Fiat 1100 uprights, telescopic dampers and a steering rack out of a Morris Minor. At the rear it boasted an Austin A40 axle with an A90's final drive, while braking came from a set of A90 drums converted to take fins for cooling. It was, in Bill's own words in a chapter in the Greg Mills book on Tony Maggs, done with little to no funds: "Like most other drivers, I did not go out and buy a racing car. Even if one had been available I would not have been able to afford it. When I built the car in which I won three South African titles I was earning less than £8 a week. It was done on a shoestring and with the help of my friends."

The Jennings Riley was hugely successful and Bill campaigned it at races across the land, becoming three-time South African National Champion (in '54, '56 and '57). After that he sold the car to Rhodesian racer John Love for £500 and decided to focus on sports car racing in a GSM Dart but with a serious twist. Instead of the typical Ford engine, Bill opted for Porsche power after acquiring a four-cam Carrera GS 1500 engine from Porsche itself.

Quite how he pulled that off at the time, given that Porsche was firmly established in racing, beggars belief but, in the Maggs book, Bill recalls writing to the German carmaker with some assistance from the local agents "to ask for a Carrera four-cam engine, transmission and rear suspension". It was a ballsy move but it paid off as, "these items duly arrived, despite the fact that we later received a letter from Porsche stating that it was not company policy to supply engines and transmissions for those sorts of purposes!"

The engine was then slotted into the Dart and Bill campaigned it with great success, covering thousands of miles driving to races in the then Transvaal and Natal and even in Luanda, Angola.

But ultimately the Dart Porsche fell foul of local sports car regulations when organisers felt the car was too much of a 'one-off' to compete unless the grid featured single-seaters. Bill found himself in Formula 2 and in fact campaigned it in the sixth South African GP at East London in January 1960, where he finished 11th overall. And that was after driving the car from Cape Town – something no other Formula 2 car could claim at the time.

After that, Bill decided that a lighter single-seater body was needed to get the

best use out of that fabulous four-cam Carrera engine. At the same time Formula 1 had seen a reduction in engine capacity to 1500cc, which meant the car would be eligible for Formula 1 fixtures. And that's when he dreamed really big...

An article in *Motor Parade* magazine at the time records that Bill spent a month thinking out the design for an all-new single-seater (no scale drawings were done) before taking a further three months to build the chassis. The body was, as Bill further elaborated in the Maggs book, "modelled on the Works Porsche" and was formed around ¾-inch tubing with coils over telescopic Teleflo dampers all round while the front suspension came off a crashed Alfa Giulietta bought in Johannesburg.

The transverse wishbones were fabricated from high tensile 18-gauge 1in steel tubing from a furniture factory. The rear used Porsche drum brakes and wheels with the rear suspension featuring lower transverse lower wishbones and stressed driveshafts, much like a racing Lotus of the day. The steering rack came – yet again – from a Morris Minor, while braking was by dual Girling master cylinders.

Bill spent considerable time engineering items like the gear linkage which took the movement from the back of the 'box, across the engine and all the way into the left-hand side of the cockpit, with a clever rod design featuring no less than 28 ball races to ensure slick and reliable operation. The body was the work of Bill's talented friend Charlie Hatton, who rolled the panels out of light aluminium using an English wheel, and featured a clam-shell rear-end with removal side panels for access to each cylinder bank. All up the Jennings-Porsche weighed 450kg, which was some 25kg lighter than the Porsche team cars.

At the time of build, Bill had already clocked up more than 10 000 miles on the four-cam engine driving the Dart to race fixtures and it was untouched. His only modification, soon after installation in the F1 car, was a switch to four Grand Prix Amal carburettors (in place of the standard Solexes) and this involved some precision machining of the manifolds as the ports were larger than the carburettors' 15/32in bore.

Fuel was supplied from a straddle tank over the driver's knees and fed by twin Autopulse pumps. In standard form the plain-bearing 1498cc Carrera engine was rated 115bhp at 7 000rpm but Bill reckoned the switch to Amals took it up to 125bhp –



Jennings with Stirling Moss looking at the Jennings car.



Jennings-Porsche in the 1961 South African Grand Prix.



The GSM Dart that housed the Porsche engine.



An early Jennings car, the Jennings Riley Special.

still a way short of the 147bhp output of the Porsche team 718s, the car his was visually modelled on.

The Jennings-Porsche made its first international Grand Prix debut at Killarney on 17 December 1960. The race was dominated by the works Porsches of Stirling Moss and Jo Bonnier but Bill managed an impressive 10th place. His self-built racer evidently caused quite a stir as he recalled both Porsche team manager Baron Huschke von Hanstein and Moss taking time to examine and photograph the suspension and bodywork, before promising to investigate the possibility of supplying a more powerful four-cam engine. Can't imagine Ron Dennis having quite the same reaction if you showed them a rip-off of the latest McLaren F1 car in the pits at Silverstone today...

Ten days on Bill entered the seventh SA Grand Prix in East London. Moss and Bonnier repeated their one-two finish while Bill came home in 17th place. A year on he was back for the '61 SA Grand Prix at the same circuit and Bill brought the Jennings-Porsche home in 12th place, although this time the race was won by Jim Clark with Moss in second place, both in a Lotus. Bill's next competitive fixture was the Cape Grand Prix, which ran in January of '62, but sadly he had to retire from the race after the Carrera engine suffered camshaft damage.

After two seasons, Bill sold the Jennings-Porsche without the engine to Doug Maister, who fitted a Volvo engine to it before the car ended up with Lionel Day. He campaigned successfully in the 1960s before it eventually found its way to Mike Ledingham. By then it had been modified to accommodate an Alfa Romeo 1750 GTV engine. Little was known of the car's racing history with the Alfa unit, or indeed in the last three decades (the last scrutineering stickers are from 1980). In fact,



A genuine Porsche 718 in the 1960 South African Grand Prix. The resemblance to the Jennings car clearly visible.

The Jennings-Porsche made its first international Grand Prix debut at Killarney on 17 December 1960. The race was dominated by the works Porsches of Stirling Moss and Jo Bonnier but Bill managed an impressive 10th place



This series of shots shows the Jennings Porsche as Crossley & Webb found it. Note incorrect Alfa engine. A restoration is on the cards for later in the year.

the Jennings-Porsche only really came to light by chance just 18 months ago when Mike's daughter attended an event at Cape Town classic motoring specialists Crossley & Webb, as Gareth Crossley recalls: "She was at a fashion event held on our premises and casually mentioned that her father had a Jaguar E-type and an old racing car in his barn which the family wanted him to sell. Then she added that it was a Formula 1 car and we thought 'yeah, right...'"

Still Gareth and fellow director Brian Webb were intrigued enough to consult local racer Dave Alexander, who confirmed that it could only be the Jennings-Porsche – Dave having reunited Bill with the car some years before. A deal ensued to acquire both the E-type, the Jennings-Porsche and a rotten 928 – all three of which had to be extracted from a barn near the town of Stanford, just past Hermanus.

Today the car is parked as found in Crossley & Webb's showroom and is proving quite a conversation piece. It's complete but missing the delectable bit, namely that four-cam Carrera unit. It still has the 1750 engine in place, which is mated with an adaptor plate to the Porsche 'box, but it's obvious

the car has been modified.

Most notably the elegant nostril-like nose has been given a Maserati 250F-like chop to accommodate a radiator to cool the Alfa unit (the Porsche being air-cooled) and there's evidence that the engine mounts have been crudely re-positioned to accommodate the longer in-line four. The rear clam-shell end has been lost, as have the original wheels (fronts were Alfa Borraris), but much of the rest looks original, although Gareth thinks that the chassis itself may have been lengthened.

Up close it's in barn-find condition with a fair amount of dirt and surface corrosion to some parts but it's all minor. Bill's engineering ability is evident in the original structure: the substantial tubular chassis itself has been carefully fabricated to accommodate the wide four-cam engine and it's easy to see why von Hanstein and Moss were impressed: this is no DIY kit car. The design is clearly well thought out and the finish every bit as good as a professional racing car of the time. Ditto the extended gear linkage which is still in place and operational. Bill's only improvement to the car had been the addition of an anti-roll bar and this is still on

the car, complete with properly engineered locating points and pivots.

So what's in store for this amazing piece of South African motorsport heritage? Crossley & Webb are keen to restore it to original specification – a task they hope to start later this year. Of course the 64 million Dollar question is how to source a four-cam engine as that restores its Porsche and F1 heritage. And that in turn allows them to dream big. Really big, as it will be eligible for such illustrious races as the *Glover Trophy* at the annual Goodwood Revival meeting.

But spare Carrera four-cams are über rare and don't exactly turn up on eBay... tool room copies are available off the shelf from race engine experts Capricorn in Germany but the invoice for one of its turn-key engines will be well into six figures in hard currency. Mind boggling in Rands but, in a sense, the ultimate compliment to Bill Jennings when you consider it will be for a car that was built on a shoestring by a man who started his racing career on just £8 a week. **C**

Thanks to Crossley & Webb
(www.crossley-webb.com)

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UN- COVERING THE UN- CONVENTIONAL

Despite never having seen or heard of Honda's diminutive 1300 Coupe 9 before he stumbled across it in a Johannesburg basement, **Stuart Grant** became enamoured thanks to some interesting and not-so-common engineering, ingenuity and stylishness. Oh yes, and there is the fact that it was a somewhat private project spearheaded in a rather dogmatic approach by Mr Soichiro Honda himself, with customer satisfaction outweighing any engineering or production compromises.

Photography by Henrie Snyman

In 1971 *Sports Car World* magazine succinctly summed up just how different and odd-ball this car was with the following lines: "Four cylinders... fair enough. Air-cooled? Well, it's been done. Transversely-mounted engine? That's been done, too. Forced-induction air-cooling? Not all that new. Front-wheel drive? Not new. Four carbs on a four-banger? Standard procedure, for Honda. Dry-sump? Been popular in performance cars for donkey's years. Cross-over swing axles? Extremely rare! But combine all these features in one super-sporty little coupé, and you've got what looks on paper to be the weirdest little motor car ever!"

The Coupe 9 story goes back to the mid-1960s, when Honda set about building mainstream export market cars to run alongside its motorcycle production. His brief was not an easy one: it called for a well-priced, family saloon powered by an air-cooled 1.3-litre engine that featured interior dimensions of the average 1.5-litre Japanese sedan while performing like a 2-litre engine. Add into the mix that it should deliver fuel economy figures in the same league as a small 1000cc car and that the engine should emit no more noise than a water-cooled 4-cylinder petrol and it is understandable that the engineering team got a bit jittery.

From then on the relatively inexperienced car designers and engineers had to put up with Mr Honda standing over their shoulders and insisting that they change the design when he felt it would not work. When lead designer Hideo Takeda, under pressure to get manufacturing going, retorted: "I hear what you say, Mr. Honda. But they are about to start mass production at Suzuka, so to make additional design changes would only bring chaos to the line", he was met by red-faced Honda sternly barking: "Dammit, chaos on the line is nothing compared to what our customers would have to suffer. Can't you understand that? Now, go to Suzuka and take care of it, right now!"

Under this constant pressure and pursuit

From then on the relatively inexperienced car designers and engineers had to put up with Mr Honda standing over their shoulders and insisting that they change the design when he felt it would not work

of perfection for the customer the team managed to churn out a fleet of prototype cars by its 21 October 1968 unveiling at the Akasaka Prince Hotel in Tokyo. Known as the H1300, the show cars were small 4-door saloons and the media reception was favourable. Honda claimed 96 horsepower and a top speed of 175km/h and threw in the fact that they recognised their social responsibility to ensure an active safety design, with powerful brakes and supreme comfort. At the unveiling one unit was fired up for journalists to hear how quiet the 1298cc engine was and apparently Mr Honda was heard to say that the engine was far quieter than a certain well-known German rear-engined automobile.

By 15 April 1969, following a slight delay in production as Mr Honda had designers fettle what he thought was a bland aesthetic, the first production H1300s were ready and the media were let loose in a whack of them at Nagoya's Suzuka Raceway.

Aimed squarely at the Toyota Corona, Mitsubishi Galant, Nissan Bluebird and Mazda Capella, the H1300 was Honda's largest car to date, measuring in at 3885mm x 1465mm. Two derivatives went on sale immediately: the first was known as the Series 77 and came with a single carburettor 100hp mill, and the second was the Series 99 that had four Keihin carburettors, making it good for 115 horses. For top dollar a Series 99 Custom Saloon was also offered, featuring an automatic gearbox and air conditioning. The H1300 saloon competed favourably with the rest of the Japanese makes when it came to performance, driving enjoyment, specification and comfort departments but failed in the pricing war.

It was in February 1970 that the Coupe version raised its head to the public. Although both sport a so-called 'Mohican' nose structure, the Coupe is definitely a better looking machine. Some say that the designers saw how fond Mr Honda was of his Pontiac GTO, which also wore a Mohican, and penned it with this in mind. Another, more plausible, theory is that it allowed for more body

Road testers complimented the handling, often commenting that if you didn't pop the bonnet you'd have walked away thinking you'd just driven another front-engine, rear-wheel drive vehicle

rigidity and removed the need to solder panels, which concerned Mr Honda because of the unhealthy soldering gases breathed in by employees while doing this. Saloon mechanicals and engine specs were carried across with the single carb variant badged as the Coupe 7 and the quadruple carb version the Coupe 9.

Road testers complimented the handling, often commenting that if you didn't pop the bonnet you'd have walked away thinking you'd just driven another front-engine, rear-wheel drive vehicle. Front suspension saw A-arms rubber-mounted to the sub-frame and McPherson struts, while the Honda inventiveness shone at the back end with each rear wheel mounted on a swing axle that pivoted on the opposite side of the chassis. The axles were sprung and located longitudinally by semi-elliptic leaf spring with a floating connection to prevent the leaves twisting as the axle rose and fell. This thought benefitted the ride and handling by lowering the roll centres and reducing the wheel camber change and jacking effect.

All very clever but the real gem in the crown was that air-cooled motor. Mr Honda stated that "since water-cooled engines eventually use air to cool the water, we can implement air-cooling from the very beginning". His R&D crew came up with a system called Duo Dyna Air Cooling where the cylinder head and block had airways or passages like the water channels of liquid-cooled engines. An impeller was mounted directly to one end of the crankshaft and provided cooling by pumping air through these passages. Added to this were external cooling fins cast onto the engine casing. The result was triumphant, with the system doing just as efficient a job as a traditional water-cooled lump. While most other air-cooled suffered with noise issues, Honda's internal channels meant that the external fins were short in comparison, and this prevented vibrations and high-frequency ringing.

Lubrication came via a dry sump unit with two pumps: one sending oil from a tank





mounted on the upper right of the engine bay to the motor and the other pumping it from the crankcase back to the tank. Of course this tank also featured some cooling fins in the casing. An OHC engine configuration was used but the performance of the little 1298cc was enhanced by hemispherical combustion chambers and an alloy cross-flow head layout.

In Coupe 9 4-carb guise the maximum break horsepower is measured at an incredible 7 300rpm but the Honda pulls all the way from 900rpm without a hassle. Only a Mazda RX2 Rotary could rival the smoothness and lack of engine and transmission vibrations. Max speed came in at around 160km/h and a naught to 100km/h sprint accomplished in just under 12 seconds. Gearshift on the fully synchromeshed 4-speed manual is swift and thanks to the decent tractability, third is only needed for a quick overtake on a back road. Weighing in at 960kg, the discs up front and drums at the rear do a top-notch job.

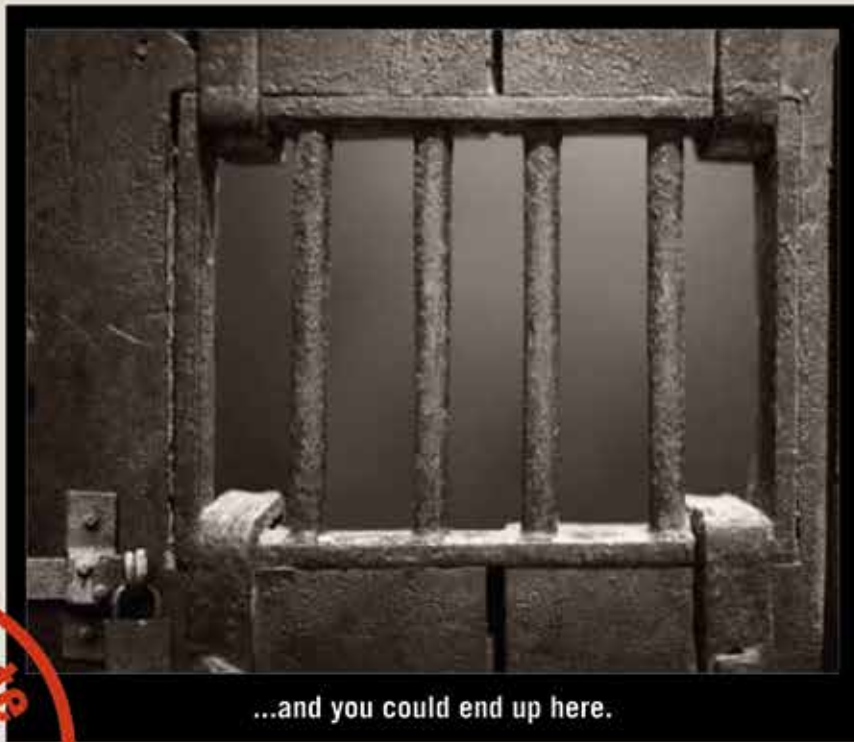
Although aimed at the export market, the Coupe numbers are not huge with 35 804 Coupe 7s, 7 881 Coupe 9s and 1 788 automatic models claimed to have been made between 1969 and '73. Of those only 1053 left Japan, and records show that 731 of these ended up in Australia. With Japan being a right-hand drive market this shipment to Australia is not that surprising, but how three made it to the United States remains a bit of a mystery. The remainder seem to have found their way to various pacific islands but Zimbabwean motorists seem to recall seeing some on their roads back in the day, as well as another Japanese cult Coupe – the Isuzu Bellette. How many made it to South Africa remains a mystery.

No matter how hard I try I can't find much fault with the Coupe 9. Perhaps back in the day the negative could have been the pricing. Or maybe that it was marketed as being able to carry three rear passengers when in reality it is two teenagers at a squash. But as a collectable classic I can't really slate it – after all it has the look, goes well, is rare and even reasonably economical in the fuel usage stakes.

But wait... I found one big negative – you are not going to find one in the local classifieds. And if it is that hard to find the car itself, imagine trying to source the spares to keep it delighting your senses on the road... 🇳🇿



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SOPHISTICATED ELEGANCE



Mercedes-Benz's SL badge has been around for over 60 years but the enormous success and aspirational brand positioning of the company's luxury sports car tag is arguably thanks to the longevity of one variant: the R107SL, which famously starred in the TV series *Dallas* says **Graeme Hurst**.

Photography: Graeme Hurst





It might be hard to believe in today's consumer-driven and marketing-heavy society but there was a time when filmmakers had a job convincing car companies to supply their offerings for the silver screen. BMC reluctantly supplied three Minis for the original *Italian Job* with the producers coughing up for the remaining stunt double cars, while Aston Martin only got involved with Eon Production's *James Bond* series after Jaguar refused to hand over an E-type for its 1964 release, *Goldfinger*, in what must rank as the marketing blunder of the century...

But fast-forward a decade or two and the concept of product placement – also known as embedded marketing or brand integration – was heavily embraced by most major brands. Just ask any kid of the late '70s and early '80s who was allowed a peek at TV1 on a Tuesday night when the TV series *Dallas* was aired here in SA. Yup, true petrolheads old enough to be

out of bed for the 9pm slot will recall each member of the Ewing oil baron family by the car they drove: Pamela Ewing had a Porsche 911 Convertible, family matriarch Miss Ellie a VW Rabbit and granddaughter Lucy had the keys to a Porsche 924. Oldest Ewing prodigy and series mainstay, the wheeling and dealing JR, had a W126 Mercedes while wife Sue-Ellen had an SEC. But the standout was Bobby Ewing's red Mercedes-Benz 450SL.

This was the car that exuded European class with the extravagance of the Ewings' oil-rich lifestyle all in one. It was product placement on a Texan scale. And with the series running from 1978 to 1991 with a massive viewership – the famous 1980 'Who Done It?' episode of *Dallas* pulled in 90 million American viewers, all keen to find out who shot JR – it paid off. More than 230 000 R107 SLs rolled off the assembly lines, although not just in Sindelfingen in Germany. The model was also assembled here from 1977-80 in East London at

United Car and Diesel Distributors (UCDD), as the Mercedes-Benz plant was known back then.

In all, the R107 had an 18-year lifespan, which is impressive and second only to the marque's famed Geländewagen off-roader, while the sheer volume of production (more than five times made than its predecessor, the W113-series Pagoda) helped cement the SL moniker as a symbol of luxury sports cars into the automotive cerebra.

That SL acronym stood for *Sportlich-Leicht* (Sport Lightweight), a bloodline of Mercedes sportscars that kicked off with the Gullwing racer of 1952 – with the iconic lift-up doors necessary to accommodate the car's tubular monocoque racing frame. Two years on, a road-going version was launched. It turned out to be so successful that American importers famously convinced Mercedes to engineer a convertible version for the drop-top-hungry Californian market – and that's really how the SL concept as we know it was born.



With sophisticated engineering and a race-derived design, the 300SL was seriously pricey and the preserve of the rich so Mercedes penned the 190SL, a pretty two-seater based on the more humble Ponton saloon's underpinnings. It was a handsome thing with styling cues from its big brother but, with barely 100bhp from its four-pot overhead cam engine, the 190SL lacked the urge needed to match those looks.

But all that changed in '63 with the Paul Bracq-designed W113 SL 'Pagoda' – a name coined after the dip-down styling of its removable hardtop. The Pagoda offered 150bhp and 120mph performance, in a crisply styled two-door configuration that boasted a neat folding hood and the option of a hardtop. Initially available only as a 230SL, it was guided by chief engineer Rudolf Uhlenhaut's maxim that the SL should beat the opposition on handling and finesse rather than brute power. It was a brave move as the model replaced both the 190SL and 300SL but it worked as the

W113 was hugely successful with nearly 50 000 made.

Capacity increases soon followed, with the switch to 250 and 280 units with power steering standard and four-speed manual gearbox an option (later a five-speed). The W113 SL quickly established itself as a refined, upmarket sports car with European panache but its styling, particularly the chrome-rimmed instruments on its painted dash, dated it by the late '60s.

Cue its replacement, the R107, which debuted in 1971 as a 350SL. Aimed squarely at the lucrative US West Coast market, it was an all-new design that accommodated the ever-tightening crash test requirements. Suspension came from the underpinnings of the new generation W114/5 saloon, with a semi-trailing arm rear-end, and like its predecessor, the R107 was supplied with a hardtop which had the 'pagoda' roof styling.

But the focus on crash protection meant the new car tipped the scales at 1 560kg

(it was nicknamed *der Panzerwagen* during development) which was 300kg up on the Pagoda, so Mercedes had to slot in the 3499cc iron-block V8 from its 280SE 3.5 'fintail' coupé to maintain performance – hence the 350SL moniker.

By '74, the onset of the oil crisis resulted in the Stuttgart engineers dusting off the 280SL badge, this time with the twin-cam M110 'six' from the then-new W123 280CE while the development of a larger, 4.5-litre V8 created the range-topping 450SL.

That nomenclature quickly came to epitomise success here in SA; one of these parked on the drive of a Spanish-style Rivonia home said as much about the owner doctor or director's success as his horseriding-attired wife did wafting around in the family Range Rover. It was a hugely aspirational model and rightly so: when *CAR* magazine tested one in early '79 it was listed at R27 374 – about half the price of the average house and six times the price of an entry-level Alfasud (although even the

bravest of *Alfisti*, buying and then driving six rot-prone Alfas into the ground back-to-back for the last 37 years, may still not have had something rust free on the drive today, whereas there are plenty of R107s currently driving on our roads).

Demand was clearly there as UCDD was assembling around 40 a week in East London, although that figure included the four-seater, coupé variant, the SLC. In total 454 SLs (and 1428 SLCs) came out of the local plant with the remaining 530 SLs sold from '71, until sales petered out in '87, coming in to SA as imports.

Intriguingly the SLC is the only Mercedes model to be built as a stretched convertible and not as a cut-down saloon. The coupé was only in production until '81, when the C126 380SEC and 500SEC coupés were launched. By then SA production was over by a year and the SL became a full import, which upped the price tag massively.

Curiously, ten years into production, there were no rumours of a replacement or sightings of heavily-disguised mules on test. Truth is the three-pointed brand was

holding back. By the late '70s there had been talk of convertibles being banned in California and Mercedes, much like Porsche with its 911, was reluctant to invest heavily in a replacement. It was safer to let the already-long-homologated R107 model simply evolve.

That meant the 350 and 450SL got engine capacity stretches to sire the 380SL and 500SL variants (the latter instantly recognisable in the car park of a Sandton golf club by its bootlid-mounted rubber spoiler). These engines boasted lighter all-alloy construction and more refined four-speed gearboxes, while the cars had minor styling tweaks.

From September 1985 the 280 SL was given a 3-litre single-cam engine to create the 300 SL while the 380SL's capacity increased to create the 420SL. There was a switch to four-pot front callipers and the front suspension from the W126. The 500 SL remained but it was no longer top of the tree as there was a 560 SL for the USA to overcome performance-strangling emissions equipment. All models now

had a front air dam while Bosch KE Jetronic injection was fitted under the bonnet, providing state-of-the-art engine management. Wheel size increased by an inch to 15in to make use of low profile tyres, and ABS braking was standard on the 500SL.

The tweaks helped to freshen up the R107, particularly in the performance stakes, although even in original 450SL spec it was no slouch. *CAR* magazine recorded 205 km/h on its test. Acceleration wasn't quite as impressive: flooring the throttle only got the speedo needle up to the 100km/h mark after 11.3 seconds (a lot of that was down to the sluggish three speed gearbox) but the testers claimed it was 'very quick once moving' and certainly the 80-100km/h overtaking test took just 3.7 seconds.

But outright acceleration isn't what the R107 is about as it's more of a boulevardier that offers bottomless levels of sustained teutonic urge once on the move, with a turbine-like *whoosh* from its V8 when you hit the metal. The ride quality is seriously



350 SL Sportlichkeit mit Gewissen.

Ab 17. April 1971 gibt es einen sportlichen Zweifitzer, wie es ihn nicht alle Jahre gibt. Weil ein solches Automobil lange und gründlich entwickelt werden muß. Nur so verstehen Mercedesfahrer das Wort „neu“. Sie messen Fortschritt nicht an Blechschlängen. Sondern an Technik, Fahrkomfort und Sicherheit. Die eigenwillige Karosserieform hat dem 350 SL

schon im Windkanal Bestnoten eingebracht. Sie ist modern. Aber nicht modisch. Erstens funktionsbetont. Zweitens attraktiv. Eine Reihenfolge, die Mercedesfahrer mögen.

Die Fortsetzung folgt unter der Haube:

Der 3.5 l V8-Motor, 200 PS beschleunigt in 8,8 sec von 0 auf 100 km/h. Dieserspitze 210 km/h. Doch für Mercedesfahrer zählen andere Werte: Das hohe Drehmo-

ment, das seine Kraft aus dem Hubraum schlägt. Zwei obertliegende Nockenwellen, die sportliches Fahren ermöglichen. Die Luftluke seines kultivierten, ausgeprägten Triebwerks. Das auf lange Lebensdauer ausgelegt ist und das verzögerungslos anspricht. Die elektronische Benzineinspritzung garantiert dafür. Und nicht nur dafür. Sie reduziert auch die Schadstoffe. Der V8-Motor erfüllt schon heute die europäischen Abgasvorschriften von morgen.



Über links. Die eigenwillige Form des 350 SL, seiner Formen und Proportio. Hier ist in jedem Bereich Bestnoten im Automobilbau zu erwarten. Oben rechts. Der 3.5 l V8 von Mercedes erfüllt alle Zusätze des besten Hubraum der, der gleichzeitig in Drehmoment „ganz vorne“ liegt ein bester Mercedesmotor. Unten links. Die hochentwickelte und auf sportliche Höchstleistungen ausgelegte Benzineinspritzung des 350 SL. Die Einspritzung ist ein Meisterwerk der Technik. Die Einspritzung ist ein Meisterwerk der Technik. Die Einspritzung ist ein Meisterwerk der Technik.



Fahrerlebnis haben als selbst selbst.
Mercedesfahrer begegnen Sie und werden der Meinung, daß Sie:
1. hochkonzentriert sind
2. auf ein höchstes Fahrniveau höher werden als ein gewöhnliches Konkurrenzfahrzeug
3. total entspannt sind
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Fahrwerk und Bremsen

Die Diagonal-Federachse sorgt für sicheres Fahrverhalten, gute Straßenlage und hohen Fahrkomfort. Doch wer schneller auf 100 ist, braucht auch bessere Bremsen. Deshalb werden die Scheibenbremsen des 350 SL von Turbinenscheiben in Luftgekühlung. Und vorne zusätzlich innenbelüftet. Fairne ist die Sportlichkeit, die wir unseren Straßen brauchen. Beherrschung der Kraft ist wichtiger als die Kraft selbst. Für Mercedesfahrer,

Zu Ihrer Sicherheit wurde auf besonderen Flankenenschutz Wert gelegt. Und Windbleche für die vorderen Dachstreben konstruiert – um Seitenwinden schutzfrei zu halten. Ergebnisse unserer systematischen Sicherheitsforschung. Zwei von vielen. Wenn Sie einen 350 SL probefahren, werden Sie spüren, daß ein neuer Mercedes immer ein „neues“ Auto ist.



Mercedes-Benz
Im neuen Design auf dem Schlachtfeld.

refined and must have been a revelation compared to its peers back in the early '70s.

The old school and (typically Mercedes) power-assisted re-circulating ball steering doesn't have the precision of a rack setup but it's sharp enough for the job, if a bit over-assisted. But that sort of adds to the air of sophistication when behind the wheel. Maybe it's the view across the expansive bonnet with its chrome vents on the scuttle or the wood detail on the central binnacle, or just the luxury feel of leather and the sight of the three pointed star badge on the 'wheel... whichever, this is a car that quickly makes its driver feel special, even if the ergonomics are dated and the cockpit cramped if you're over 6ft. It's also superbly put together. From the moment you pull on the sculpted chrome door handle (on pre-'85 cars) or operate the switchgear you sense the quality of the engineering and heft of the componentry – the last of the era where Benzes were built to a standard and not to a price, as fans of the Stuttgart brand often put it.

By the mid '80s it was clear that Californian safety legislation wasn't going to kill off the open-top lifestyle and the Daimler board sanctioned the development of its replacement, the Bruno Saccopenned R129. The same petrolheads old enough to have seen the cliff-hanger series finale of *Dallas* in May 1991 (which ends with JR staggering around with a bourbon and a loaded gun before the credits roll), would recall that the new SL boasted one seriously nifty gadget: a hidden roll bar that could be raised on demand but which is automatically raised on impact in much the same way as airbags are deployed.

Bigger and decidedly lardier (weight was up to 1 800kg), it was launched in 300 and 500SL form (with the option of a multivalve version on the 300) and featured many innovative details for the time, including the option of electronically-controlled damping. The range evolved to include a 280SL and a 'big daddy', the 290kW V12 variant, badged as the 600SL.

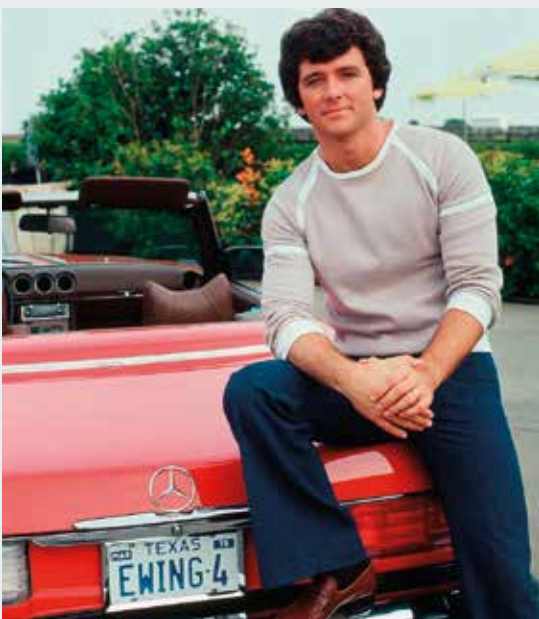
Underneath the R107's rather dated rear, diagonal swing axle gave way to a modern

multi-link axle, as per the W124 saloon on which the R129 was based. The number of standard features was high, with electric operation for the windows, mirrors, seats and – for the first time – the soft top.

Although the styling was from one of the German carmaker's less memorable eras, the new SL was successful and Mercedes sold over 200 000 in the model's 12-year cycle before it was in turn replaced by the R230, which featured a full folding metal roof.

R230 sales rated better than the R107 but it only happened as the R107's near two-decade stint in the showroom paved the way so that the SL could remain as the prime offering in the pointed star's line-up, that's as much an aspirational offering on your local Sandown Motors showroom floor today as it was to the 984 local owners who got the keys to their SL in the '70s and '80s. And a lot of that is thanks to seeing Bobby Ewing's Signal Red 450SL on TV every Tuesday at 9. 📺

Thanks to Ryno Verster for sales figures.



Sicherheit durch Dynamik.

Die größtmögliche Sicherheit, die ein Auto bieten kann, ist Überlegenheit im Beherrschens seiner Kraft. Durch ein Fahrwerk, das schmäler ist als der Motor. Durch eine perfekte Synthese aus Fahrerstützung, Fahrstabilität und Fahrkomfort, die zweispiegeliges Fahren ermöglicht. Aber dennoch keine Heikeln produzieren.

Die Stärke als Reserver bietet. Und nicht als Zwang, nur auszuspielen. Deshalb ist die Sicherheit eines Mercedes nie nur durch technische Merkmale nachweisbar. Sondern auch durch Gelassenheit beim Fahren. Die Dynamik

dieses Konzeptes verschafft einen Vangung an Überlegenheit, der sich auch durch Überholen nicht einholen läßt. So beweisen sich auch im kleinen Kreis der exklusiven Sportwagen, daß es ein Luxusmodell ist, ob man Pferdeköpfe auf die Straße bringt. Oder Mercedes fährt.

Die SL-Klasse von Mercedes-Benz. Sie zeigt, daß das Konzept der dynamischen Modellpflege im Hause Daimler-Benz auch für den Kreis der Autos gilt, die mit in kleineren Stückzahlen gebaut werden: Nahezu unbemerkt sind Neuentwicklungen für Wartungsfreundlichkeit, ver-

längerte Lebensdauer, Sicherheit und komfortableren haptischen Kontakt eingeflossen, so daß die Sonderanfertigung auf dem Weltmarkt unangefochten bleibt. Mit der SL-Klasse dokumentiert sich Mercedes-Benz in ihrer sportlichen Form.



Die Sicherheit, besser zu fahren. Mercedes-Benz. Die ganz Besten auf allen Straßen.

FERRIS WHEELS

Feign illness and take a day off school, take your friend's dad's priceless Ferrari for a joyride, have a wonderful day off around town and sneak back home to pretend to your parents you have been in bed all along. Which one of us hasn't done that? Okay, maybe not the priceless Ferrari bit, but as **Sivan Goren** found out, we can't all be as lucky as Ferris Bueller.



11 June 2016 marks the 30th anniversary of the release of the cult classic *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, directed by John Hughes, who also directed several other '80s smash hits such as *The Breakfast Club* and *Pretty in Pink*. This was the movie that launched the career of Matthew Broderick, but possibly the biggest star of the movie had a non-speaking role – the rare Ferrari that was ultimately destroyed in a scene near the end of the movie.

The movie revolves around the age-old story of some kids skiving off school – nothing new there. But add a few plot twists, such as Ferris hacking into the school records to alter the number of days he had been absent from school when the principal smelled a rat, and Ferris convincing his best friend Cameron to 'borrow' his dad's prized

possession – a 1961 Ferrari GT California – and take it for a joyride into town, and you have the makings of a blockbuster.

Things might have ended okay, but unfortunately the unsuspecting youths left the car with two parking attendants, who then proceeded to take it out for a joyride. When Ferris and Cameron eventually got the car back, they realised that a good 100 miles had been added to the odometer and concocted a crazy scheme to roll it back, which involved putting the Ferrari on axle stands and running the car in reverse in the hopes that it would run off the miles. When this did not work, Cameron's frustration resulted in the car falling off the stands and flying out of the garage and into a ravine behind the house.

Of course, the '61 Ferrari GT California being an extremely rare and valuable car, it could obviously not be used in all the scenes.



Says Hughes: "The insert shots of the Ferrari were of the real 250 GT California. The cars we used in the wide shots were obviously reproductions. There were only 100 of these cars, so it was way too expensive to destroy. We had a number of replicas made. They were pretty good, but for the tight shots I needed a real one, so we brought one in to the stage and shot the inserts with it."

The replica cars used in the film (there were 3) were Modena Spyder Californias. Interestingly, the idea of using these cars came from the director John Hughes himself, prior to filming. He had been doing research into Modena Design and Development who produced the Modena Spyder California, a replica of the Ferrari 250 GT, after he had seen the name mentioned in a car magazine. Started in 1980, Modena Design and Development produced only Ferrari GT Spyder replicas – apparently

such good replicas that it was said that you could've parked the replica next to the real thing and you wouldn't know the difference.

Hughes contacted Modena co-founder Neil Glassmoyer to arrange to see the Modena Spyder and when Hughes introduced himself over the phone, Glassmoyer actually hung up on him, thinking that he was being pranked. When Hughes called back and convinced Glassmoyer that he was in fact the real John Hughes, Glassmoyer and co-founder Mark Goyette arranged to take the car to him. Upon arrival at the director's office, a scruffy looking chap emerged from the building and began to look the car over. Thinking he was a janitor, they didn't pay him much attention until he suddenly cried out "This is it!" Turns out that the scruffy guy was in fact John Hughes himself. Given four

weeks to produce the movie cars, Modena Design quickly put together three cars to be used in the film.

Mark Goyette, an automobile restorationist, designed the kits for the three reproductions used in the film. The first was leased to Paramount Pictures and was used in almost every shot in the movie. The 'replicar' was hated by the entire crew because they claimed it just didn't work right. Case in point: the scene in which Ferris turns off the car to leave it with the garage attendant had to be shot a dozen times because the car would not start. The car was built with a correct wheelbase,

There were only 100 of these cars, so it was way too expensive to destroy. We had a number of replicas made



but used a Ford V8 engine instead of a Ferrari V12. After filming was wrapped up, Paramount returned it to Goyette. It had some superficial damage but he rebuilt it and subsequently sold it to a couple in California. He had to rebuild it yet again after it was run off the road. It was sold in the mid-90s but hasn't been seen since about 2000.

The second car was sold to Paramount as a kit car which was meant to be used to assemble their stunt car, but they did such a poor job that all it was good for was going backwards out of the window of Cameron's house. It too was ultimately

rebuilt and ended up at Planet Hollywood in Minneapolis and then Cancun. The last car was never actually completed and disappeared after the film was finished. No one really knows where it ended up – possibly it is still sitting somewhere

in a back lot at Paramount! What *is* known is that one of these replicas was sold by Bonhams on 19 April 2010 at the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon, United Kingdom for £79 600.

In 1986, at the time of filming, the original 250 GT California model was worth \$350 000. Since the release of the film, the model has become one of the most expensive cars ever sold, selling for \$10 976 000 at an auction in 2008 and more recently, in 2015, for an astonishing \$16 830 000. And speaking of recent events, in February 2015, a new version of this iconic car was launched in South Africa – the Ferrari California T.

One wonders if the Californian name alludes to the iconic movie or the beach and summer lifestyle this car epitomises... either way, with a top speed of 316km/h, Ferris Bueller's perfectly-fitting quote rings true, especially behind the wheel of this Ferrari: "Life moves pretty fast; if you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it!" 🚗

Since the release of the film, the model has become one of the most expensive cars ever sold, selling for \$10 976 000 at an auction in 2008 and more recently, in 2015, for an astonishing \$16 830 000



Pablo Clark's S.A. Ferrari Price Guide

Model	Year	Production Numbers	Value
Dino			
246 GTB	1969-1974	2609	4 800 000
246 GTS	1972-1974	1274	5 200 000
308 GT4	1974-1979	2826	400 000
V8			
308 GTB FG	1975	712	2 000 000
308 GTB/S	1975-1981	5404	1 200 000
308 GTBi/Si	1982-1985	2237	1 000 000
308 GTB/S QV	1981-1982	3790	1 400 000
328 GTB/S	1985-1989	7412	1 700 000
348 TB/TS	1989-1994	7125	1 000 000
348 Spider	1993-1995	1090	1 200 000
F355 GTB/S Manual	1994-1999	5877	1 800 000
355 GTB/S F1	1997-1999	1571	1 700 000
F355 Spider Manual	1995-1999	2664	1 950 000
355 Spider F1	1997-1999	1053	1 850 000
360 Modena	1999-2004	8800	1 300 000
360 Modena Spider	1998-2004	7565	1 500 000
Challenge Stradale	2003-2004	-	2 250 000
360 Challenge	1999-2004	-	800 000
F430 Berlinetta	2004-2009	Not available	1 700 000
F430 Spider	2005-2009	Not available	1 900 000
430 Scuderia	2007-2009	Not available	4 200 000
F430 Challenge	2005-2010	Not available	1 300 000
12 Cylinder			
365 GT4 BB	1974-1976	387	6 500 000
512 BB	1976-1981	929	5 500 000
512 BBi	1982-1984	1007	5 000 000
Testarossa	1984-1991	7177	1 800 000
512 TR	1991-1994	2261	2 200 000
512 M	1994-1996	501	4 000 000
456 GT	1992-1998	1548	950 000
456 GTA	1996-1998	403	850 000
550 Maranello	1996-2001	3600	1 900 000
550 Barchetta	2000-2001	448	4 500 000
575M	2002-2005	2100	2 000 000
612 Scaglietti	2004-2010	Not available	1 900 000
599 GTB	2006-2011	Not available	2 300 000
599 GTO	2010-2011	599	8 200 000



The information and content provided herein are provided by Pablo Clark as general information. Pablo Clark does not guarantee these values. Any information herein is not intended nor does it constitute financial or investment advice.

- These values are based on an average mileage vehicle in good running and original aesthetic condition.
- To discuss or give your view on the values please contact info@pabloclark.com or visit us at 706, 6th Street Wynberg in Johannesburg.

THE BODY BUILDER

When Ian Morgan spotted the 1931 Ford AA Truck, he knew he had to have it. His desire to own this truck becomes somewhat less surprising when you learn that he is the Managing Director of Motor Body Constructions (Pty) Ltd, a company that specialises in the manufacture of truck bodies, including tippers, tankers and trailers. The company, founded in 1948 by Ian's grandfather, McPhie Morgan, has been in the family since its inception and runs out of Cleveland, Johannesburg. Clearly determination runs in the family, and although the truck belonged to one of Ian's business competitors at the time, this did little to quash his determination to acquire it. When you delve a little deeper into the story of the Model AA Ford, a few little similarities are uncovered.



The Ford Model AA truck came about when it was realised that its predecessor, the Model TT, was fast becoming obsolete, and initial design began in 1926.

The general style and design of the body was conceptualised and the manufacture was then outsourced to a number of body manufacturers. The Ford Model AA and Model A (its car counterpart) shared several parts and materials, including the body and engine but the interior style of the truck was plainer than that of the Model A.

Inside the cabin it is a sparse environment with a steering-wheel, three pedals, gear-shifter, floor-mounted handbrake, light-switch and a pair of levers mounted on the steering wheel. The one lever is to adjust the Model AA timing while the other offers manual control of the throttle. The column-mounted light switch features three stages for headlights, high-beam and parking lights.

Three gauges are laid out in a diamond formation on the dash and give the bare essentials such as petrol level, amps, speedometer and odometer.

The engine and mechanicals of the Model AA Ford are identical to the Model A Ford in all respects except one: the radiator, which in the truck had to be heftier to deal with cooling under heavy loads. It has a 201-cubic-inch (3.3-litre) engine that features an up-draft carburettor, six-volt generator, 2-blade fan, mechanical water pump, mechanical oil pump, electric starter and four-row radiator. The engine can also be crank started by a hand crank that is inserted through a hole in the radiator shell. The Model AA is based on a chassis that is similar to that of the Model A Ford, but as with the radiator, it is substantially larger and heavier.

The gearbox is a four-speed manual with lower-geared transmission than that of the car, as the truck would need more power when loaded, which also means that the top speed of the truck is lower than that of the Model A. The suspension in the car and truck are similar, in that they both have a leaf spring

centred in the front 'A' frame over the front axle. However, the rear suspension is where the Model AA differs from the Model A. The AA has leaf springs mounted to the chassis and shackled to the rear axle and the rear suspension does not have shocks.

Controls in the Model AA are along the 'Keep it simple and functional' lines. Brakes, which see four oversized drums at each corner, are operated by a mechanical pull-lever system that applies the force from the pedal to a pivot that then pulls brake rods. These rods work the shoes, expanding them inside the drums and stopping the workhorse. Even the windscreen wipers started life as hand-operated items but these were changed to a vacuum-operated assembly in the later stages of production.

Produced between 1927 and 1932 the Ford Model AA proved a popular choice and manufacture of the vehicle was licensed to various countries throughout Europe. Highlights of the production contracts though had to be when, in October 1931, a Model AA was the first vehicle produced at Ford's Dagenham plant in England and 985 000 units built in the Soviet Union. Sure the USSR items of 1932 through to '52 were known as GAZ AAs and not Fords but still an impressive number.

Perhaps the coolest bit about the Model AA Ford was that it was almost entirely customisable. It was available in a variety of body styles to suit whatever your individual needs may have been. Some of these specialised bodies included funeral coaches, ambulances, express pickups, dump trucks, and generic cabs without a bed – this aimed at customers who wanted a custom body to be built by an after-market company. Corporates could also order their fleets from Ford and could have them custom painted and modified as they needed – just such an example was the US Postal Service, who ordered a fleet from Ford and then had bodies custom built by other companies. Much like Ian Morgan's company would do today.

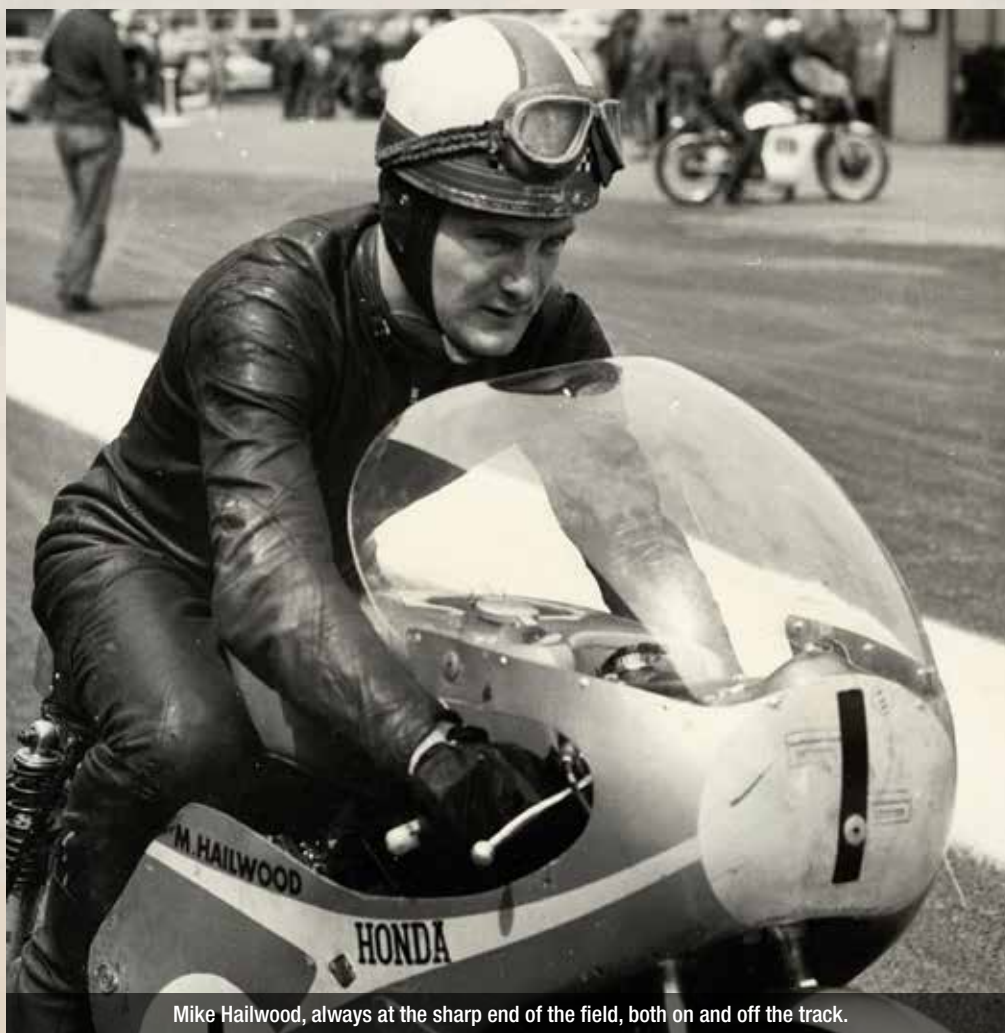
The 1931 Model AA Ford bought by Morgan was repaired and restored to full running condition by his mechanic. Today it lives at the factory in Cleveland and is used to trundle around the grounds of the factory. It occasionally makes appearances at various club meets and get-togethers and sometimes even surprises trendy supercar drivers by parking alongside them at fashionable hangouts, bringing much amusement and entertainment to passers-by. Surely Henry Ford would be smiling if he could see his brainchild still being loved and used today – more than 80 years later – although maybe not quite in the way he imagined... 📍

The engine and mechanicals of the Model AA Ford are identical to the Model A Ford in all respects except one: the radiator, which in the truck had to be heftier to deal with cooling under heavy loads



LIFE ON THE LIMIT

Mike Hailwood was allegedly known to staff at hospitals and clinics around the world, who administered regular penicillin jabs for the odd infection his hectic social schedule inflicted upon him. But he was not alone in his wild lifestyle. **Gavin Foster** recalls some of the bike world's party animals.



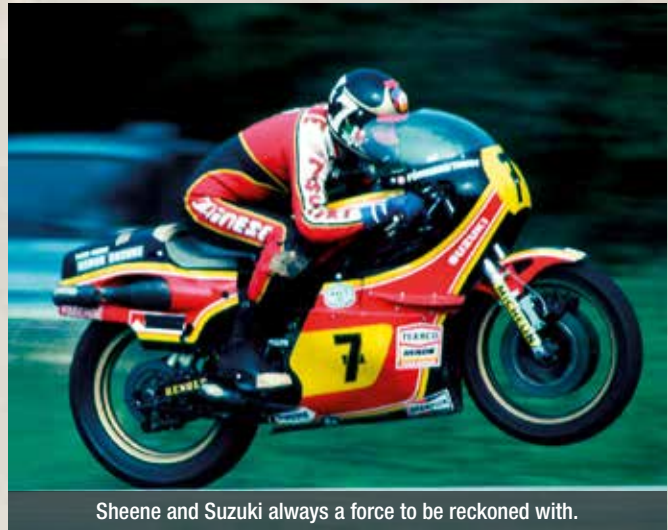
Mike Hailwood, always at the sharp end of the field, both on and off the track.



Despite knowing how to party Hailwood was able to focus when needed.



Barry Sheene, always up for some fun.



Sheene and Suzuki always a force to be reckoned with.

Barry Sheene cut a swathe through Europe's maidens a decade later, deflowering those who had been too young for Hailwood to take care of. Drunken parties followed by high-speed car races through the streets of whatever town the Grand Prix circus happened to be visiting were commonplace in the '60s and '70s, and Suzuki teamster Steve Parrish, in the biography *Barry* recounts how he and Sheene once set off in the world champion's Rolls Royce, with masked number plates, to burgle the house of some cad who'd left a female acquaintance in distress. Parrish himself earned notoriety when he was arrested for blowing up a brothel that was at the time hosting the police chief one splendid evening in Macau, so he was no saint. Today, with the beady corporate eye watching every move and cutting riders loose at the first hint of impropriety things have changed a lot, but the nature of the beast remains unchanged. Bike racers are an adventurous bunch who, given the choice, prefer not to comply with the more restrictive norms of society.

Five times World Champion Mick Doohan was a real party animal early in his career, until his team boss in Australia told him to be either a racer or a pisscat. Mick pulled himself together and went on to be an all-time great. It seems that the hard-boiled Aussie still knows how to have a good time though. Ten years ago he was tossed into the slammer for assaulting a bouncer at Darwin's Honey Pot Club, a local strip joint, at 3am. He paid a fine of around R15 000 and got on with his life. He's still wealthy and well connected though – he once lent his private jet to Paris Hilton when she visited Australia. I'd love to know how she got that right.

Gary Petersen was probably the supreme bad boy in South African motorcycle racing circles. Gary, no stranger to the inside of a prison cell, was a very good friend to have, and a very bad enemy. The problem with him was that once he had a couple of drinks inside – which was quite often – the distinction between the two tended to blur in his mind, with unfortunate consequences for anybody, friend or foe, who misread the warning signs. Whatever else he may

Five times World Champion Mick Doohan was a real party animal early in his career, until his team boss in Australia told him to be either a racer or a pisscat



America's bad boy racer John Kocinski could race any bike with the best of them but was not popular with the teams.

have been, Gary was never boring, which is always a good thing.

If you want to merge not-boring with obnoxious you need look no further than ex-250cc GP and World Superbike champion and top 500cc contender John Kocinski, who used to throw tantrums even when he won. At Laguna Seca, a track on an American army base, he high-sided his bike early in the '91 US Grand Prix and left the track in a huff, ignoring the 40km/h speed limit and passing slower traffic on the wrong side of the road in his Ferrari. The Military Police set off in hot pursuit, so our Johnny decided to give them a driving lesson. He dodged a few roadblocks before they managed to stop and arrest him. A police helicopter filmed the whole thing and nobody in racing circles was too upset when the spoiled brat was sentenced to six months in a federal jail plus an enormous fine. Sadly, the judge later ruled that because he was representing the USA in international sport the sentence should be reduced, first to 30 days then to ten, that he had to serve once the season was over.

Kocinski was fired from most of the teams he rode for, and his career came to a premature end about fifteen years ago when he had nobody left to offend by riding for them. Today he works as an estate agent, a usually boring occupation that he no doubt enlivens when his commission comes through late.

The very good example of throwing away everything through being badder-than-bad has to be that of Australian wild-child Anthony Gobert. A national teenage motocross champion, Gobert switched to road racing and superstardom when he won the Aussie superbike championship and moved on to become a works Suzuki 500cc Grand Prix rider. His hard drinking, weird

hairstyles and colours, and myriad tattoos earned him a cult following. Gobert was dumped mid-season by the Suzuki Grand Prix team after he failed a drug test, and the same happened in World Superbike, where he won eight races, often on uncompetitive machinery, during his erratic career. His subsequent career in USA Superbikes was curtailed when he was caught for drunk driving and fired.

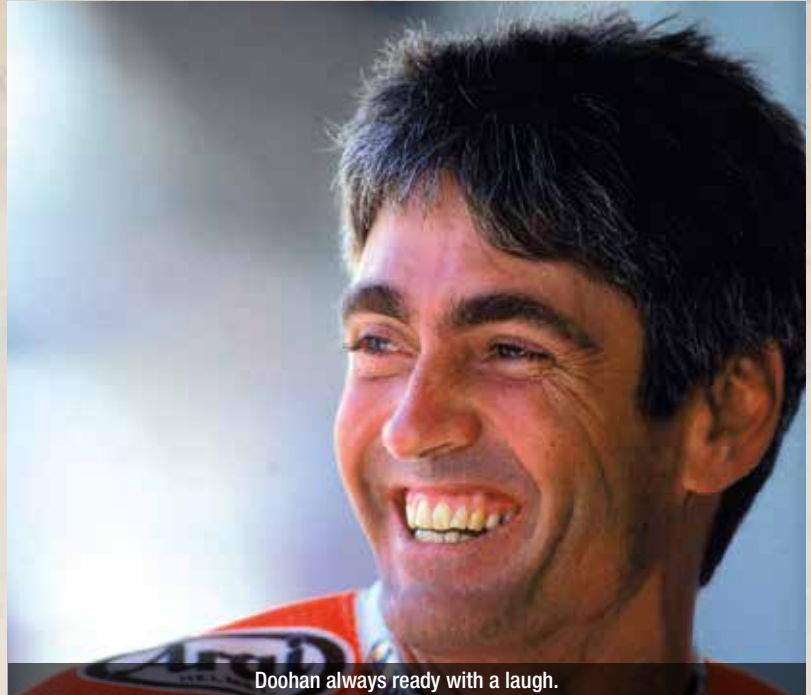
Unlike Hailwood, Parrish, Doohan and the rest, Gobert self-destructed. He was convicted in Australia in 2006 of driving while disqualified three times in five months. He told the court that he was speeding in his car to fetch heroin, to which he was addicted, when he was caught the third time. The court imposed 300 hours of community service and disqualified the rider from driving until 2010.

Gobert reached his lowest point when he was arrested after a "crime rampage" in Surfers' Paradise in 2008. The unemployed 33-year-old was convicted after he grabbed a woman's handbag, just one day after he'd snatched \$40 from the hand of a 70-year-old pensioner. When asked what he did for a living the ex-GP racer stretched the truth a little, saying he was "a professional motorcycle racer, mate" but then added that he was unemployed and had unsuccessfully applied for a job at a Subway sandwich bar. The magistrate reprimanded him for calling him "mate" and described his antics as "a two-day crime rampage" and "appalling behaviour" before imposing another 300 hours community service and a \$600 fine. Gobert told reporters outside the court that "it's all a crock of shit" before fading into obscurity. There's been no further news about him on the Internet so let's hope he's sorted his life out by now. **Q**

The Military Police set off in hot pursuit, so our Johnny decided to give them a driving lesson. He dodged a few roadblocks before they managed to stop and arrest him



One of the greatest of all time Mick Doohan.



Doohan always ready with a laugh.



A Victorious John Kocinski.



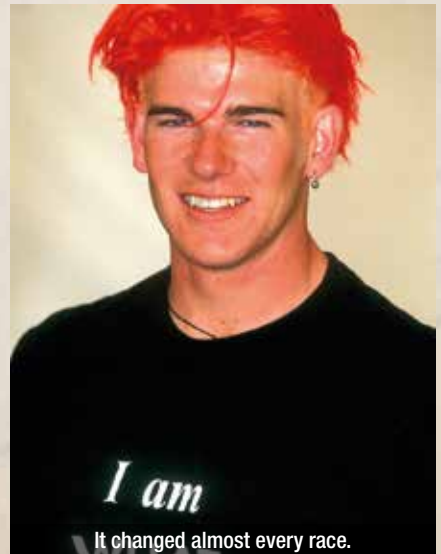
Anthony Gobert had bike riding talent in bucket loads but couldn't tame his demons.



Kocinski air punches after winning but was known to throw his toys when losing.



Gobert had his own pit lane style...



It changed almost every race.



The Cuban Hat, Durban.



The inspiration – 1946 SCC stop at the Lollipop.



Uncle Charlie's, Johannesburg.

SPORTS CAR CLUB — SANDWICHES —

Photos by Etienne Fouche & Reuben van Niekerk



Toward the end of 2015 *Classic Car Africa* held its first Classic 'Shakes event – an informal get together for classic cars, bikes and people. The focus is not on how shiny/old/valuable your ride is but simply on enjoying your chosen machine by taking it out for a run, meeting like-minded people and sipping milkshakes at a strategically chosen venue. To kick 2016 off we headed for Pretoria's Lollipop Roadhouse in February.

Why the Lollipop Roadhouse?

While enjoying a double thick 'shake at last year's run to the Doll House on Louis

Botha, a slightly yellowed picture surfaced of an early Sports Car Club of South Africa meeting. It was initially thought to have been taken at the infamous Roadhouse just outside Johannesburg but on closer inspection of the photo a "Church Street" sign was visible just behind the rather tasteful row of cars. A bit of digging through the archives shows that Lollipop, located at 1340 Stanza Bopape Street, was once part of the Doll House group of roadhouses, had been in existence since 1938 and of course Stanza Bopape was, until recently, known as Church Street.

So, in homage to the founders of the



SCC and to celebrate 70 years of the club's existence, we filled the parking lot and overflowed into the adjoining petrol station and pavements, sipped milkshakes, ate Dagwoods and kicked the tyres of around 70 classics – old and new.

Just after the run Tony Watson, whose father was pictured in the original 'inspiration' picture, stumbled across an article penned by Ken Lee in July 1955 in which he recalls the founding of the Sports Car Club.

"It all started on July 1st, 1946, when a group of twelve young motor enthusiasts foregathered at the residence in Dunkeld of one Sam Tingle. They decided to form a club which would be known as the Sports Car Club – why we are now known as the

Sports Car Club of South Africa, I don't quite know! However, a Constitution was drawn up, and the objects of the new club were stated as being to promote and organise competitive motoring events, to hold debates, lectures etc., in short to do all those things we have been enjoying for years. It may now be necessary to overhaul that Constitution to take care of changing conditions, but our aims and objects will, and must remain unchanged.

"Pierre Kelfkens became the first Chairman with Sam Tingle as first Secretary, and during the month of July, 1946 when three general meetings were held, membership grew from the original twelve to about thirty. A word about

prevailing conditions might not be out of place at this stage. In 1946, only a year after VE Day, motor vehicles of all types were at a premium and new cars, even TC MGs, virtually unobtainable. The Club regulations then insisted on the possession of a sports car as a prerequisite of membership. This meant that every new member was a dyed-in-the-wool enthusiast, prepared to pull his weight in establishing this new Sports Car Club.

Informal, wildly enthusiastic and perhaps a trifle mad, Club members hunted for a venue for 'dicing' and found Kafferskraal. For those readers who have never seen Kafferskraal, let me explain that it is a disused military armoured car testing



ground for which my brother Dick claims to hold the armoured car record. It was a narrow tortuous track, hot dry and dusty, but to us it seemed ideal, especially as it sported a tarred (if somewhat abrasive) surface, and on September 1st, 1946, we staged our first Kafferskraal meeting.

“This was a tremendous success; an impressive collection of real motor cars was assembled at Doll’s House in Louis Botha Avenue and, with considerable noise and confusion, made its way out of town, skirted Pretoria, and arrived at the track over one of the worst ‘roads’ imaginable. Still, nobody minded and once on the tarred track, drivers and marshals thoroughly enjoyed themselves and all the long pent-up racing

spirits were given free rein. Pierre Kelkens brought out his magnificent 3.3-litre Grand Prix Bugatti which he spun on the first lap, but he then reversed joyously down the straight completely unperturbed by the unorthodox manoeuvre. Sam Tingle’s very impressive shortened 4½-litre Bentley, and Jeff Watson’s standard 4½-litre Bentley were there and joined the battle with a veritable host of MGs, Austins and Whatnots. The most enthusiastic ‘Kafferskraalian’ was Wally Perry, and even threatened to push his Austin to Kafferskraal and back.”

Judging by the condition of the tyres in the image we guess that a number of the Kafferskraal competitors stopped off at the Lollipop Roadhouse after one of their events,

perhaps even this very first one. We will continue with a full SCC history story closer to the actual anniversary and welcome any of your club memories and tales.

We also welcome any of your own Roadhouse and motoring exploits and pictures for future publication – even if the venue no longer operates we would be keen to visit the location with some classic machinery, maybe even bring along a vintage ice-cream van to get your Classic ‘Shakes fix. Here are a few triggers...

- Flying Saucer – Pretoria
- The Cuban Hat – Durban
- Uncle Charlie’s – Johannesburg
- Apple Bite – Edenvale
- Pure & Cool – Primrose 



THINKING OUT THE BOX

Gavin Foster catches up with bike racer, hellraiser and gearbox builder extraordinaire Bruce Verson.



Twenty years ago Durban motorcycle racer Bruce Verdon was well known as a true motorsport character in the classic hellraising tradition. He was a very successful short-circuit motorcycle competitor on a Husqvarna, and a regular winner in Durban's popular hill climbs on closed off public roads, usually riding an ancient Norton Commando. The lanky mechanical boffin was an even more accomplished performer at the prize-giving functions, and some of his extraordinary antics are still spoken of in hushed tones today around Pinetown, where he lived and ran his small engineering business. His living quarters at one time consisted of a mezzanine floor above his factory-

unit workshop, furnished with a double bed, a fridge full of beer and piles of motorcycle magazines.

When I visited him there one morning I found that all business activities had been suspended while Bruce sent his staff shopping, then fabricated a contraption consisting of a long pole with a siren on top, wired to the workshop power supply. In response to the obvious question, Bruce told me that the woman in the office on the floor above his premises had complained about the noise coming from his workshop, so he was about to show her what a real noise was. I just had to stick around. The siren edged upwards on its pole until it was just half a metre or so from the back of the oblivious woman's head as she sat

at her desk, and all hell broke loose when Bruce flicked the switch. The badly-frazzled woman nearly went through the roof and when she poked her head out of the window, I took the picture.

In the late '90s Bruce packed up his workshop and set off to seek greener pastures first in the UK, and then the Antipodes. Upon landing in New Zealand a year or so after he left Pinetown, he took a job for a short while and then quit to set up shop on his own once again. His workmanship in South Africa was known to be exemplary and he had a good name, but nobody in New Zealand knew or cared about that, so things were slow in getting off the ground.

"I'd taken my machinery from Pinetown,



As business picked up Bruce rekindled his passion for motorcycle circuit racing and started competing on classic racebikes in Australia and New Zealand, which helped keep his blood pressure down and gearbox sales up

which reduced set-up costs, but I was still very much an outsider. That changed when a guy from Hamilton who was building a replica 1950's Matchless G45 racebike asked me whether I could build him a five-speed gearbox, and that was the spark that got me going."

During his apprenticeship with the South African Railways & Harbours in the '70s Bruce had been exposed to foundry and blacksmith work and in his Pinetown racing days he'd machined various gearbox components to change the internal ratios of his old Norton's transmission, so he knew enough about what was required to take the job on. "Lots of people can make gears and shafts and things, but not many can make an entire gearbox that's better than original," he says. "I knew it was critical to make the patterns properly and get good castings made. I wasn't daunted because I knew I could do it."

"In 2005 I did everything myself, making one or two bike gearboxes a month, but when business suddenly took off I employed staff and built up production to 50 a year. I designed all of my own four, five and six-speed boxes without looking inside any of the other manufacturers' products because I didn't want to be influenced by their train of thought," he adds. "There's a certain set of problems that we all face and it's all about how you handle them. Obviously when you design each component you have to do so with the manufacturing process in mind. I've concentrated on keeping things simple and making my gearboxes modular with shared components."

Bruce built his first prototype and in its first outing, at a major event at Phillip Island in Australia, his happy customer took it to a pole position, followed by two race wins and a lap record. Within a month Bruce had orders for 30 more racing gearboxes and he's never looked back since. His company, Trans Tasman Industries Limited, has manufactured around 800 ultra-robust four, five and six-speed motorcycle gearboxes and sold them mainly in the UK and Europe.

"Once I had money behind me I decided to start developing sequential gearboxes for racing cars, and built a prototype that we gave to a local racer for a year," Bruce says. "We followed its progress and made a few small changes and then redesigned it completely before going into production. We sold our first ten in 2009 and have moved about 150 to date, with orders increasing all the time." All entrants in the very popular NZ V8 road racing series now use TT Industries six-speed manual transmissions.

As business picked up Bruce rekindled his passion for motorcycle circuit racing and started competing on classic racebikes in Australia and New Zealand, which helped keep his blood pressure down and gearbox sales up. He's since raced his 500cc Manx Norton and 750cc BSA Rocket 3 in the USA and at the Isle of Man Classic TT, with his best result being two fifth places at Daytona in 2011. Just two places ahead of him in both heats was 1991 and '92 World Superbike Champion Doug Polen, while multiple American national champion Dave Roper finished behind him in sixth both times.

Bruce will be coming out to South Africa shortly. He can be contacted on bruce@ttindustries.com if anybody wants to catch up with him on racing gearboxes. 📧



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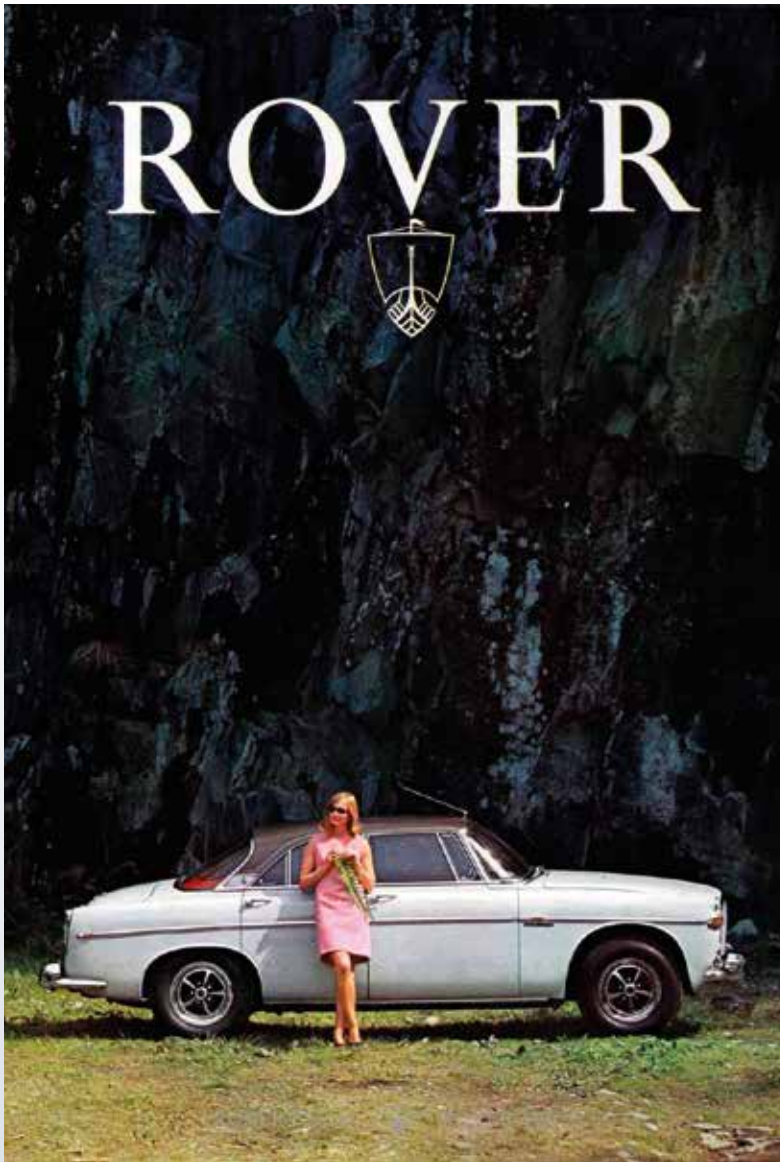
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TAKING THE ROUGH IN A SMOOTH RIDE

In the Patrick Coyne *Faithful Rover* article featured in the August/September 2015 issue of *Classic Car Africa*, a concern that Rover cars do not get the exposure they deserve, was raised. Having seen the image of Coyne's P6 version in print regular reader **Tian van Niekerk** gets misty-eyed about the smooth-riding British brand and takes us on the firm's up and down ride.

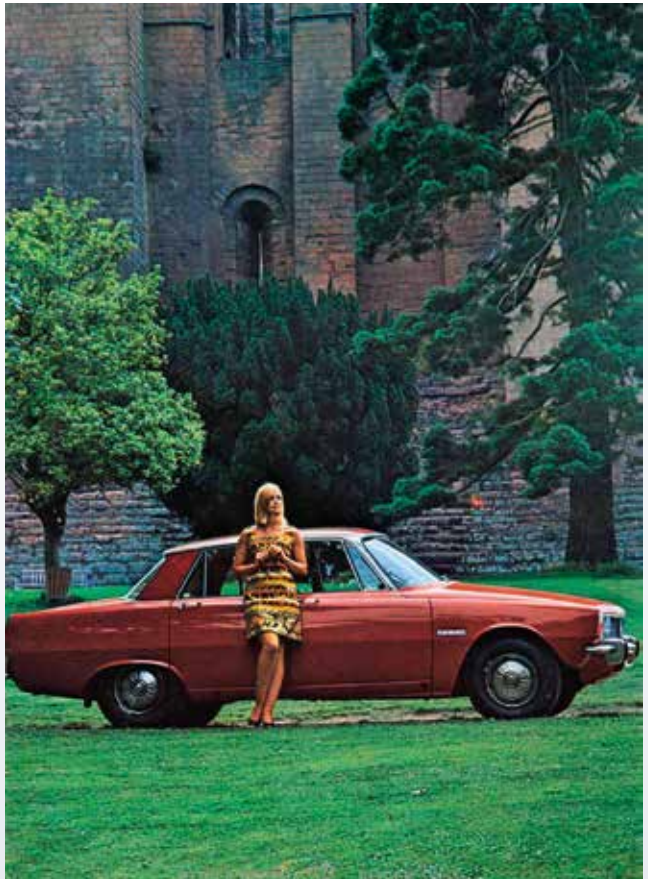
Cars were also on his mind and believe it or not he made an electric vehicle as early as 1888 but this never went into production

What is unknown to many is the fact that Rover started life in 1878 as bicycle makers Starley & Sutton Co. and spearheaded the use of same-sized wheels on these pedal-powered machines. Starley & Sutton's Rover Safety Bicycle of 1885 basically killed off the Penny-farthings by moving the driving force to the rear wheel and setting the standard for what we all know a bicycle should look like. Like Hoover is to vacuum cleaners so the Rover Safety Bicycle was to early 1900s cyclists – in Polish a bicycle is known as a Rower and in Belarus a Rovar, straight adaptations from the British bike builder's model.

Founder John Starley dabbled in motorcycles, initially importing Peugeot motorbikes for research purposes, then

fitting an engine to the company's own bicycle. Cars were also on his mind and believe it or not he made an electric vehicle as early as 1888 but this never went into production. The firm changed its name to Rover Cycle Company in late 1890. When Starley passed away at the age of 46 in 1901 H.J Lawson took over the business, continued bicycle and motorcycle manufacture and added cars to the repertoire – the first being a 2-seater model titled Rover Eight.

By now the name Rover and badge depicting a famous Viking longship were in place. Ownership remained as such until 1967, when Leyland took over. For 1968 Leyland merged with British Motor Holdings to form British Leyland, taking Rover with it. Honda then took a 20% stake in Rover alongside British Leyland but this was not



enough to keep BL happy and it pulled the plug in '86, selling the firm to British Aerospace where it fell under the title of the Rover Group. Numerous Hondas were re-badged as Rovers, but this came to an end when Honda separated itself from Rover as BMW bought out the brand in 1994. By 2006 the German-owned Rover Company went insolvent.

Gone but not forgotten, let us look at the various Rover models most motorists regard as true thoroughbreds.

First up to the plate is the Rover P4 series, which were manufactured from 1949 through to 1964 and under the designations of 60, 80, 90, 95, 100, 105 and 110, depending on engine size. Top of the range cars were fitted with 2.6-litre straight-6 engines capable of propelling the car to a top speed of approximately 160km/h – not

bad for the period. Interestingly, a 1947 Studebaker design can be found at the heart of the P4 with Rover executives said to have purchased two such vehicles and fitted the body of one of them to a Rover P4 chassis to create a prototype for development work.

Initially doors, boot lids and bonnets were made of an aluminium/magnesium alloy, but as the need to cut costs arose so these changed to steel units. The rear-hinged 'suicide' doors, however, remained, making the P4 one of the last British cars to employ this format. Rover was the first UK manufacturer to build and employ an automatic transmission in 1956 when it fitted the *Rover-Drive* system to the P4 in 1956. In keeping with this technological striving theme, a P4 body was also used as a test mule in the company's gas turbine programme, which resulted in the JET 1 prototype.



For 1958 Rover unveiled its new P5 series, which started off as the Mark I, also referred to as the 3-litre, and gradually developed through to Mark II and III versions. Arguably regarded as a car that originated from the Rover P4 in an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary way, the blueprint for the engine came from the Rover P4 but some regression was visible with the omission of the Girling vacuum servo-assisted disc brakes at the front of later P4s; instead early P5s came out with drums all round. This was remedied soon after when it became apparent that the setup could not cope with the weight of the car. The P5 was initially slower than the P4 and battled to reach the magical 100mph (160km/h) mark. When a 3.5-litre V8 engine was added to the mix this mark was achieved and the car became known as the P5B series. The pick of the P5 bunch has to be the beautiful four-door coupé version which, fitted with the Buick-

originated 3.5-litre, set the benchmark for other manufacturers to follow.

P5 production ran through to 1973 but keeping the brand fresh, Rover launched the P6 in 1963. Sold as the Rover 2000 it was a 'clean sheet' design and turned out to be one of the best Rovers ever built, was voted European Car of the Year in 1964, and won numerous awards for safety. It had independent suspension all round, with Rover's own advanced design at the front, and the De Dion suspension at the back. A fully synchromesh manual gearbox took the power to the rear and stopping prowess came from discs all round – inboard units at the rear.

Although a splendid car the Rover 2000, and later the 2200 versions, were a bit underpowered but when Managing Director, William Martin-Hurst, visited the USA in 1967, and was told by General Motors that a deal could be made on a discontinued Buick 3.5-litre aluminium V8 for fitment in Rover cars and Land Rovers, this niggle was solved.

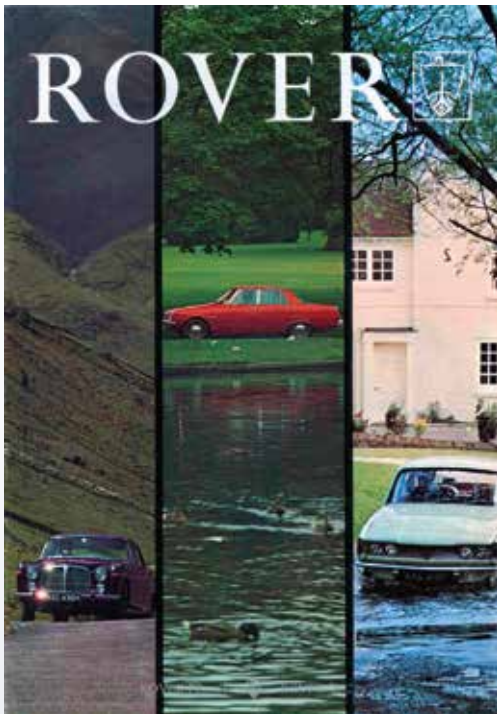
Early 1970s consumer surveys showed that although the automotive press was impressed by sophisticated and revolutionary designs, the general buying public was not swayed by it enough to whip out extra loot. With this in mind Rover unveiled

the SD1, the P6 replacement, in 1976. Although a radical departure from the P6 in the looks department with its David Bache-penned Ferrari Daytona-inspired line, the engineers at BL decided to keep the mechanical design simplistic in order to enhance the production process, and cut costs. The De Dion rear suspension was kept and oddly a return to rear drum brakes taken.

SD stood for *Specialist Division* and the 1 came to the fore as it was the first Rover to come from the design team of the BL group. It was initially available with 2.6-litre straight-6 or 3.5-litre V8 engines but over time a 2-litre 4-cylinder, 2.3-litre 6-cylinder and even a 2.4 diesel were added.

Sadly, like many British Leyland products, lousy build quality plagued the SD1 though – partially thanks to co-operate politics within the government-funded group, a disillusioned workforce and the use of inferior quality materials. Regardless of this the Rover performed well in the sales department and, as unlikely as it sounds, excelled in motorsport. Andy Rouse took the 1984 British Saloon Car Championship honours in such a machine, Tom Walkinshaw and Win Percy excelled in the 1985 European Touring cars and here in SA Paddy O'Sullivan always put on a top show with his V8. And the British cops liked the SD1 too, so much so that when production ceased in 1986 they stockpiled cars for future use. One such car was

Sadly, like many British Leyland products, lousy build quality plagued the SD1 though – partially thanks to co-operate politics within the government-funded group, a disillusioned workforce and the use of inferior quality materials



famously used to transport donor organs to a patient in a hurry – covering 27 miles in under 30 minutes.

All good things come to an end though and for the SD this started happening in 1981 with its replacement *Project XX* activated – an initiative between British Leyland and Honda for a new executive car. To the purists this endeavour is widely regarded as killing of the Rover tradition for ever. When BMW took over Rover in 1994 the venture between BL and Honda was in full swing, which meant that *Rover* cars were actually re-badged Hondas.

Bernd Pischetsrieder, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of BMW, made it clear from the outset that the Rover brand should be re-introduced as a truly British brand. Geoff Upex, Rover's design director, supported him by commenting as follows: "The most important thing they had to do was to design the Britishness back into Rover cars, after the long association with Honda had eroded it."

The car that they had in mind was the Rover 75, which would once again be a car that would make Rover proud of its heritage. With the Rover 75 the challenge was to find the balance between *legacy* and *stylishness*. Widespread use of chrome and retro interior styling helped to induce the premium brand values the Rover marque represented in the 1950s and 1960s, while ample use of twenty-first century technology updated the image. The Rover 75 was launched on 20 October 1999 at the

National Exhibition Centre in London. The powder blue car, with its lines of chrome gleaming under the lights, descended on a mechanized scaffold in front of a crowd of media watchers, and could not have been more impressive.


During March 2005 the Rover 75 finally ran off the cliff, taking everybody with it – the end of the road became a reality. But, what were the main reasons why Rover did not make it?

Before the BMW acquisition, it was an open secret that British Aerospace, who took possession of Rover in 1988, was more interested in Land Rover, the jewel in Rover's crown. The lack of sufficient financial resources restrained product research and development, and had a restricted effect on upholding high volumes of production, which was crucial for maintaining competitiveness in the car industry. The declining of the western European market, and the constant battle with the Longbridge manufacturing plant in terms of outdated tooling, as well as the fact that full capacity could technically never be achieved, added to the problem.

After the BMW acquisition, different production cultures between the British way of manufacturing and the German way of manufacturing inhibited a seamless transition. The initial hands-off approach followed by BMW after acquisition was probably not a good idea. BMW misjudged the seriousness of the Rover trademark

'illness', sometimes referred to as the 'English patient'. After BMW realised that it had to change to a hands-on approach, it became a near-impossible task to accomplish. The announcement from the CEO of BMW, Bernd Pischetsrieder, the same afternoon after the Rover 75 was unveiled, that Rover was actually in financial trouble, stunned the motor industry, and the economic environment that deteriorated after the Rover 75 launch, and the pound's surge, resulted in Rover plunging towards bottom-line losses.

Looking back at the Rover story, no one will really know why this marque could not stand the test of time. Could the fact that most Rovers had been regarded as underpowered, played a role in its demise? In the words of ex-Rover Chairman, Spencer Wilks, when he was offered a ride in the first Rover 2000 that was fitted with the newly acquired 3.5-litre V8: "It is the first Rover I have driven that is not underpowered". Maybe it was the image of a car suited to bankers, pensioners or as a parliament-member car that ruined the brand? Or shoddy workmanship and labour forces? Maybe it was the lack of modern day relevance to the so-called British 'Harris tweed' that was such a seller in the 1950s and '60s?

Whatever the reasons for Rover's fall, we will always look fondly on this marque, and today the rarity makes them a sure-fire classic – even if significantly underrated. 



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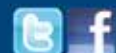
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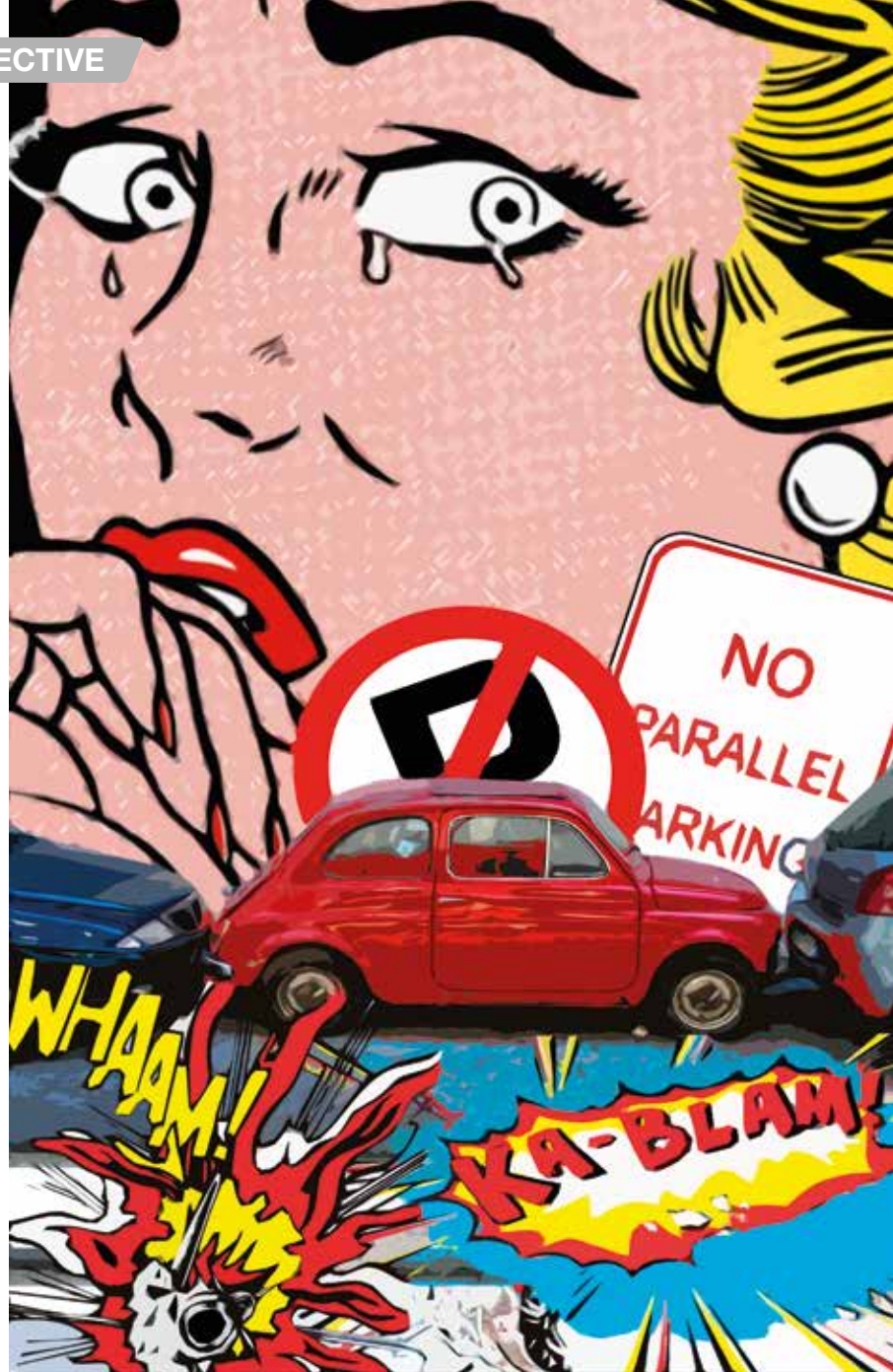
PARK LIFE

BY RACEY LACEY

This is a man's world... or so the saying goes. Don't get me wrong – I'm the first to argue that we women can do it all as well as – and often better than – men. These days women are doing and having it all and we can run rings around men when it comes to a lot of things. But there is one area in life in which I believe women were handed a bad deal – and that is when it comes to parking.

Let me paint the picture: you're cruising along the main road of a suitably trendy suburb, where stylish people sit sipping steaming lattes and watching life go by. The road is jam-packed with cars, all parked alongside bustling restaurants and coffee shops. As you drive along, you notice a prime open parking space, right outside the restaurant you want to go to, so naturally you proceed to drive straight past it. Why? Because you would sooner parade around naked, painted bright orange, in front of the entire South African parliament than even attempt to parallel park. Especially in public. You know, in front of people who are *watching*.

The other day my other half (for the purposes of this column I will refer to him as The Driver) and I were sitting having dinner at a restaurant, much like the aforementioned ones. As we sat watching, a car pulled up and began a lengthy attempt at a parallel park. What ensued was about a 25-minute ordeal, with the car performing various unsuccessful attempts at slotting into this vexing parking space. When the hapless driver eventually managed to park the car, even though it was a good way away from the curb and parked at a jaunty angle, the crowd that was by now watching in rapt fascination from the restaurant patio burst into spontaneous and enthusiastic applause. It was certainly not the abysmal display of parking talent but more the *chutzpah* that had been needed to perform under pressure and scrutiny. You might be amazed when I tell you that the driver in this instance



was, in fact, a man. Which brings me to my point: it is not necessarily lack of parking ability on the part of a female driver, but rather a lack of confidence... or maybe just caring too darn much about what other people might think.

Most people have huge fears that put them off doing things in their lives. For some people it is public speaking, others might have a phobia of heights. For me, it is reversing into a parking space. Yes, you heard me correctly. Reversing for me is akin to bungee jumping, shark cage diving and crocodile wrestling all rolled into one happy package. Immediately the adrenaline starts pumping, the

sweat starts pouring and the praying begins – and this is just the unfortunate passenger in my car, usually The Driver. "Okay, turn the wheel left ... no, the OTHER left... okay, straighten the wheel... right, right, OTHER right!" You get the idea. It isn't pretty.

The result is that invariably I will wind up driving round and round a parking area, eventually settling on the furthest, least crowded, most simple-to-get-into parking space possible. Usually slightly away from the parking area. Down the road maybe. Two blocks down. Okay, across town. But it's a well-known fact that women are very capable walkers. And we can even do it in high heels. ☑



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