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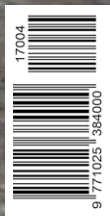
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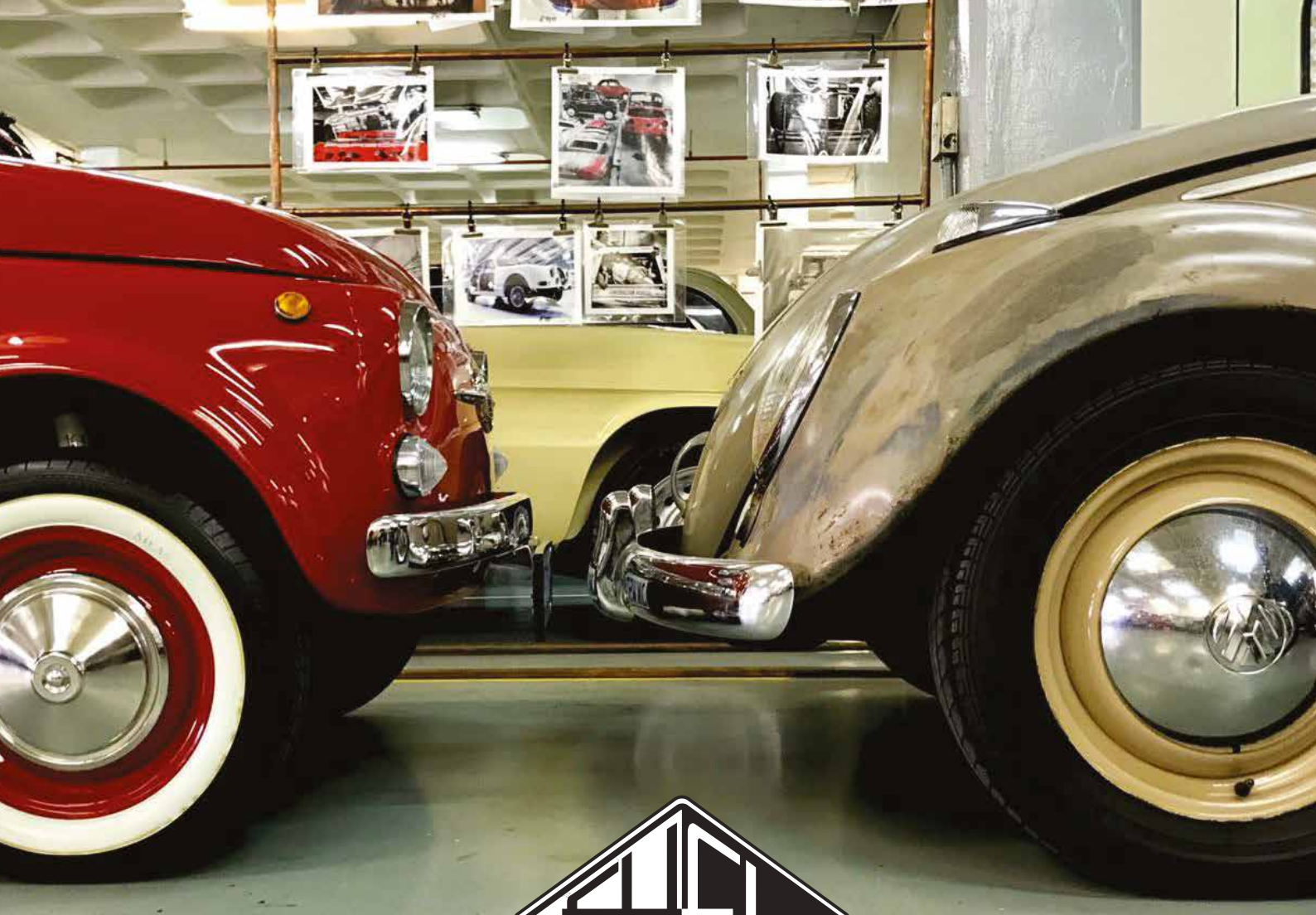
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## SYNCHRONISED CLASSICS

**O**n a weekly basis I am asked how our contributors keep coming up with new stories. My answer is simple: the people on our team are passionate about all things motoring and have their eyes and ears close to the classic scene, so when something grabs their fancy they get stuck in researching and writing about it. Sure the occasional news snippet, major event or launch of a new vehicle paying homage to an ancestral great triggers the odd story, but for the most part it is the leads from readers that get the creative juices flowing.

With our content generation technique a touch haphazard (the way we like it) allocating a certain theme to an issue is nigh on impossible but occasionally all of us writers go down similar paths and fluke some sort of synchronisation. This April edition is one such issue that has a theme surfacing between the articles – performance classics.

Mike Monk gets the ball rolling with an impressively quick 1938 Buick Century Coupé (named for its ability to reach the 100mph mark), before swapping out for the poster-perfect performance car, the venerable Porsche 930 Turbo. Both Graeme Hurst and I opt instead for the nimble approach to fast motoring. He takes a look at a Lotus Europa that has been respectfully modified with a more modern engine transplant, while I get behind the wheel of arguably the best and fastest original Lotus Elan – a 1973 sprint. Gavin Foster goes for a taste of modern



performance with a test drive in the Ford Focus RS, a seriously hot hatchback that borrows its badge from the legendary Rally Sport Escorts of the 1960s, '70s and '80s.

Jake Venter continues his series of fictitious interviews with motoring icons and talks to Dr. Ferdinand Porsche. While he spearheaded the Volkswagen Beetle, Dr. Porsche is of course more famous for the sportscars that carry his name. He also had a hand in designing the most fearsome of pre-war racecars, the Auto Union. Sivan Goren delves into the Carrera Panamericana road race that had cars and drivers throwing caution to the wind in a 6-day pedal-to-the-metal Mexican border-to-border race.

Long distance road racing was a popular pastime here too and no local event is more famous than the DJ Motorcycle race that had motorcycles blasting between Durban and Johannesburg between 1913 and 1936. Years later, a regularity rally in memory of the original race was started and this year's event was the 46th running of this. Roger Houghton sums up the 2017 event and Gavin Foster caught up with Samantha Anderson and her 1909 Humber just prior to the run.

Please enjoy and keep pointing us in the right direction and pushing up our performance. Your letters, stories and support are what keep these classic wheels turning, so keep them flowing in.

*Stuart*

## — DJ MISTER 77 —

FMM curator Wayne Harley fulfilled a dream on 10-11 March when he took part in the Durban to Johannesburg Motorcycle Rally – the DJ Run. This year was the 104<sup>th</sup> running of this legendary event and for the occasion he rode the ex-lan Brodie 1934 Triumph 350 3/1 sponsored by Marius Malherbe.

The 700km reliability and regularity trial runs from Hillcrest to an overnight stop in Newcastle, then on to the finish in Germiston. Final preparation for the event was marred because of heavy rain on the Thursday night so Wayne was unable to actually ride the bike before the Friday morning start in order to get familiar with the machine. On a lighter side, registration also provided a small problem: his entry number plate was missing so he had to make up one using a blank and some black tape. Such was the quandary that for the rest of the event, Wayne was known as 'Mister 77', even though the original plate was later found.

Having studied the schedule as bedtime reading, Wayne was nervous at the start but was simply determined to finish. His start time was 07h17 – 77 minutes after the first rider set off. The first 30km went well until the bike's amp gauge fell off and rolled away, and time was lost trying to find it. Then fuel starvation caused the bike to stall when going up steeper hills, forcing Wayne to push the bike to each of the summits. Attempts to fix the problem at subsequent fuel stops in Maritzburg and Mooi River caused more time loss, without finding a lasting cure. A rear-view mirror fell off but was

found – more time lost – before the lunch stop at Estcourt, where the fuel problem was finally fixed. The run to the overnight stop in Newcastle went without a hitch and Wayne ended the day in a respectable 71<sup>st</sup> position.

Day 2 began at the same start time, with Wayne determined to do better. Road works on the road to Majuba caused a cancellation of a regularity section but otherwise the ride was going well. Wayne was finally able to relax and enjoy the whole experience. From Volksrus to Standerton to a lunch stop at Heidelberg. A bit of the seat broke along the way but a MacGyver fix kept Wayne comfortably in the saddle. Heidelberg provided a nostalgia trip for FMM's curator because the town was where Dr Anton Rupert established the motor museum where he began his career. The Heidelberg collection was the foundation of FMM when it was relocated to the Cape 10 years ago. Lunch was taken at the old Eskort bacon factory, and Wayne managed to catch up with many old friends who had come along to spectate.

The run to the finish in Germiston was trouble-free and Wayne improved his position by 10 places to 61<sup>st</sup>, despite the numerous hiccups along the way. "I am proud to have taken part in such an historic event," he said after the prize-giving where he received his finisher's medal. "The organisers put a lot of effort into making it a success, and everyone involved is just so friendly, from the serious competitors to the straightforward enthusiasts. All along the way spectators watch and wave as the riders pass by. It is a stunning experience."



## LAUNCH PAD

Plaaspad, FMM's test facility on the L'Ormarins Estate, has been a venue for some recent new car media launches and the latest company to make use of the facility was Fiat Chrysler Automobiles South Africa, who introduced the new Alfa Romeo Giulia to the mainstream local press in early March. Two model lines were launched, three variants of the 2.0 turbo – Base, Super and Super with Stile Pack – and the range-topping 2.9-litre V6 Quadrifoglio Verde (QV).

This successful event is the latest vehicle launch to take place at FMM. In the past,

all of the German Big Three manufacturers, Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz, have also used L'Ormarins as FMM provides a perfect motoring setting for such events. Media briefings are usually held in one of the display halls in company with a number of the particular manufacturer's historic vehicles drawn from the museum's collection. Plaaspad provides a challenging but safe venue for driving exercises away from public roads and under the control of properly-trained FMM staff with regard to circuit-related activity. With on-site catering and museum tours as added



attractions – along with the availability of the estate's wines – the facility's popularity is steadily increasing.

### WHERE, WHAT TIMES AND HOW MUCH

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 R80 adults, R60 pensioners and motor club members (with membership ID), R40 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.



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# MAKE A — DATE —

We will continually update the 2017 events calendar. To submit your club event for publication in the magazine as well as on our website ([www.classiccarafrika.com](http://www.classiccarafrika.com)) please submit details along with an image or two to [stuart@classiccarafrika.com](mailto:stuart@classiccarafrika.com).

## APRIL

2	Angela's Picnic	Delta Park
16	Century Run – Classic Motorcycle Club	Durban
22	Xtreme Festival – Phakisa Freeway	Welkom
22	SA Endurance Series 3 Hour – Killarney Race Track	Cape Town
23	Red 'Car'nival Day	Parkhurst
27-30	MacGregor Maluti Meander	Mont Aux Sources Hotel
29	Historic Tour – Phakisa Freeway	Welkom
30	Knysna Motor Show	Knysna

## MAY

4-7	Jaguar Simola Hillclimb	Knysna
6	Highveld Old Motor Club Show	Middelburg, Mpumalanga
7	Buick/Cadillac Show Day	Johannesburg
19/20	Fragram Natal Classic – Classic Motorcycle Club	Durban
20	Xtreme Festival – East London GP Track	East London
21	Pietermaritzburg Cars in the Park	Ashburton

## JUNE

3	Mampoer Rally	Pretoria
3	Historic Tour – Red Star Raceway	Delmas
10	Vryheid Cars in the Park	Vryheid
11-15	Continental Milligan	Port Elizabeth
16	Golden Oldies at the Mall	Rustenburg
18	Cars at the Mall	Nelspruit
24	Great Train Race	Krugersdorp
24	VW Celebrations at Idle Winds	Centurion
24	SA Endurance Series 3 Hour – East London GP Track	East London
25	Blairgowrie Toy Fair	Blairgowrie

## JULY

1/2	1000 Bike Show	Germiston
8/9	Dezzi Raceway Invitational	Port Shepstone
15	Xtreme Festival – Aldo Scribante Race Track	Port Elizabeth
22	Xtreme Festival – Phakisa Freeway	Welkom
29	VCC Car Show Day	Hillcrest

## AUGUST

4-6	Concours SA	Sun City
5	Historic Tour – Dezzi Raceway	Port Shepstone
6	POMC Cars in the Park – Zwartkops	Pretoria
9	Cars in the Park – OFS Vintage Car Club	Bloemfontein
9	Prowl – Durban Early Car Club	Durban
12	Xtreme Festival – Zwartkops Raceway	Pretoria
13	CMC Winter Rally	Germiston
13	Parkhurst Heritage Day	Parkhurst
16-20	Magnum Rally	Hazyview
19	SA Endurance Series 3 Hour – Dezzi Raceway	Port Shepstone





## SEPTEMBER

1-3	Kyalami Festival of Motoring	Kyalami
2/3	Wheels at the Vaal	Vanderbijlpark
3-7	SAVVA National and Rendezvous Tour	Fouriesburg
16	Historic Tour – Zwartkops Raceway	Pretoria
17	Piston Ring Swap Meet	Modderfontein
23	SEFAC Ferrari 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	Kyalami
23	4-Stage – Zwartkops Raceway	Pretoria
24	National Drive It Day	National
24	Blairgowrie Toy Fair	Blairgowrie
30	Xtreme Festival – Kyalami Race Track	Kyalami

## OCTOBER

1	POMC Aircooled Show	Pretoria
1	Classics in the Bay	Cape Town
14	SA Endurance Series 3 Hour – Aldo Scribante Race Track	Port Elizabeth
15	Killarney Classic Car Show	Cape Town
28	Historic Tour – Red Star Raceway	Delmas
29	Studebaker Club Show Day	Irene

## NOVEMBER

4	Xtreme Festival – Kyalami Race Track	Kyalami
4	SA Endurance Series 9 Hour – Phakisa Freeway	Welkom
12-15	SAVVA National and Fairest Cape Rally	Cape Town
25	Xtreme Festival – Zwartkops Raceway	Pretoria
26	Blairgowrie Toy Fair	Blairgowrie

## DECEMBER

2	Historic Tour – Kyalami Race Track	Kyalami
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## MONTHLY MUST DO EVENTS

1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month	Classic Motorcycle Club of Natal	Bluff, Durban
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month	Classic Motorcycle Club Johannesburg	Germiston, Johannesburg
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month	Pretoria Old Motor Club	Silverton, Pretoria
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month	Piston Ring	Modderfontein, Johannesburg
3 <sup>rd</sup> 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



## ALL-NEW ALPINE A110 SHOWSTOPPER

Renault all but stole the show by pulling the dormant Alpine brand out its parts bin at this year's Geneva Motor Show. It's a two-seater sports car design that should take on the likes of Porsche's Cayman or Audi's TT. Like the original A110 featured in the March 2017 issue of *Classic Car Africa*, the new model focuses on being lightweight and employs an aluminium core. It's high-tech stuff: the body and chassis parts are glued and riveted and the welder was only brought out on the rear subframe.

With the petrol tank mounted behind the front axle and the engine sitting ahead of the rear axle, weight distribution is 44:56 front/rear. No bolt-on wings and aero packages means that drag coefficient comes in at just 0.32, which combined with an all new 1.8-litre 4-cylinder, promises to make it an agile and fast offering. Right-hand drive appears to be on the cards with delivery of cars promised to the UK at the end of the 2018 first quarter, so we could well see a few A110s running around the South African streets too.

## CONCOURS SA GETS INTERNATIONAL

A gratifying aspect of the very first Concours South Africa, held at Sun City in September 2016, was that the event attracted entries from outside the borders of South Africa. In fact, the overall winner, Fatima de Abreu with her 1985 De Tomaso Pantera GT5, hails from Gaborone in Botswana.

The 2017 event, which takes place at Sun City from 3 to 6 August, has already attracted strong interest from the UK and Europe.

Chris Routledge, owner of Coys of Kensington, the internationally-famous auction house, will be attending as a member of the judging panel and he will also host an auction of motoring memorabilia and possibly a small selection of classic cars, during the Thursday build-up to the main Concours event, which begins on Friday, 4 August.

*Octane* magazine founder and UK-based motoring journalist Robert Coucher, has been a judge at the famous Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, the Salon Privé in London, currently sits on the Windsor Concours of Elegance Selection Committee – and now he'll add Concours SA Judge to his repertoire. Of course he knows a bit about our country, having been born and bred in Cape Town. Yet Robert is no stranger to the rarefied crisp air of the Highveld. "I recall some wild times there, not least when I was in the army doing basic training. Having bunked out for the night, I woke up late in Johannesburg

and had to race back, flat-out along what were then dirt roads through Fourways – never lifting the throttle once!" After completing his schooling at Bishops and obtaining a BA degree at the University of Cape Town, Robert did his military training at Voortrekkerhoogte, and later worked for advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather in what was then known as the Transvaal office.

For those of us that see our old machines as investments, Thursday is a good day to go to Sun City, where HAGI Index creator, German aficionado Dietrich Hatlapa will host the VCCM (Value in the Classic Car Market) conference. With expert speakers providing valuable insight into rare classic cars as blue-chip investment, it's sure to remove some of the gamble from your next purchase. Nedbank Private Wealth, along with a selected number of other high-end companies, will again be on board for Concours South Africa in 2017, providing exclusive hospitality for hand-picked clients.

Judging categories have been completely overhauled to stay in line with the growth and vision. The first class (Pre-War Vintage) will see cars from 1900, while the second is for cars from 1939 (Post-War Vintage). Thereafter there will be various



divisions extending up to 1990. Each of these will be further split up into Restored and Preserved groupings and for modified vehicles there's a Resto Mod section. For those who want to enter their cars in a less competitive format, where the emphasis is on general appeal rather than a nut-and-bolt approach to correct specification and originality, there's a Show & Shine competition.

Entries limited to 150 cars. To register cars visit [www.concourssa.co.za](http://www.concourssa.co.za) or contact Paul Kennard on [paul@concourssa.co.za](mailto:paul@concourssa.co.za).

# BULLIT IN A MEXICAN SCRAPYARD



Nearly 50 years after it was last seen, a 1968 Ford Mustang found in a Mexican junkyard has been confirmed to be one of two known to have been used in the filming of the Steve McQueen movie *Bullitt*.

Hugo Sanchez discovered the car last year in Baja California Sur, its then-white body rotting away sans original drivetrain. Legend had it that the car (the film's primary stunt car) had been sent to a scrapyard shortly after filming was completed. But the layers of paint sprayed on top of its Highland Green suggest that this did not happen and that it had roamed the streets for years thereafter.

Sanchez brought it to a custom car shop owned by Ralph Garcia, Jr. with the intention

of cloning the equally-famous 'Eleanor' Mustang as seen in the film *Gone in 60 Seconds* but thankfully on finding out the car's history, changed tack and has undertaken to restore it back to the specification it was when filming of McQueen's movie begun. That means keeping a few of the mods made for filming, like the strut tower reinforcements and holes drilled into the boot for auxiliary power cables.

Marti Auto Works, a firm that maintains the production database for every Ford built from 1967-2012, has confirmed the car is the genuine one. Two Mustangs were ordered by Warner Bros for the making of the film – the other one is privately owned and hasn't been seen by the public in 25 years. Once restored



it will be difficult to put a value on the car but one thing is for sure: with all McQueen-connected machines reaching top dollar recently and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movie taking place in 2018, you can bet this 'Stang will more than likely set some records.



Volkswagen is paying homage to its legendary Citi Golf model with the introduction of the limited edition Citi Vivo Polo. Citi Vivo is bringing back the ubiquitous three colours of Red, Yellow and Blue, which were used to launch the original Citi Golf in 1984.

The production of the iconic Citi Golf at the Volkswagen manufacturing factory in Uitenhage ended in 2009 after 25 years. Over that time, the plant produced over 377 000 units, many of which are still used on our roads today. Of course the Citi Golf gained some of its popularity from the quirky and humorous television and print adverts that told a South African story and we hope to see VW employing a similar campaign with its new model, along with the same engineering ingenuity that gave Citi Golf its cult status and longevity in the local market.

In 2010, Volkswagen launched Polo Vivo to replace Citi Golf as the market leader in the compact passenger car segment. In the past six years, Polo Vivo has been the best-selling passenger model in South Africa and has to date sold 229 300 units. There is no better way to celebrate the success of the Polo Vivo than to pay homage to its iconic predecessor. As the three colours of Red, Yellow and Blue are synonymous with the classic Citi Golf, it was fitting to use them as the only colours for Citi Vivo. And no, you still can't get it in green!

Citi Vivo comes from the 1.4i Conceptline Polo derivative, which has a power output of 55kW. In addition to the standard features of Conceptline, the new Citi gets 15-inch alloy wheels, side mirrors, door and tailgate handles and CITI decals all in white. As a special edition only 2 000 units are planned and it retails for R177 300.

## MARCOS MOULDS FOUND

In August 2015 we ran Ryno Verster's in-depth article on the Mini Marcos and how South African Brian Raubenheimer manufactured the little giant-killer locally. What happened to the moulds since the operation shut up shop remains a mystery, but somehow they have turned up overseas in near-perfect condition. The set of moulds for the Mk3 Mini Marcos has been purchased and the new owner is said to have also bought the rights to manufacture new bodies. We wait to hear more on this and whether or not it will be possible to order our 'new' old Marcos.





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# UNDER THE SKIN

Since last month's update **Dino's** has shipped out a number of completed projects – off the top of my head I can think of the Ford Galaxie, Ford Prefect Bakkie, Porsche 944 Turbo and an Alfa Giulia going home with clients. Others are nearing completion while some sit as we wait for parts supply – a problem typical to classics and one many of you at home will sympathise with. It never gets boring, with the variety of machines and scope of work continually changing. Each time we strip a car we uncover a part of its past life, which in many cases is not the prettiest sight, but we really enjoy

putting the years of experience and old school techniques to use and hammering out a solution. Each day is a challenge with work ranging from show cars in need of minor touch ups to rust buckets that require a lot of cutting and metal shaping to meet the grade. We will share what is on the go at Dino's, what cars have come in, how much progress has been made in a month, which cars have gone out and which are on the waiting list. In the world of classic restorations you never know what you will find, so as and when any stumbling blocks occur, we will point those out too, in the monthly updates.



On arrival this Lancia Aurelia was partly assembled and looked in reasonable condition. We loosely assembled the car to see where we stood. From there the multiple layers of paint were stripped off, sadly revealing a host of poor repairs neatly covered by thick filler. It's all off now and lots of welding and metal shaping hours lie ahead.



This 440 Dodge Charger was in reasonable condition when it came in but the owner wanted a colour change. It has been stripped to the metal and minor dent and rust repair carried out before a first coat of paint was applied. Panels were then fitted and a second coat of paint has just been completed. With a double layer of clear coat the depth of the paint is brilliant.



Progress on the Corvette Stingray has slowed a touch as we wait for some bonnet fasteners from America. The chances are the fitment of these will mean realignment of panels is necessary. This will require lots of hands on the bodywork so it's best to do the surface preparation after that. Thereafter the paint can be done – in this case as per the original.



Regular readers will remember a rather sorry looking Datsun Fairlady that entered the shop last year. This is that car. It was taken down to metal, repaired and then painted in a period-correct colour. We are now in the process of waiting for some trim and chrome parts to arrive so we can complete the full assembly.



The single family-owned Alfa Romeo Spider that arrived in red is now ready to be painted back to its original white. To get it to this stage a few bits of rot were removed and replaced with new sheet metal and then the primer was shot. Preparation is the key to every top quality paint job.



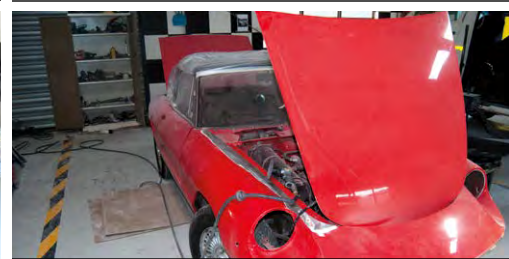
Following a bare metal exercise where a large amount of rust was removed, new metal put in and panels fitted, this Jaguar E-Type has finally reached the primer stage. Hours of work went into getting the specially-ordered reproduction nose to fit – it is worth remembering that even though you can buy replacement panels, they will never fit exactly and need plenty of fine tuning.



Repairs have been done to this Volkswagen Beetle body, the primer and preparation stages went well and the result is a show-condition final paint job. Masking will now be removed and a polish done before handing over to the owner who will complete the assembly and restoration himself.



This rare, early split-window Beetle arrived in a sorry state – filled with dents, rust and more than a few botched repair jobs. Hours of cutting and welding has seen these remedied and the entire body has been primed and is ready for the application of the chosen paint.



It's worth spending some extra effort on classic bodies, not only to look the part but also to remove any corrosion before it spreads. This square-tail Spider came in for a paintwork refresh but some areas of concern need to be addressed first. Filler was previously used to shape the damaged front wing and it is now being removed so that the original metal can be beaten back to the correct profile.

# VOLKSWAGEN AUTOPAVILION UPGRADED

Volkswagen AutoPavilion in Uitenhage has recently had an upgrade and at the core is Jan the Beetle. Jan was built on Wednesday, 14 September 1949 in the original Volkswagen factory in Wolfsburg. In 1971 Volkswagen South Africa and *Wheels* magazine held a competition to find the oldest Beetle in South Africa. The winner was owner David Rubin of Middelburg, who received a brand-new 1300 Beetle in exchange for Jan the Beetle. Jan went on display around South Africa before coming back home to rest at the Volkswagen factory in Uitenhage. For a number of years, no one paid attention to Jan and he was left in storage as his condition had deteriorated and he could not be displayed. That changed when Jan the Beetle was brought to the attention of another very special Jan at Volkswagen, namely Jan Schiedek-Jacht, the Head of Product Engineering at VWSA. Schiedek-Jacht, a classic car enthusiast and expert, offered to give Jan a new lease on life. Soon, highly qualified engineers from Product Engineering at VWSA heard

about Jan and offered to help.

The team under the leadership of Jan Schiedek-Jacht donated their spare time to fully restore Jan back to pristine condition over a seven-month period. "I am humbled by the dedication, passion and love of our automotive heritage that this team has shown during the restoration of the Jan the Beetle," said Thomas Schaefer, Chairman and Managing Director of VWSA.

Jan was restored to original condition and colour with as many original components as possible repaired and restored. Only where required were new components sourced from specialist local dealers, Germany and the US.

Jan is now the jewel of the AutoPavilion vehicle collection and still gets driven, the most recent trip being a 600km run to the George Motor Show in February. The AutoPavilion is VWSA's Automotive Experience Centre and Museum. Each year over 30 000 car enthusiasts, school children, tourists, families and friends visit the operation.



## PETER DE KLERK MEMORABILIA

South African racer and builder of one his own Alfa Special Formula 1 car would have turned 82 on 16 March and to honour this, Sportique Collectable Models has freed up a handful of its 1:18 scale models of the Porsche 906 that Peter and Udo Schütz drove to sixth position in the 1966 Le Mans 24 Hour. Each of the 40 Perspex-boxed limited edition models are numbered and were signed by Peter. Only a few remain in stock and are offered at a special price of R2 800 each. Why not add one of their De Klerk Gunston Brabham BT26 stickers to the basket too? They also have a host of other Gunston drivers/cars decals to choose from.

Contact Bunny on 011 026 7614, 082 923 0512 or [bunny@sportique.co.za](mailto:bunny@sportique.co.za).

## GARAGE METAL SHAPING GAUTENG

Barry Ashmole of Classic Custom Creations is bringing his renowned metal shaping courses to Gauteng in June. He'll be in Elardus Park, Pretoria from 1 to 3 June and then Strijdom Park, Randburg from 5 to 7 June. Cape Town, he hasn't forgotten you – he'll also be in Stellenbosch on 5 to 7 May and again on 23 to 25 June. For more information and to book your spot email [barry.ashmole@gmail.com](mailto:barry.ashmole@gmail.com).



# MEANDER THE MALUTI

The South African Regularity Rally Association (SARRA) hosts the popular MacGregor Maluti Meander at the end of April 2017. The event runs over three days and will see the Mont Aux Sources Hotel in the Drakensberg as its home base. While it is open to cars and motorcycles of all ages, participants are encouraged to enter in classic vehicles, which for purposes of this event refers to vehicles which are 25 years and older. There will be two categories (open and sealed odometer) and cars and motorcycles will run in different classes, as will modern and classic vehicles.

Start time is 12h00 on Thursday 27 April in Harrismith, from where the route will head to Mont Aux Sources. Day two involves a competitive scenic route through the mountains to lunch in Nottingham Road, before rallying back to the hotel. The third day is a rest day to allow some relaxation, sightseeing and participation in the many activities on offer at the hotel and surrounds. The fourth and final day sees some more competition driving before rounding off with the Sunday evening prize-giving. Check out is on Monday morning (a public holiday).

While there is an obvious competitive element to the event, it is designed to allow sufficient time to socialise and soak up this beautiful part of the country in your classic car. All roads used are tarred and every effort has been made to use the best condition surface available for the 600km route. Set speeds are all well within applicable speed limits, and it is an MSA-sanctioned event.

For more information contact Larina MacGregor on 084 949 0937 or on larina.macgregor@gmail.com. Alternatively, enter by using the entry form on the SARRA website ([www.sarra.co.za](http://www.sarra.co.za)).



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# GAVIN WALTON TAKES THE DJ

Gavin Walton, a popular member of the classic motorcycle community in South Africa, notched up his second win in the prestigious DJ Rally for classic motorcycles made before 1937 when he won the 2017 event on March 10/11. He had a total error of 220 seconds for the two-day event, which took competitors from Durban to Johannesburg, with an overnight stop in Newcastle.

This was the 46<sup>th</sup> running of this regularity rally which commemorates the annual motorcycle races held on public roads between Durban and Johannesburg from 1913 to 1936.

This year there were 70 finishers from an original field of 93 riders. Favourable weather conditions held for most of the trip, with only one slight shower encountered after a heavy downpour in Durban on the day before the start.

Gavin Walton, who rode an immaculate 1936 500cc AJS motorcycle, won this event in 2009 and came second in 2010, 2014 and 2016. He also provides a valuable service to the classic motorcycle fraternity by supplying replacement parts for these old machines from the large stock he took over from Mike Lang last year.

Second overall was another former DJ Rally winner, Mike Ward, who rode a 1936 500cc Velocette MSS. His error was 304 seconds. Third place was filled by Gavin Walton's brother, Kevin, on a 1931 500cc BSA. He had also won the Pre-DJ Rally a couple of weeks before the main event.

The number of first-time riders this year – 15 of them – was an encouraging sign for classic motorcycle rallying and nine of them qualified as finishers. The best rookie performance came from Greg Kendall (1936 500cc Velocette MSS), who finished 13<sup>th</sup> overall by recording errors of less than 300 seconds on each of the two days for a total error of 455 seconds.

Two well-known first-time riders, TV presenter Harry Fisher and Franschhoek Museum curator Wayne Harley, both completed the course finishing 77<sup>th</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> respectively. Stuart Thompson, well known in the motorsport world as a builder and preparer of rally, racing and off-road racing vehicles, was another first-timer who finished. He placed 48<sup>th</sup> and said he found his first regularity motorcycle rally a wonderful experience and will be back for more on his 1932 Sunbeam.

The youngest rider to qualify as a finisher was 19-year-old Tyrone Edwards, another first-time rider, who was mounted on a 1936 250cc BSA, while the oldest was 82-year-old Neville Smith, who rode a 1936 350cc Ariel Red Hunter and placed 46<sup>th</sup>. Hans Coertse's 1913 1039cc Matchless 7B took the honours as the oldest finishing machine and came in as last official finisher, in 70<sup>th</sup> place.

Two 'MotoGP Dads' rode. Derek Crutchlow (father of Cal, who races in MotoGP) and Trevor Binder (father of Brad, the 2016 Moto3 World Champion) both qualified as finishers, placing 51<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> respectively.

There was a vote at the prize-giving as to whether the direction of the rally should be reversed to go from Johannesburg to Durban in 2018, and those present voted strongly for the event to continue to follow the Durban to Johannesburg route, even though the first DJ road race in 1913 was held from Johannesburg to Durban.

## RESULTS OVERALL:

- |                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Gavin Walton      | 1936 500cc AJS              |
| 2. Mike Ward         | 1936 500cc Velocette MSS    |
| 3. Kevin Walton      | 1931 500cc BSA              |
| 4. Ryan van Heerden  | 1936 350cc Velocette MAC    |
| 5. Jaycee van Rooyen | 1936 350cc Ariel Red Hunter |

## CLASS AWARDS UP TO 1925:

- |            |                                     |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Over 500cc | Mark Shaw (1925 600cc Indian Scout) |
|------------|-------------------------------------|

## CLASS AWARDS 1926-1930:

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 251-350cc           | Graham Bowles (1930 300cc Zenith Special)            |
| 351-500cc           | Tony Lyons Lewis (1928 500cc Norton)                 |
| Sidecar combination | Brian and Desmond Lange (1928 1000cc Ariel Big Twin) |

## CLASS AWARDS 1931-1936:

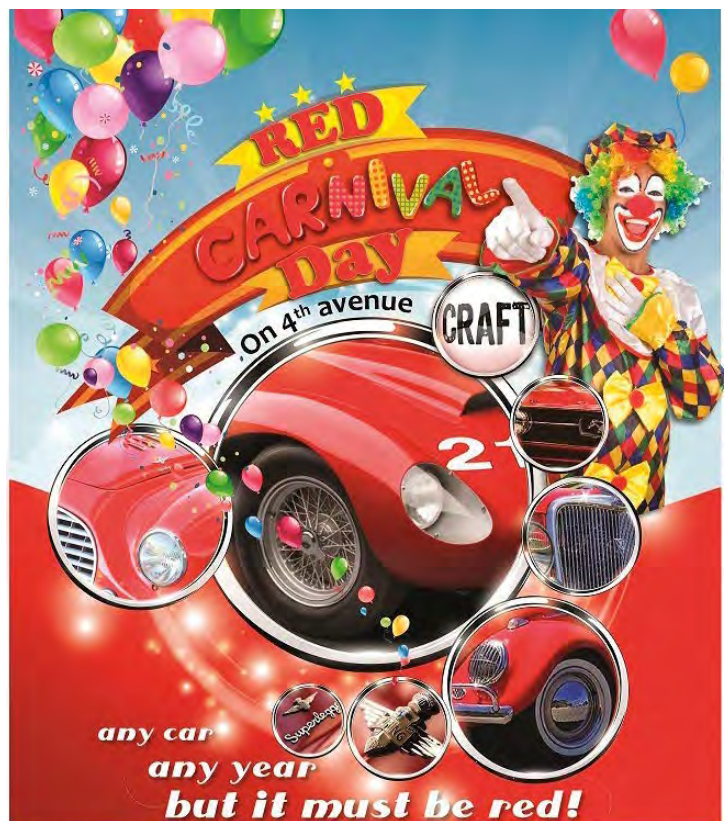
- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Up to 250cc         | David Pitchford (1935 250cc BSA)                   |
| 251-350cc           | Ryan van Heerden (350cc Velocette MAC)             |
| 351-500cc           | Allan Cunninghame (1936 500cc Velocette MSS)       |
| Over 501cc          | Aubrey Cilliers (1936 550cc Triumph)               |
| Sidecar combination | Adrian and Gerald Hollis (1935 600cc Sunbeam Lion) |

## BEST WOMAN RIDER:

- |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|
| Beverley Jacobs (1925 250cc Triumph) |
|--------------------------------------|

## BEST FIRST-TIME RIDER:

- |   |
|---|
| Greg Kendall (1936 500cc Velocette MSS) |
|---|



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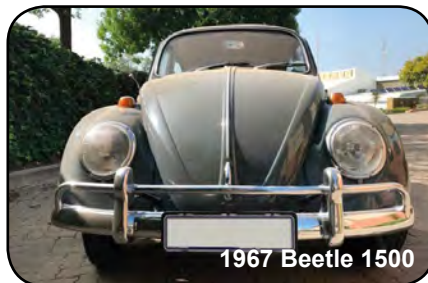
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## CORSAIR DREAM A REALITY

Dear Sir,

Although not a subscriber, getting the current *Classic Car Africa* is always a priority when I come to South Africa. However, I hope you will give me some space to confirm a story I'd like to tell, but whose events no one seems to remember – to the point where I'm beginning to wonder whether it only happened in my dreams.

In the early sixties, as a boarder at a government high school in Lusaka, we were told that a car would be driving through the town on a certain day. Apparently the Union-Castle Line had advertised that their way was the quickest from SA to Southampton, other than flying. Ford Motor Company kitted out a Ford Corsair to challenge this statement, and the race was on.

I believe the car won. Is there anyone who can confirm this, before I register myself for an institution? The Magazine is a great read.

**Best regards,  
Pete Ihmann**

*Don't worry, Pete, it is not time to book yourself into an institution. Years back I found images of this race and researched the details. I have always had a desire to do something similar today and have even calculated that it would be a close race between a car and aeroplane between Johannesburg and Durban. By my calculations, if I left the CBD post office in a Ford Focus ST and maintained the legal speeds down the N3, I would arrive at Joe Cool's on the beachfront within 15 minutes of someone leaving the same starting point, fighting traffic and O.R. Tambo check-in requirements. A slight delay at the baggage terminal would give the win to the Ford.*

*But back to the Corsair versus ship race. In May 1967 the RMS Windsor Castle raced a Corsair from Cape Town to Southampton. It began after Union-Castle Line claimed sea travel was, other than flying, the fastest means of travel from South Africa to the UK. The Ford Motor Company disputed this and set up a race from Cape Town back to England. So the RMS Windsor Castle took up the challenge and in May 1967 raced home against a Ford Corsair 2000E. Despite the high profile*



*nature of this race, press coverage was sadly very minimal. The ship and the car (with rally drivers Ken Chambers and Eric Chapman) left simultaneously from Cape Town docks. The liner's sea voyage measured in at 7 000 miles while the car had to cover 9 700 miles. Chambers and Chapman had many adventures along the way, including a moment when the Corsair fell into a water-filled pothole that was 6 feet deep and had to be rescued by 30 locals and a rope. Other challenges included petrol shortages (some nuns apparently gave them some beer as a substitute) and armed Congolese soldiers that forced frequent stops – their support team and plane were even locked up for several days. Even at the Congo/Central African Republic border the drivers were in trouble, being arrested for eight hours for trying to cross a river after the customs point had closed for the night. If that wasn't enough, add 24 tyre changes and 37 puncture repairs. Just before reaching Southampton, they were pulled over by West Sussex Police and cautioned for having a dirty number plate. The Corsair however arrived 20 minutes before the ship sailed in but the race was declared a draw, taking into account the two flights the car need to make the distance – it was air-lifted a total of 700 miles over water and across the Cameroons, that territory being impassable – for diplomatic rather than physical reasons. Total race time was eleven and a half days.*

**Stuart**

## SWEET BITTER

Hi Stuart,

You will recall the article that Mike Monk wrote on my 1974 Bitter CD in your magazine some time ago. I sold the car to my son in England and he is really enjoying it. My son, Andrew Grace, was invited by the organisers of the London Classic Car Show to display his Bitter along the VIP Avenue at the show and, lo and behold, the car won the prize as the best Coupé on the show. Quite a feather in his cap. I attach a photo of the car on the show with my son sitting behind the steering wheel.

**Sincerely  
Ronnie Grace**

*Hello Ronnie,*

*Brilliant to hear. I first came across the Bitter when it was just about to be restored and was immediately intrigued by the car. While the car is a solid performer thanks to its American V8 lump it is in the aesthetic department that I think it really excels. Add to this a world-class restoration and it is not surprising that it stole the show. Glad to hear Andrew is enjoying the unusual machine.*

**Stuart**



## IDENTITY CRISIS

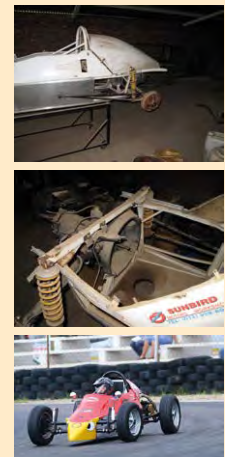
Hi Stuart,

I am sure that you get numerous requests like this but would really appreciate it if you could publish this. In 2012 an air-cooled formula Vee was found and restored by Albert Smuts in Gauteng. Nobody knows the history of this car and it is rumoured that it never competed in the air-cooled Vee era. I have campaigned it in Formula Libre and Historic Single Seater events since 2014 and have thoroughly enjoyed the close racing and camaraderie which you find in historic racing. The car has been issued with a Historic Technical Passport but the year of manufacture was estimated in the absence of any detail. I have included a couple of photos and would ask that you let the readers have a look and see if they recognise it and can fill us in. There is a sticker from Sunbird Motors Workshop in Pretoria which may help.

**Kind regards,  
Duncan Gibb**

*Hi Duncan, great to see another local race car being preserved and raced. I have no idea as to what and when the Vee is, but will put it out there to the readers and sure it will spark some sort of memory. Will pass on any correspondence.*

**Stuart**



## RESTO MOD ALFA

The story started when my dad James Buckley bought an Alfetta GTV 2000 from the first owner for R8 000. We drove the car for a few years with torn seats and a leaking sun roof, and as the years went on, I asked my dad if this could be my first car. I was surprised when he said yes and also stated that it could become my project car later on.

So the idea popped into my head of building the car the way I would like it and in 2009, without my dad knowing, I started stripping the car to start my café racer project. At this time I was nearing the end of Grade 9, and during school holidays and on weekends I stripped and stripped and then stripped some more. Finally, in 2010, we took the car for sandblasting in Tarlton and on the way back a man stopped us to ask if the car was an Alfa.

I thought he was going to say what a dumb idea it is to build an Alfa, but was surprised when he said that if I needed parts his plot was up the road and he had a barn full of parts! When it finally came to finishing my car my plan of a café racer had fizzled out but a new one replaced it – keep it as simple as possible but modernise the car. I updated the '77 suspension for the later GTV6 suspension with thicker torsion bars and



brakes. With that I had a stiffer ride, much better brakes (2 pot Brembo) and vented discs but it didn't stop there as I also made my own aluminium radiator and expansion bottle, as well as a few other odds and ends, which meant that I also unknowingly saved 20kg (an excellent surprise).

I also tried to clean up some of Alfa's wiring diagram, which gave a much cleaner look to the lower, more modernised '77 Alfetta GTV. But the main reason for this build was to show the younger generation that old Alfas can also become a 'resto mod' and not just VWs and Hondas. Being part of the West Rand Alfa Club, even the 'Old Farts' (as they call themselves) admire what I have done and that puts a massive smile on my face. I hope that more people are following the path of restoring



older cars with a slight twist.

**Brandon Buckley**

*Hi Brandon, more and more youngsters are realising that classics offer a decent alternative as a daily drive and that with a few tasteful modifications they can not only perform better but also look the part. I agree that it seems as if the flavour of the month for these enhancements is more evident in the Volkswagen and Japanese circle, but with companies like Alfaholics doing some magic on suspension and engine internals overseas (and setting Nürburgring lap records along the way), the Alfas have plenty of tricks to call on. My own Alfetta is also in the process of being made lighter – not because of any clever engineering, but rather the dreaded tin worm eating away at the sheet metal. Enjoy the car – it is a winner.*

**Stuart**

## FLYING COMET

Hi Stuart,

I would like to tell you about my son Douglas's Ford Mercury Comet. It is a 1966 model and we think it is the only one in SA. There is a 1965 Comet with a V8 that races in the Historics class at Zwartkops, but the body profile between the '65 and '66 is slightly different. Our Comet has the 3.3-litre straight-six motor fitted as standard. Doug made the decision early on to keep it standard. The car had a colour change as you will see in the photos, and it has had a nut-and-bolt restoration. The interior was totally redone, including the dash which had its own Grand Canyon-sized crack. New tyres, new windscreen, fuel tank and radiator refurbished. New hoses, slave cylinders, brake shoes and carpets throughout. It is licensed and registered, although it needs a better carb and discs up front. Doug bought it for R30 000 and the total cost so far is R140 000. As it is a

two-door hardtop, value is estimated at R200 000 - R250 000. Being left-hand drive it is 'interesting' to drive on busy Johannesburg roads. The turning circle is about five full turns. I hope you find it interesting.

**Regards  
Greg Baxter**

*Thanks Greg, really interesting story and as I have never seen a similar Mercury Comet at any of the shows and events around the country it could well be the only version here. Let's see if any of the readers know more. If it is the only one here, it begs the question: how and why did it arrive here? Perhaps as a Ford test unit with the intention of converting them to right-hand drive for our market? If this was the case I would assume that the cost of doing this, added to the premium Mercury offerings were sold at against similar specification Fords, meant it would have maybe been a touch overpriced. It's a worthwhile story to look into.*

**Stuart**



## XK MEMORIES

Hi Stuart,

Your article in the March edition on the XK120 brought back memories of my own ownership of an XK140 FHC. I was barely 19 when my best friend's father advised that he was getting rid of his 1954 XK140. Having ridden in the back of it at high speed down the M1 I had to have it, and although at the time I could have bought a three-year-old Mk3 Ford Zodiac for the same money (£150), it was always going to be the Jag.

I recall picking it up from Charing Cross Road in London on a winter's night and my father and I driving it home to Sale in Cheshire. The trip was memorable as the heater didn't work, and the closing mechanism of the two body vents had rusted open so we had to stop every few miles to thaw out our frozen legs thanks to the icy draft!

Closer inspection in the daylight revealed rust in the floorpan behind the front passenger seat and the plywood floorboards on both sides gave a disconcerting view of the road – so that was why my dad and I ended up with wet bottoms! While the XK would still do the 'ton', the oil consumption was horrific and the smoke from the exhausts was embarrassing.

Over the next two years I set about fixing her up, before emigrating to South Africa in 1972 and bringing the XK with me.

The original engine was terminal – to a youngster of very limited resources – and I found a written-off Mk2 3.4 with a reasonable engine that became the donor for the XK. Being a bit of a speed freak (and determined to build a wolf in sheep's clothing) I also found a Gold top cylinder head and triple SU setup from a burnt-out 420G. A more thorough inspection of the Mk2's engine revealed bore wear and the Achilles heel – the rear main bearing oil seal needed replacing. I had the block rebored +.02" and fitted a set of D-type pistons with flat tops which after I'd skimmed the head, raised the compression ratio somewhat. New bearing

shells, seals, gaskets and timing chain were part of the rebuild as was a decoke, valve grind and porting of the cylinder head. The triple SUs were refurbished with new needles and jets. A new clutch and lightened flywheel completed the mechanical restoration. Before emigrating I had the body resprayed and some of the rust attended to – she was now red instead of black, and looked a treat.

After settling in Johannesburg I needed new tyres which were impossible to find, and as the Jag was my daily driver, I came up with a solution! Some research (no internet in '72) revealed that the wheels from a Humber Hawk had the same PCD as the Jag and these were found in a local scrap yard which when banded, would allow the fitting of the then-new Dunlop Aquasport radials. This, and the fitment of Konis all-round, transformed the handling but the brakes were not good – drums were not up to the car's now considerable performance and a disc conversion from a 150 was a non-starter. The 140 has two six-volt batteries located behind the front wheels which had to be checked according to the handbook by 'Removing road wheel...' I removed the two six volters and replaced them with one 12V located in the passenger side battery compartment. The spare space on the driver's side now housed a servo from a late model Cortina. While this modification undoubtedly reduced the pedal effort and inspired more confidence while driving, the underlying problem of brake fade was always there.

This manifested itself in the most terrifying way when, as members of the Jaguar club, we all decided to enter our XKs at the Kyalami Top Speed trial. My first circuit was disappointing when I went through the timing marks at 94mph, and I knew that the Jag was better than that! A fellow XK owner told me to be more adventurous and keep my foot down, which I did on the next lap. I have a certificate which attests to a speed of 109.6mph – and a pair of soiled

trousers! Once through the timing marks at over the ton, the 3,2,1 marker boards for Crowthorne Corner (clockwise circuit in those days) come up pretty quickly and I was on the anchors and setting up for the corner. No sooner had I hit the brakes than the cabin was filled with the smell of burning Mintex. The pedal was rock hard and no more deceleration! I had to put my trust in those Dunlops and Konis to get me around the corner, and they did thankfully, but I never raced the Jag again.

The sad end to the story began when I decided to do a full body-off restoration as there was still a lot of structural rust around the sills and A-post, which made the closing of the doors problematic. Time, cost, space and family pressures meant that I never saw the completion of my pride and joy, and I eventually sold the car in pieces.

Today I would be condemned for carrying out those modifications on what is a priceless piece of automotive history, and in my retirement I would probably seek complete originality. It was a wonderful experience though and I taught myself invaluable skills in restoration, engineering and how to innovate without spending a fortune.

C'est la vie!

**Regards**  
**Robin Hayes**

*Hi Robin,*

*Thanks for this story. These are the personal stories we love to get in as they give each and every car its own personality. And I wouldn't feel bad about the modifications – at some stage in life (normally in our twenties) we all strive to have the hottest car amongst our peers and at that stage don't see our cars as investments. For me this is the best form of car ownership as the car gets used and driven properly without any kid gloves. With the host of specialists in our global village now it is never too late to put back a car to original or pick up a restored version, but you can't buy those memories. Thanks for all the support and correspondence.*

*Stuart*

## THE WIZARD OF OZ

Hello, my name is Brendan Fitzpatrick from Melbourne, Australia and I would like to purchase a back issue of *Classic and Performance Car Africa* from April/May 2014. That issue has an article on the Ford Fairmont GT. Also, do any other of your

issues have information or articles on the Fairmont GT? If so I would be interested in them also. Can you please tell me how I can purchase?

**Many thanks.**  
**Brendan**

*Thanks for the contact, Brendan. We have back issues of the magazine in question and are able to post one Down Under. I will also post a copy of another issue where we mention the Fairmont GT in an article about Holden Monaro GTS and Chevrolet SS models.*  
*Stuart*

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# FINDING ..... LOST ART



The imported wooden buck didn't quite get the shape right.



Having aborted the wooden buck polyurethane foam was laid over the 400i chassis and then hand carved as a former for the final shape.



A donor 400i chassis and running gear was sourced and then modified with a skeleton to support the new aluminium bodywork.



With the body nearing completion the finer details became the focus. Here a bespoke grille is made from scratch.



Hours of labour went into making the gearbox tunnel, firewalls and interior cladding and the seat was hand made from aluminium before being covered in red leather.

With a plan of action and part collection going well for our WMD Inyoka Mystery Car project, our attention has turned to the body and how to mount it to our Triumph TR chassis. It's going to take a decent number of support braces and as it is a bare shell we will need to fabricate firewalls, floorpan and some sort of internal cockpit cladding. For the sake of keeping the car as light as possible aluminium is the material of choice. And the search for a Johannesburg-based artisan with the required skill set led **Stuart Grant** to his next Carbs & Coffee outing – Dean van der Walt and his English Wheel Fab outfit in Kya Sand.

I was expecting a 60- or 70-year-old who'd gained his aluminium expertise from years of graft in the airways so was a bit taken aback when Dean, who is under 40, strolled out to greet me. My reservations were quickly put to rest as I saw a few English wheels, shrinkers, nibblers and tools of the aluminium trade. If there were still any concerns about Dean knowing his aluminium, the sight of a nearly completed Ferrari 315S look-alike was enough to banish them to the scrap heap once and for all.

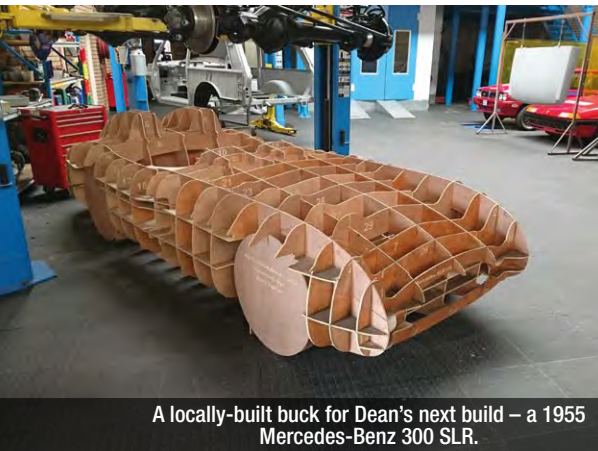
Like so many of the kids growing up in the 1980s Dean's motoring career started with the humble Volkswagen Citi Golf. He left school at an early age and set about repairing, modifying and rebuilding the beloved hatchback. He learned heaps along the way, becoming proficient in both mechanics and bodywork, but in a never-ending search for more kept researching both new and old techniques. As time went by he pulled in work from various two- and four-wheeled corners, including a monstrous structural repair to a Lamborghini, metal replacement on a Ferrari 308 and plenty of tanks, panels and mudguards for custom motorcycles. Rust repair, bakkie bins, wheel arch extensions and even repairing damaged aluminium cylinder heads complete his impressive resumé.

When a business partner decided that he needed a look-alike of the achingly beautiful Ferrari 315S, Dean stepped up to the plate. The pair purchased the correct equipment needed to echo the curvaceous body and even went to the States for the proper training in their usage. A damaged

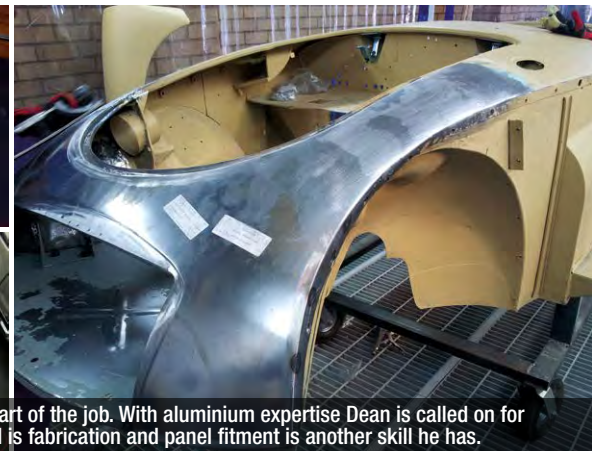




From any angle Dean's hand-built Ferrari 315S look-alike is a stunner. Total time to get to this stage was close on a year and a half. To paint it in red or to leave it in raw aluminium? That is the question.



A locally-built buck for Dean's next build – a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR.



Bike tank and panel fabrication is also part of the job. With aluminium expertise Dean is called on for damaged supercar repairs but steel fabrication and panel fitment is another skill he has.

Ferrari 400i saloon was sourced as a donor vehicle and a wooden body former (or buck) ordered from the UK.

Hours of metal shaping followed but inaccuracies in the buck meant that the silhouette was not quite correct. The solution was to start again. Only this time the buck was discarded and a new template was made by covering the Ferrari chassis with polyurethane foam and then hand carving and smoothing the lines. With that done, metal formers were shaped off the poly body and the bending, beating and rolling commenced. A support structure was welded up from tubing and the likes of door and bonnet frames were made before these could be skinned. Just on a year later the basic body was, to the untrained eye, complete. But the job wasn't done and months of work then went into making all the internal panelling, the gearbox tunnel, aluminium seat internals, hinges and the various body clips to hold it all together. The attention to detail is impressive. Having found images of 'the real thing' Dean then set about scaling the petrol tank dimensions and appearance in order to replicate that. The same happened with the clips that

secure the bonnet and rear opening section – off-the-shelf latches were no good so instead round bar was shaped as per the originals. The 400i alloy wheels were replaced by wires, which meant converting hubs to take a centre-locking knock-on and instead of going the easy route of fitting a generic mesh grill, a bespoke unit with horizontal and vertical aluminium fins was added to a delicately formed lip.

At the time of our visit the last few finishing touches and adjustments were being made before the car goes off for painting. While a shiny red coat of paint will look marvellous, I would be tempted to leave it in raw aluminium to show off the worked metal surface.

In total the project has taken just under one and a half years, which is not half bad when you consider that other jobs like fitting new replacement panels to British sports cars (even though these are made for a certain model they never fit perfectly) and new floors to an Alfa Sprint, building a custom motorcycle and bending up a Kombi load box floor have been dovetailed in with the Ferrari.

He's also started making English wheels

and the likes for clients and is now offering courses in sheet metal fabrication and aluminium welding. Sign up to one of these and you could even play a part in building his dream car – a replica of the Stirling Moss Mercedes-Benz 300SLR racer that won the 1955 Mille Miglia.

Dean's already had the wooden buck made up by a local shop. Under the skin this project will feature a hand-built chassis as close to the original as possible but because finding a straight-eight Mercedes motor is impossible, he'll make use of a single-cam straight-six as found in the likes of the Pagoda 280SL or W108 saloon. We look forward to hearing the silky smooth exhaust note blasting through the Magaliesburg, re-enacting the Moss/Denis Jenkinson victory with leather caps and pace notes.

Maybe it's time for us to book a session on one of English Wheel Fab's courses – with the aim of learning how to finish off the WMD Inyoka cabin or form and weld up an authentic-looking petrol tank. **C**

*For more information on Dean's projects, his equipment and tool offering or fabrication classes visit [www.englishwheelfab.co.za](http://www.englishwheelfab.co.za).*



# DOING THE CENTURY

**Mike** and **Wendy Monk** take A 79-year-old car with less than 30 000 miles on the odo for a cruise and realise why it has only had four owners over its lifetime – this Buick is simply stunning.





**A**s America reached the end of the Great Depression, Buick's fortunes took an upward swing when the dynamic 39-year-old Harlow Herbert 'Red' Curtice took over as general manager in October 1933. Curtice had earned his reputation heading up GM's AC Spark Plug division and quickly set about instigating what was to be a Buick renaissance. The company's snob appeal still had value but because times were still hard a smaller, short wheelbase model was introduced, while the rest of the range underwent a speed and style upgrade to increase public interest and appeal.

In reality, the first-generation Century ran from 1930 to 1935 and was simply known as the Series 60. The name Century was only added when the second generation appeared in 1936 and joined a line-up consisting of a Series 40 Special, Series 80 Roadmaster and Series 90 Limited, all powered by an inline, eight-cylinder, overhead-valve engine. But there is a bit of an odd story about how the name

Century was adopted. The Series 60 was the performance model of the range and it is said that as a result of designing a car capable of 100mph, Buick was looking for a suitable name in recognition of the fact. When a company executive arrived back from a trip to the UK and mentioned that the British referred to doing 100mph as 'doing the century', the name stuck. But in cricket, the term 'ton' was used to denote a batsman reaching a century – 100 runs. A bit lost in translation perhaps? I digress...

The wheelbase of the rigid-girder X-frame chassis varied according to the model: the Special measured 122 inches, Century 126 inches (3200mm), Roadmaster 133 inches and Limited 140 inches. The Special had a 248ci engine (4064cc) whereas the rest boasted a 320.18ci (5247cc) version of the Buick Dynaflex 8. With a dual-barrel downdraught carburettor and running a 6.15:1 compression ratio, the bigger motor produced 141hp (105kW) at 3600rpm and 269lb.ft (365Nm) of torque at 2000. Alloy pistons and an improved combustion process meant 'There's a cyclone in each



cylinder' according to the sales brochure. It was this more powerful engine combined with the shorter, and consequently lighter, body that gave the Century its mildly hot rod persona. Mind you, at around 3 690lbs (1 674kg), the Century can hardly be classified as a lightweight.

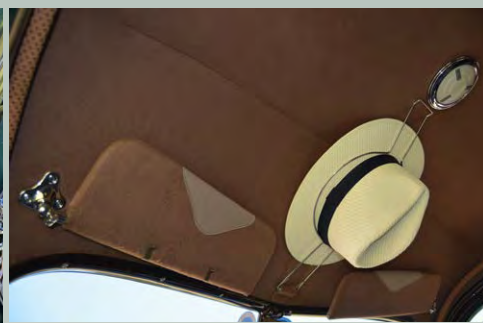
So much for the background. The car featured here has a remarkable history. It is a 1938 Sport Coupé with opera seats (Model 66-S) painted in Van Gogh Green and fitted with a number of extras including bumper overrides, a fog lamp, a radio and a boot light. The basic US list price at the time was \$1 226. Of the 2 030 Century Coupés that were built in 1938, this is one of only 39 right-hand drive models. It was purchased new by Martha McDonald, a resident of Harrismith with a redoubtable reputation, who used it simply to go to the local shops (often waving the Union Jack out of the window and singing 'God Save The Queen') and the occasional visit to relatives in Ladysmith.

Once a year she hired someone from the local garage to chauffeur her to Durban for her annual holiday at the Caister Hotel in Musgrave Road.

The car then went to a Pietermaritzburg couple, Graham and Rose Carter. Graham rallied the car and raced at the Roy Hesketh Circuit and Rose used it occasionally for trips into town until it was laid up, unprotected, at Rose's parents' home in 1976. It was transferred to another family home in Montrose in 1997 where it stood in a lean-to until May 2010. At that year's annual Pietermaritzburg Cars in the Park show, local old car enthusiast and event organiser Ty Terblanche was approached by a relative of Aunt Martha to see if he would be interested in purchasing the car. A folder of pictures revealed a tired but seemingly complete vehicle and when a viewing was arranged, amazingly it was located just a kilometre from Ty's home! The odometer read 25 182 miles.

Ty set about a full restoration of the car, sourcing many new parts from the US through the Buick Club of America. One

It was purchased new by Martha McDonald, a resident of Harrismith with a redoubtable reputation, who used it simply to go to the local shops



change was replacing the (colonial spec?) knee-action rear shocks with heavy-duty telescopic, which improved the ride. A heart-warming incident was provided by Dave Tacheny, a US Midwest dealer in mid-'30s Buicks. During its laid-up period, two of the road wheels had rotted and Ty tried in vain to find replacements locally as its recessed design was unique to the model. When Dave was approached, he said, "Sure, how many do you want?" and sent them to Ty free of charge. The restoration project took 21 months and Ty drove the car on club and special occasions before selling it to well-known Cape Town automobilist Dave Lyons in June last year.

All of Dave's cars, past and present, have something special about them and this Buick is no exception, thanks to the quality of Ty's superb restoration work. A streamlined 5170mm-long 2+2 is naturally imposing, particularly when the coupé shape is highlighted with art deco-inspired brightwork. The domed roof is said to prevent drumming in the all-steel 'Turret Top' bodywork built by Fisher. The detailing

is a visual delight: one of the upgrades for 1938 was fender-mounted sidelight housings mimicking the shape of the headlight nacelles.

The interior is no less imposing. Beneath the V-shaped windscreen, the symmetric dashboard layout continues the art deco style and is fussily elegant. Recessed spring spokes on the ivory plastic steering wheel help prevent accidental use of the full horn ring. A quartet of gauges supplements the 180-degree speedometer. The car originally had brown tufted leather upholstery but this had rotted by the time Ty's restoration was underway and it was replaced with Bedford Cord from LeBaron Bonney in the USA, copying the smooth design from the '38 Buick sales brochure. The door cappings and window surrounds were done by Ty using printers' ink over an undercoat. The full-width front seat's centrally-split backrest gives access to the rear in which the two fold-

The restoration project took 21 months and Ty drove the car on club and special occasions before selling it to well-known Cape Town automobilist Dave Lyons in June last year




down opera seats look decidedly inadequate, given the space available. When not in use, the available luggage space, when combined with that of the massive boot, is vast enough for a couple to take a full wardrobe of clothes along for a weekend vacation.

Turn on the slightly fiddly ignition switch; press the starter and the straight-eight eases into an immediate steady rhythm. Despite such a long lever, gear selection is positive and the big coupé pulls away with ease. The gearbox is a three-speed synchromesh, with second comfortably dealing with all the low speed action. Drive is taken to the hypoid rear axle via a torque tube. While driving the car in and around Hout Bay, most motorists seemed to sit back and admire its presence on the road. Once on the coastal road and into top gear, the Dynafash takes on a calm yet powerful persona and bowls along with an easy cruising gait. Yes, given a stretch of Interstate, it is

easy to imagine the speedo needle reaching the, er, century mark... Zero to 60mph (96km/h) was claimed to take 13 seconds.

For 1938, Buick introduced coil spring rear suspension: up front, independent coil suspension and a stabiliser bar

had been in use since 1934. By the standards of the time, ride quality is excellent and Buick made a lot of the 'torque-free springing' and cited 'rear tyres last longer because the wheels no longer slip and spin' as one of the benefits. The recessed rims are shod with whitewall 15x7.00 tyres while the effective internal-expanding brakes are hydraulically-operated 12x2-inch drums all round.

In essence, the Buick Coupé evokes more of the glamour of the Flapper Era than any Bonnie & Clyde connotation, despite the car's performance – and wide, people-supportive running boards, which, incidentally, have spring-loaded feelers on the passenger side to help the driver park the requisite distance from the kerb. Who thought parking sensors were a modern-day innovation? To look at and to drive, this car represents Buick at its very best. In 1937 Buick passed the 200 000 production milestone for the first time, and by 1938 had risen from a routine 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> place in America's sales charts to a strong 4<sup>th</sup> (8.8% market share), a position it held until war broke out. No wonder the company's advertising suggested 'Better Buy Buick'. 

*The author thanks local Buick club members Ty Terblanche, Chris Palk and Brian DePouli for their contributions to the history of this car.*

Once on the coastal road and into top gear, the Dynafash takes on a calm yet powerful persona and bowls along with an easy cruising gait



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PERFECT BY NAME,  
PERFECT BY NATURE







First shown at Earls Court in 1962, the Lotus Elan became the sportscar against which others were judged for a decade. Not only did it win on the road but also on track and when the Japanese once again felt the need to design an entry-level sportscar in the late 1980s, Mazda turned to the Lotus for inspiration and backbone to its MX-5 Miata project. **Stuart Grant** climbs into a beautiful final version of the Elan, a Sprint, and talks tobacco sponsorship.

**Photography by Etienne Fouche**

Look up Elan in the dictionary and you'll see it translates to liveliness, flash, dash and panache. And that right there sums up the Sprint more succinctly than any road test or review I've read about the model. In the late 1950s Colin Chapman realised he needed to develop Lotus into more of a mass production sportscar-manufacturing company. He came up with the Elite: a beautiful, fibreglass monocoque that made use of a Coventry-Climax engine. A brilliant car but the difficulty in making the bodies at a reasonable price, the complexity of the design and the engine's tendency to be temperamental meant it could never be a volume seller.

Lotus did however take a massive step in the right direction when a new purpose-built factory opened in 1959, where it soon made strides towards becoming an independent engine-manufacturing plant – developing the Lotus Ford Twin-Cam converted from the likes of the Ford Anglia 4-cylinder. This new facility and the Twin-Cam engine soon led to the Elan – the car that saw Chapman taking a step closer to becoming a major sportscar manufacturer.

Like the Elite, the Elan was initially going to be of a fibreglass monocoque construction but luck stepped in when Ron Hickman, who headed up Lotus Developments, suggested that while John Frayling worked on the body design, a prototype with a backbone chassis should be built to measure up and finalise mechanicals like engine, transmission, suspension and brake details. Chapman agreed and since then decades of Lotus cars have featured such an item.

The Elan launched as a 1500 roadster but with only 22 units leaving the production line, the engine capacity was bumped up from 1498cc to 1558cc and it was assigned the Elan 1600 badge. A hardtop was offered in 1963 and a fixed coupé version ran alongside the roadster from '65. Besides the design being a bit more fashionable and contemporary than the Elite, it also saw a huge step forward in reliability and proved more economical to manufacture than its predecessor. Production engineer John Cope-Lewis





Monaco GP where Graham Hill, debuting the Lotus 49B, put the red/gold/white car on pole and drove to victory. The numerous colour images published following this showed that cars painted in a team sponsor's colour, rather than traditional country colours, was a match made in heaven – teams got the funding, events got more entries and the sponsor got plenty of mileage.

Despite the fact that this might have been the first appearance of a cigarette-sponsored team in world championship motorsports, Lotus and Gold Leaf had actually teamed up a few months prior during the Tasman Series Under. On 6 January 1968 the team Lotus 49 took to the track fitted with a 2.5-litre engine, painted red/gold/white and with Jim Clark at the wheel. With four out of eight wins in the series, Clark and the Gold Leaf Lotus scooped the Tasman title. It was the third and final Tasman Series win for Clark, who was killed in a Formula 2 crash at Hockenheim,

Germany a month after the series concluded.

While Lotus are widely regarded as having introduced the idea of sponsors dominating liveries, Southern African race fans with a keen eye for dates and stats are quick to point out that this is not the case. Reason being that on 1 December 1967 Team Gunston (a local cigarette brand) made its appearance at an event held in Bulawayo just before the Rhodesian GP – beating the Gold Leaf arrival at the Tasman series by a week.

But I digress... let's get back to the Elan Sprint. Arnold convinced the Lotus powers that be that a revised Elan was needed to boost sales, and by August of 1970 four concept Sprints were built (a pair of roadsters and coupés in both right- and left-hand drive format). But oddly a matt black-over-yellow colour scheme was chosen for these. The split in the two-tone paintwork was basically where vertical planes met the horizontal, which also seemed a

bizarre choice, considering the potential homage to its racing livery. Regardless, press shots were done (with Jochen Rindt posing alongside it – prior to his fatal crash that September) and the new Sprint was announced at the Earls Court Motor Show in October 1970. Mechanically there was nothing new about the cars on the stand as they were actually tarted up S4s. But the information sheet that was displayed said that the new Sprint would feature a 135bhp big valve engine and 3 different final drive options for improved performance.

Without any new cars ready and with clients not buying S4s and rather holding out for the greater performance promised at the show, it became a mad rush back at the factory. Lotus Engineering Director Tony Rudd was tasked with making this big valve engine happen and he had the result in an amazing ten days. To fill the gap in sales until the scheduled official launch of the Sprint, a



number of these big valve engines were fitted to unsold S4s and to refresh the look the lower half of the bodies were painted white – records indicate a total of 71 S4s were treated in this manner.

Come February 1971 and there were finally Elan Sprint units ready for selling. Outwardly the differences between it and the S4 included removing the bulge from the bonnet (the Sprint used a Weber carb instead of the taller Stombergs, which allowed this change), black wheels with chrome trim rings – and the two-tone paint schemes with gold bumpers and sideline (featuring the word SPRINT) became the standard. An interesting benefit to the gold striping was that it allowed poor workmanship at the cut lines between the two colours to be tidied up. It's said that no two early Sprints had this strip in the same place. If all this works driver-looking paintwork was too much for the under the radar clients, a single colour was offered at an additional cost – but the gold flash remained. Playing fully on its motorsport success Lotus fitted a

World Champions Constructor badge to the right-hand wing, which was revamped over the next two years as more titles came the firm's way.

To meet new safety laws the ignition switch was moved from the dash to underneath the steering column. The steering wheel changed, with a larger but flatter black centre cover and Colin Chapman's name engraved in the downward-facing spoke, and sun visors became standard equipment.

Of course the real excitement was in the engine department, with a massive increase of 20%. The head was worked to get in the bigger valves. It was skimmed too, resulting in extra compression and the camshafts were re-profiled to generate more torque. A Weber 40 DCOE 31 carburettor was re-jetted and fitted to the initial batch of Sprints, but when Dellorto were more adaptable in changing its DHLA 40E unit to meet new European emission regulations, Lotus went that route.

In the drivetrain department the diff mounting was reinforced by the addition of a brace between the mounting points, which combined with revised Rotaflex couplings to eliminate 'wind up' or surge.

Although some decisions appear to have been made hastily, all the parts of the Sprint equation somehow added up to the best Elan ever. Despite its small dimensions the cabin space is not bad for two, it has luxury touches like wood

vener dash facia and electric windows, is relatively comfortable as a tourer and mind-blowing as a racer. The engine is magic and when compared to its contemporaries, performance was quick – how does a Lotus-claimed zero to 60mph (96km/h) sprint of 5.9 seconds sound for 1971? A touch optimistic? Yes, but the 6.2, 6.6 and 6.8 runs recorded by respected British publications in the day show it wasn't far off, with recorded top speeds in the 120mph zone. Apparently with the 3.55:1 differential option added over 130mph was possible, proven by Lotus PR chief at the time, Don McLaughlin, who did 134mph in Belgium (this speed dropped to 128mph with the flip-up lights on and hurting the aerodynamics).

True to its meaning, the Elan Sprint is very flash and dash, particularly when added to the astonishing handling, the sublime steering feel and relatively low price tag when new, which is why Mazda were so clever in choosing it as a case study when looking to build a small sportscar almost two decades after the last Sprint left the Lotus line.

Midway through 1973 Lotus announced that the last Elan, number 12 224, had been built. With floods damaging a large portion of Lotus's paperwork, quantifying an exact number of Sprints made is open to debate, but general consensus is that between 1 314 and 1 353 were produced. Whatever the score, Elan numbers were impressive and elevated Lotus from the ranks of specialist sportscar maker to mass-production outfit. 🏁

Despite its small dimensions the cabin space is not bad for two, it has luxury touches like wood veneer dash facia and electric windows, is relatively comfortable as a tourer and mind-blowing as a racer



**1989 Jaguar XJS 5.3i V12 Cabriolet**  
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Old English White with Dark Blue Leather interior, Automatic with A/C and wire wheels. Excellent condition. **R1,500,000**



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**1959 Ford Thunderbird**  
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# A STING IN THE TALE

First the refined, now for the raw. Last month Editor Stuart Grant got behind the wheel of what he described as 'the most desirable non-turbo impact-bumper 911, namely the 930 series Carrera 2.7 MFI'. As luck would have it, just after the March issue hit the shelves **Mike Monk** had the opportunity to drive the latest addition to the Franschoek Motor Museum's fleet, a one-owner 1979 Turbo – and that is an offer no one would refuse.

**Images by Mike & Wendy Monk**





The rear-engined 911 was introduced in 1963 and has been steadily developed ever since. A successor to the 356, the 911 has become one of the world's most iconic cars, even staving off an in-house threat from 1976 to 1995 by the front-engined 924/928/944/968 evolution as the company's staple sports car offering. The basic sequence of 911 series numbering is:

Porsche 911	(1963 - 1989)
Porsche 964	(1989 - 1994)
Porsche 993	(1995 - 1998)
Porsche 996	(1999 - 2004) all-new body and water-cooled engines
Porsche 997	(2005 - 2011)
Porsche 991	(2012 - 2014)
Porsche 991.2	(2015 - )

Despite having gone upmarket to make room for the more affordable Boxster/Cayman in the corporate line-up, the 911 continues to thrive and there is no sign of any imminent demise.

Harking back to the VW Beetle flat-four

that was at the heart of Porsche's original 356, up until the introduction of the 996 all Porsche engines were air-cooled, which helped create a distinctive sound, especially from the hotter versions. But where does the 930 Series fit in the overall picture, and what significance does it have?

Simply put, it was Porsche's first turbocharged road car and was a derivative of the first series 911. Because of the changes made to the basic floorpan, it was given its own series number and was in production for no less than 14 years, from 1975 to 1989. The bodywork included the impact-absorbing bumpers that were adopted to meet US safety legislation in the USA, where the car was as much of a success as it was in Europe, until emission laws forced its temporary withdrawal in 1980.

Using technology learnt from the 917/30 CanAm race car project, Ernst Fuhrmann began developing the Turbo motor in 1974 using a KKK turbocharger fitted to the fuel-injected Carrera RS 3.0 single overhead-cam flat-six engine. It delivered 191kW at 5500rpm, compared with the 169kW of the naturally-aspirated 2994cc motor, while





Performance figures suggested 0-100km/h in 5.5 seconds and a top speed of 246km/h. It is thought that no other production car accelerated as fast

peak torque was 354Nm at 4000rpm. To handle the increased outputs, a revised suspension and larger brakes were added to the package, as well as a stronger clutch and gearbox. But to the dismay of many, it was four- rather than five-speed. The now infamous 'whale tail' was adopted to improve air flow to the engine, as well as adding some aerodynamic downforce. Massively flared rear wheel arches housed 15x8-inch rear wheels shod with 225/50VR rubberware. Fronts were 205/50VRs on 15x7-inch rims. The car was launched at the Paris Motor Show in October 1974. Performance figures suggested 0-100km/h in 5.5 seconds and a top speed of 246km/h. It is thought that no other production car accelerated as fast.

In 1978 the engine capacity was increased to 3299cc and an air-to-air intercooler added under the slightly raised and re-profiled whale tail. Wheels were enlarged to 16-inch and tyres were 205/55 (front) and 225/50 (rear). With up to 1 bar of boost, peak power was raised

to 224kW, still at 5000rpm, and torque to 407Nm, at the same revs. To cope with the improved performance, the cross-drilled ventilated disc brakes were upgraded too. Although the changes increased the car's weight (to around 1 310kg), the benchmark 0-100km/h time dropped to 5.3 seconds while top speed was raised to 260km/h, figures that many of today's performance cars would be pleased with. The extra mass and its location had more of an effect on the handling.

All 930s are left-hand drive and typically the floor-mounted pedals are offset to the right, but the slightly skew driving position is not that apparent once behind the fixed, padded three-spoke steering wheel, which sits close to the full-width fascia.

## HOMOLOGATION

The main purpose of the Porsche Turbo road car was to gain homologation for the 1976 racing season. The FIA had announced that for Group 4, cars had to be production models available for sale to individual purchasers through manufacturer dealer networks and 400 had to be produced within 24 months to gain approval. Porsche met the target by the end of 1975, and the Turbo quickly became a cult car. By 5 May 1976, 1 000 had been built.



Although there is plenty of seat adjustment, for someone who is tall the position is a tad compromised, yet somehow not too problematic. Five dials house the comprehensive instrumentation, which includes a central rev counter red-lined at 7000, a 300km/h speedo and a boost gauge. Oh, and there is even an original Porsche-branded radio/cassette player.

It fires up with a long turn of the key and settles into an easy idle. The gearbox on this 150 000km car is a bit slack so care will be necessary not to hook the wrong gear when pressing on. Pottering around is no real hardship, except for the steering which is 'sticky' because of the grip of the tyres. Quiet and civilised. The leather seats have

integral head restraints: the +2 rear seats with fold-down backrests are more akin to a child's seat than anything an adult would fit into. This is not a family car.

Like with any performance machine, driving the 930 quickly requires concentration. All-independent suspension gives a naturally stiff ride around town but as speed rises it combines with the steering to give plenty of valuable feedback. On a clear stretch of tar select third, press the accelerator and watch the revs rise as the notorious lag preludes the infamous kick and, sure enough, at 4000 the boost comes on strong and immediately the 930's *raison d'être* becomes apparent. The whoosh effect is electric and as max revs approach, shift into top for uninterrupted urge. Brakes are very effective.

Ah, but that is only part of the story. Twisties approach and the 911's notoriety for being a 'widow maker' springs to mind as gear, turn-in and acceleration need to be balanced to make the 930 go where you want it to rather than kick ass and spin you off into the scenery. But those big tyres and wide tracks manage

to compensate for the 911's short wheelbase and increased rearward weight bias output more than I expected.

It is not even a case of 'slow in, quick out' because the laws of physics will apply if there is too much too early. It is all about balancing steering lock with application of the right foot. Find some quiet space to find the limit. Quick application of opposite lock will counter rear waywardness, but the steering is heavy and unless you really want to play hooligan there is more satisfaction to be gained by staying on or close to the limit – not over it.

A 'flat nose' version was offered in 1981 as part of Porsche's special order programme, and in 1984 the fastest of the 930 Turbos was developed with a 0-100km/h time of 4.8 seconds and a top speed of 278km/h. In 1989, the car's final year of production, a 5-speed gearbox was fitted that saw 0-100km/h in 5.1 seconds and a top speed of 260km/h. The 930 set a turbo benchmark for all future iterations of the 911. By today's standards it is a handful when approaching the limit: no plethora of driver aids to act as a guardian angel here. Why, it does not even have ABS – but it does provide A Brilliant Sensation. **C**

Twisties approach and the 911's notoriety for being a 'widow maker' springs to mind as gear, turn-in and acceleration need to be balanced to make the 930 go where you want it to rather than kick ass and spin you off into the scenery

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Wales, the land of dragons, coal mining, the language with the least vowels and home to a rugby team that occasionally has every Springbok rugby fan biting their nails (in a 32 match playing history there has been one draw, Wales has won 3 and SA 28). But there's more to this country. It's where the mythical King Arthur hails from, where mathematician Robert Recorde invented the equal sign, where lawn tennis started and where German immigrants set up Britain's first brewery. And then there's the Welsh motor manufacturer Gilbern. Never heard of it? **Stuart Grant** tracks down one of only two known Gilberts to have made it to the tip of Africa – an Invader Mk3.

**T**his Dragon's tale begins in the mid-1950s when Giles Smith, a Welsh butcher, got together with German engineer Bernard Friese. Smith had wanted his own fibreglass sportscar and by chance met Friese, a POW who'd stayed on in Kent after the war. While working as a coachbuilder, Friese developed skills with the new fibreglass technology.

He had his own fibreglass special at the time and the pair used this as a base to build Smith a car. With the project nearing completion local race driver Peter Cottrell was asked for his opinion on the car, with the conclusion being that it was too good to just be a one-off and held potential in the sales department. The pair joined not only forces but also the first few letters of their names to form Gilbern Sports Cars, and set in motion building and marketing what would become the Gilbern GT.

Home base for the project was initially behind the butchery and the bodywork had to be winched down from the first floor to complete the build. A pear tree was then sacrificed to get the finished car out the yard and onto the road. *Autocar* tested the first unit in May 1960 and reports were positive. Cottrell ordered the second car, which like the third and fourth units, was built behind the butcher shop.

With these cars making use of mostly Austin A35 mechanicals, it was originally planned that Gilberts GTs would be sold as basic body and chassis kits with buyers then sourcing their own running gear. With this opening the doors up to some below-par workmanship and part selection, the decision was



With space fast becoming an issue, in 1961 Smith borrowed money from his father, bought what was the old Red Ash Colliery and dumped a bunch of second-hand prefabricated buildings on the site

quickly changed to see the cars supplied with all-new parts in component form. With the body painted, wired and trimmed all an owner had to do was fit the engine, gearbox, back axle, wheels, exhaust system and minor trim bits. A job that was said to be possible in a weekend and even better, it meant that the owner could avoid the purchase tax of between 45% and 49% levelled at complete cars.

With space fast becoming an issue, in 1961 Smith borrowed money from his father, bought what was the old Red Ash Colliery and dumped a bunch of second-hand prefabricated buildings on the site. A few of these units became the Gilbert factory, while the majority were rented out to other businesses to help the cashflow. With half a dozen employees working, including the hands-on Smith and

Friese, the production rate measured in at a single unit per month. Powertrains evolved with the times, moving from the popular A-series and Coventry-Climax options to MGA 1600cc (*The Motor* magazine tested one in 1961, recording a top speed of 94.3mph (151.8km/h) and 0-60mph (97 km/h) in 13.8 seconds) and then to MGB 1800cc – in this guise the vehicle became the Gilbert GT1800.

Staff complement increased to 20 and production ramped up to a car a week. The American market was considered, with a trio of left-hand drive examples going stateside, but real focus was on local consumption.

Not wanting to stagnate, Smith and Friese worked on a new model in 1966. Badged as Genie, this was on a totally different tack to that of the GT. The Gilbert was no longer a small GT, but rather a larger 2+2 Gran Tourer. Ford offered the use of its V4 and V6 engines but the V4 Gilbert felt underpowered so units built to this spec reverted back to MGB lumps and ran alongside the top model Ford



V6 versions (initially in either 2.5- or 3-litre format but the smaller version fell away in 1968). The chassis was an in-house design but mechanicals were for the most part MGB – some did however replace the MG rear axle with an Austin Healey 3000 item.

Money was tight though and Gilbern, fearing the need for large loans, couldn't afford to expand, so production became one of cars being built as select dealerships took in orders.

In 1968 the ACE Group, best known for its one-arm bandit slot machine business, took control of Gilbern. Initially both Smith and Friese stayed on as directors but Smith left shortly after the changeup. Friese stayed on another year to help further develop the Genie and its upcoming replacement, the Invader Mk1.

The Invader Mk1 that replaced the Genie in July 1969 saw a revised chassis and numerous body styling changes. Although based on the Genie's space frame design the Invader Mk1 chassis changes resulted in

too much flexibility and led to stress cracks up front. Suspension came from the MGC, but the front lever dampers were replaced with double wishbones, coil springs and shocks. The rear made use of a fixed beam axle and rear trailing arms. Again Ford's 3-litre V6 engine was chosen, good for 141bhp at 4750rpm, powering the back wheels via a 4-speed manual or 3-speed auto gearbox on to a top speed of 115mph (185km/h). Servo-assisted brakes (discs at the front and drums at the rear) as well as rack-and-pinion steering were also added.

In the styling department the fibreglass body, which was bonded to the chassis, had much in common with the Genie but saw the fitment of a new bonnet and grille, a redesigned boot and the addition of rear roof pillar vents. Triumph Stag door handles

were added and Ford Escort taillights were fitted to keep it contemporary, but Gilbern opted to stick with its own alloy wheels.

In a clear move to hit the luxury market high back seats, walnut veneer dash

## GILBERN INVADER MK3 SPECIFICATION

Engine:	Ford Essex V6 OHV
Capacity:	2994cc
Fuel system:	38 Weber
Max Power:	141bhp @ 4750rpm
Max Torque:	160Nm @ 3000rpm
Transmission:	4-speed manual with optional overdrive
Brakes:	Servo assisted. Front disc/Rear drum
Kerb mass:	903kg
Max speed:	193km/h
0-60mph	8.8 seconds



insert, electric windows and high-end radio (complete with automatically-retracting aerial) were fitted.

Six months after launching the Invader Gilbern unveiled the Mk2 version. In response to the negative feedback it saw an improved chassis design with modified suspension location, and a Watts linkage replaced the previous Panhard rod setup. And with extra cash from the investors and a larger workforce, Gilbern also released a station wagon version known as the Invader Estate.

These same investors can largely be credited with bringing about the Invader Mk3 in September 1972. A brief to rationalise production and simplify supply chain complexity meant that Ford would supply the majority of components. The Gilbern alloys were dropped in favour of

13-inch Ford ones, the Essex V6 provided the go, a Ford Zodiac 4-speed manual (with optional overdrive) was employed and both suspension and rear axle came from the Mk3 Cortina. This new axle meant a wider track and resulted in spats being added to the Gilbern's wheel arches. The front windscreen was carried over from the Mk2 but a new bonnet, grille and fog lights incorporated into the front valance were added.

The chassis saw some more work, being significantly stiffened by the addition of diagonal braces in the ladder section, and to help export sales a symmetrical gearbox tunnel was added to allow for easy conversion to left-hand drive. Nine left-hand Mk3s were sold. Unlike the Mk1 and Mk2, Mk3 Invaders were only ever sold as complete cars and therefore didn't benefit from being a 'kit' in the eyes of the taxman.

The Mk3 Invader performed admirably with a top speed of 120mph (193km/h), a zero to 60mph (96km/h) sprint of 8.8 seconds making it a viable alternative to the other British cottage industry Gran Tourers of

the day like the Marcos GT, Reliant Scimitar GTE, TVR Tuscan and Lotus Europa.

With ACE Group's other businesses funding Gilbern the owners decided to pull out in 1972 and sold Gilbern to Michael Leather for £1. Under Michael Leather's control, outside consultants were brought in to improve quality control, time management and running costs and Roger Salway was also brought in as a partner. Hard as they tried, though, the business wasn't viable and the company's debts had reached £90 000 in July 1973. Salway left and the business went into receivership, halting production. That September new investor Anthony M. Peters joined in with Michael Leather and proposed an investment of £750 000 over the following five years, and production resumed. The last ditch effort failed and by March of 1974 Gilbern stopped trading. There could well have been another sting in the Dragon's tale, with numerous plans to fire up production surfacing over the years, but nothing has ever come of any of them.

During its lifetime Gilbern churned out 606 Invaders. Of these, 78 were Mk1 versions, 316 were Mk2 (104 Estates) and 212 were Mk3s. Owning any one of these Welsh rare bits of motoring history is an honour. **C**

There could well have been another sting in the Dragon's tale, with numerous plans to fire up production surfacing over the years, but nothing has ever come of any of them





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## Silence ... to relive the moment ...





# THE ULTIMATE RACER

John Surtees, the only man to have won Grand Prix World titles on both two and four wheels, passed away in a London hospital on 10 March, aged 83. **Stuart Grant** looks at his illustrious career and, with the help of some images from the **Ivor Haynes Collection**, triggers memories of him and his cars at Kyalami.

**J**ohn Surtees was born into a motor-racing family on 11 February 1934. His father Jack, a three-time British motorcycle sidecar champion, owned a motorcycle shop in South London and it was no surprise that by the age of 11 John had his own bike, which he rode and repaired with aplomb. In 1949, at age 15, John made his racing debut as the passenger in his dad's sidecar outfit and the duo won but were later disqualified when the officials realised he was under the required age.

At 16 he left school and joined Vincent motorcycle factory as an apprentice engineer. Within

a year he was racing solo road races on a hotted Triumph Tiger 70. He then moved on to Vincents and Nortons and the victories and eye-opening performances started rolling in. His skill didn't go unnoticed, with the result that the Norton works team signed him up in 1953. Two years later he was spearheading MV Agusta's 350cc and 500cc Grand Prix campaigns.

In 1956 he scooped the first of his world titles – the 500cc World Championship. Over the following four seasons he went on to capture six further World Championships on the silver and red machines – 350cc honours in 1958, 1959, 1960 and 500cc in 1956, 1958, 1959 and 1960. In 1958, 1959 and 1960, he won 32 out of 39 races and became the first man to win the Senior TT at

In 1958, 1959 and 1960, he won 32 out of 39 races and became the first man to win the Senior TT at the Isle of Man TT three years in succession



Dan Gurney (30) and Surtees (3) Can-Am Lola T70 Spiders.



John takes on the Isle of Man TT aboard an MV Agusta.



Surtees secured the number 1 plate on seven occasions in his career.



the Isle of Man TT three years in succession. This outstanding record was acknowledged in 1959, when he was awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Throughout 1959 and 1960 he continued racing on two wheels for the Gallarate-based concern but, at the suggestion of the late Mike Hawthorn and others, eventually put his skills to the test on four wheels. He'd had a go driving an Aston DBR1 and Vanwall around Goodwood and impressed both Aston Martin team manager Reg Parnell and Vanwall boss Tony Vandervell to such a degree that they both tried to sign him up as a works driver. Surtees, who was still racing bikes, turned them down due to time constraints, but did the odd car outing for Ken Tyrrell's Formula Junior team, and aged

26 made his Formula 1 debut at the 1960 BRDC International Trophy at Silverstone for Team Lotus.

Chapman offered him the number one driver's position at Lotus for the 1961 season but Surtees declined, instead taking up a seat with Reg Parnell's outfit in a Cooper T53-Climax 4. He stayed with Parnell for the following season, racing the Bowmaker-backed Lola Mk 4-Climax 4 and V8, and finished fourth in the drivers' table.

For 1963 he signed with Ferrari and delivered the firm's first victory since 1961, when he scooped the top podium step at the August German Grand Prix at the daunting Nürburgring. 1964 was his ultimate F1 year, and the one that cemented him as one of the all-time greatest racers when he

took the title and could lay claim to fame as the only 'Grand Master' of two wheels and four. The Italians nicknamed him 'Son of the Wind' while on a bike and 'John the Great' for being Ferrari's saviour. Back home he was either 'Big John' or 'Fearless John'.

1965 wasn't an ideal time at Ferrari with the team starting its year with the previous season's V8 engine while it developed a flat-12, however John kept his name in the spotlight by also competing in sportscar events – he took four wins and four second places driving the Ferrari 330P2 and 365P2 in European events. It was also the year he could well have retired, following a life-threatening accident at the Mosport Circuit (Ontario, Canada) in September. While practising in a Lola T70 one of the front



For the 1967 SA Grand Prix Surtees drove the Honda RA273 to an impressive third place.



Surtees, now a team owner, talks to his driver Mike Hailwood before the 1973 SA Grand Prix.



John Love, Surtees TS9. Kyalami 1971.



John Love, Surtees TS9. Kyalami 1971.

1970 saw Surtees devoting his time to Team Surtees. Cars designed and built by the team won numerous events and championships throughout the world

upright castings broke, pitching the car and Surtees into a barrier. The car then somersaulted and landed on top of John, fracturing his pelvis, seriously damaging his left leg and spine, and rupturing his kidneys. It's said that he came out of the crash with one side of his body four inches shorter than the other. Doctors set most of the breaks by physically stretching his shattered body until the right-left discrepancy was under an inch.

But within six months of the near-death experience he was back, testing Ferrari's contender for championship honours in the new 3-litre formula introduced for the 1966 F1 campaign and then steered his own Lola T70-Chevrolet in the inaugural American Can-Am season – he took

five wins from eight races and was crowned champion of this hairy-chested series.

All was not well at Ferrari though and the politics and striking workforce meant that there were not enough cars for the '66 Le Mans 24 Hours. Surtees was sidelined, with the team boss Eugenio Dragoni citing John's crash injuries as the reason. A bitter row ensued and Surtees quit the team on the spot, which more than likely cost him the chance of securing a second F1 title. He joined Jochen Rindt in the Cooper-Maserati team for the remainder of the season, ending up second in the World Championship behind Jack Brabham.

For 1967, Surtees signed with Honda Formula 1. Off the bat the RA273 Honda showed promise with a third place in the first round (Kyalami, South Africa) but then suffered mechanical problems. The car was replaced by the Honda RA300 for the Italian



Brett Lunger, Surtees TS19-01. Kyalami 1976.



Andrea De Adamich, Surtees TS14a. Kyalami 1973.



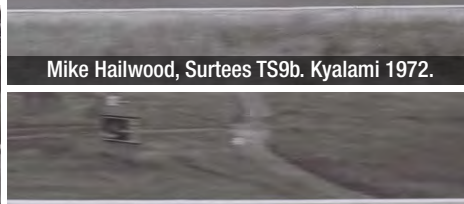
Mike Hailwood, Surtees TS9b. Kyalami 1972.



Carlos Pace (Surtees) heads Jean-Pierre Beltoise (BRM). Kyalami 1973.



Jo Domingo, Surtees TS5. Kyalami 1973.



Andrea De Adamich, Surtees TS9b. Kyalami 1972.



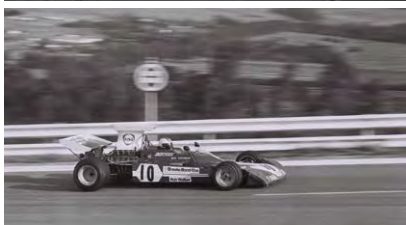
Carlos Pace, Surtees TS14a. Kyalami 1973.



Peter Haller, Surtees TS5. Kyalami 1973.



Willie Ferguson, Surtees TS8. Kyalami 1972.



Mike Hailwood, Surtees TS14a (1973).



Willie Ferguson, Surtees TS8. Kyalami 1972.

Grand Prix, where Surtees slipstreamed Jack Brabham to take Honda's second F1 victory by 0.2 seconds. Surtees finished fourth in the 1967 Drivers' Championship. He stayed with Honda for '68 and then moved across to BRM in 1969.

1970 saw Surtees devoting his time to Team Surtees. Cars designed and built by the team won numerous events and championships throughout the world, including the European F2 and US and UK F5000 Championships, and even made a stab at Formula 1. This was a difficult formula to break into, and despite his personal success behind the operation pulling in the much-needed sponsorships and engine and tyre suppliers, the team battled. Nevertheless John, together with other drivers such as Mike Hailwood and Carlos Pace, won non-championship races and points finishes in World Championship

races, including a second place in the Italian Grand Prix.

John hung up his own helmet in 1972 and concentrated fully on his team management until 1978, when financial and health issues (a legacy of his '65 crash) forced the withdrawal of the Surtees team from top flight competition altogether.

In later years Surtees was involved in a motorcycle shop and a Honda car dealership in Kent. He participated in classic events with bikes from his stable of vintage racing machines and held the position of chairman of A1 Team Great Britain in the A1 Grand Prix racing series from 2005 to 2007. His son, Henry Surtees, competed in the FIA Formula 2 Championship, Formula Renault UK Championship and the Formula BMW UK championship but died while racing in the Formula 2 championship at Brands Hatch in 2009.

In 1996 John was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame, the FIM honoured him as a Grand Prix Legend in 2003 and as he was already a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE), he was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2008 and Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2016.

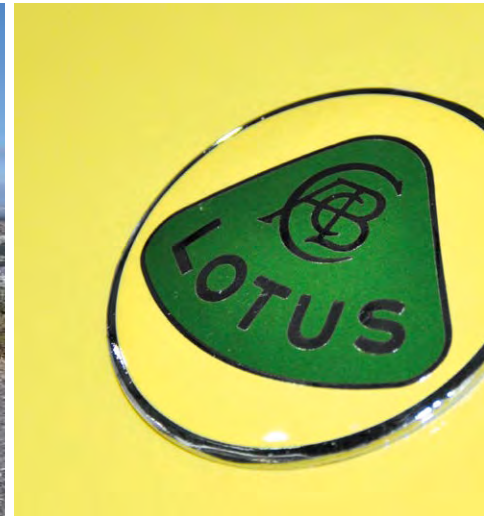
A truly great man and multi-talented racer. Will his achievement ever be equalled? The likeliest candidate to also do the double would have been Mike Hailwood, but he never did. Our own Paddy Driver had the skill set but circumstances prevented him from giving the car section a full international go. Every time a modern MotoGP ace tests an F1 car as part of a marketing stunt my ears prick up, but somehow I think this legendary man's status will remain for eternity. **C**

# WHEN LOTUS CHANGED POSITION

The Europa was Colin Chapman's first mid-engined road car and, with the exception of the engine location, it followed his successful recipe of a light backbone chassis clothed in a fibreglass body with plenty of proprietary mechanical bits to keep costs down. But, unlike its Elan sibling, the Europa was initially offered with a push-rod Renault engine, which can feel decidedly pedestrian by today's standards. But that's easily rectified with a transplant, says **Graeme Hurst**.







**A** classic Lotus with a Japanese engine? It might sound like a travesty but had marque founder Colin Chapman been around today, it's likely he would've given the concept his blessing, given his propensity for parts bin raiding and affinity for small, high-revving engines. More so if he'd seen the dyno sheet on this used Toyota multi-valve-engined 1970 Europa: the results confirmed that the second-hand Japanese twin-cam was still good for a factory-spec 160bhp (that's 118kW in new money) when former owner Geoff Ford had it on redline on the rollers a few years back.

That output is more than double what the original Renault unit (which boasted a similar 1.6-litre capacity) could muster. And it comes thanks to one of Toyota's long-running power units, the 4A-GE series engine. Only this one's in 'hot' twin-cam, 20-valve spec – a unit that's powered all manner of hot hatches the maker sells across the globe. It's a reliable and available scrap yard stock levels) that's relatively easy to fit. And because so many have been made, it's affordable.

Geoff opted to go that route about 10 years ago after he'd finished restoring his Europa to original spec around five years before. An engine swap after he'd restored the car? Well he discovered that his Europa's original engine had been stripped of its essential Lotus goodies, notably the camshaft and high

compression pistons, by a previous owner. "It was just a standard R16 engine really, and the correct Lotus parts are just about impossible to obtain now," recalls Geoff.

If your Lotus radar doesn't extend to the Europa then you're probably not alone. Although popular (more than 9 000 were made) and much lauded for exceptional road manners when new, its slightly oddball styling and reputation for having a cramped cockpit and heavy controls has seen it live in the shadows of the brand's main icons: the Seven and the Elan.

But those more famous siblings were very much part of the Europa's gestation as Chapman penned the mid-engine coupé as a replacement for the then-ageing Seven and a cheaper option to the Elan. Aimed at the European market (hence the name) the Europa project started in the mid '60s and, like other designs from the Hethel-based Lotus HQ, its format and method of construction was driven by Chapman's

Only this one's in 'hot' twin-cam, 20-valve spec – a unit that's powered all manner of hot hatches the maker sells across the globe





quest for reducing production costs. The Elan's fibreglass-over-central backbone chassis, complete with Triumph Herald suspension hanging off the front, was a cost-effective and successful design so there was no need to mess with it. But the marque founder realised that a mid-engined layout would eradicate a prop shaft and optimise handling.

A two-part moulded body (one top, one bottom) would speed up the build process, while a Kamm-styled rear end meant the engine bay could be made large enough to accommodate a variety of units – meaning Lotus could shop around as the company liked to do. The body was styled around Ford Anglia bumpers, again in the interests of keeping the price down. That had been envisioned at £650, roughly what an MG Midget would've set you back at the time, but the Europa ended up costing nearly double that (as was often the case with low-volume cars) and ate into the Elan's market.

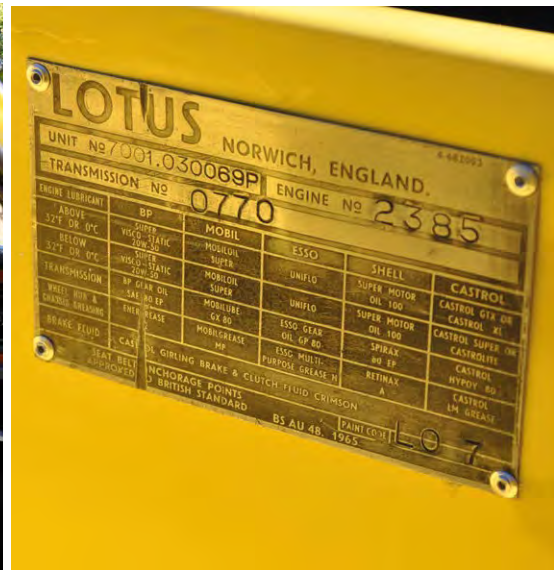
Engine-wise Chapman initially considered Ford's 105E plant – which provided the base for his twin-cam powered Lotus models – but it wasn't suitable for a mid-engined car as it had various components in the wrong place and it needed a transaxle. That was a problem until Renault launched its front-drive 16 which had the box behind the engine. It was easy enough to turn upside down, although the crown wheel and pinion assembly needed to be altered to avoid having four reverse gears. Story goes that Renault were so keen to be associated with the English sporting brand, which had been the domain of Ford, that its management agreed to supply engines at cost after it was approached for the gearbox.

Suspension-wise the Europa's front end bits mimicked the Elan's – Triumph Herald-derived wishbones with coils – while rear featured fixed-length driveshafts with Hooke joints as the upper links and tubes below connecting the hub carriers to the gearbox

casing. That meant the power train became a stressed part of the suspension, much like an F1 car at the time.

The downside of the engine layout was that the gear linkage had to be engineered to work but the upside was the front styling could be kept nice and low to reduce the Europa's drag coefficient. That aided the way it went, as did its low weight – just 660kg – and it was good for 0-60mph in 9.8 seconds before topping out at 110mph.

The whole package clearly worked, as Lotus sold 300 Europas in the first year after launch in December '66 but the model was in need of refinement as it lacked opening windows, making it notoriously stuffy inside and prone to collecting traffic fumes. The cockpit was also no good for anyone over 5ft 8in – Chapman's height! All that changed with the Series 2 in July 1969, while performance got a boost when the pushrod Renault engine was superseded by a pukka Lotus Twin-Cam in late 1971.



The car here is a Series 2, despatched from the Hethel factory in September 1970 and shipped to SA new by a returning actress. Quite what happened to it for the next decade isn't clear but it was in a right mess when Geoff heard of it for sale via a Porsche specialist in Bez Valley in the early 1980s: "The foreman of the workshop had bought it on auction but didn't have the time to restore it so decided to sell it on. Although complete, there were accident repairs on all sides with bits of aluminium plate riveted on and loads of body filler. I reckon there were about five layers of paint on it too," adds Geoff. The engine was correct and the car's file came with bills for R500 reflecting that it had been for a full rebuild but it was still in a right state: "There was more gas coming out of the crankcase breather pipe than the exhaust!"

A full strip-down was the only answer and Geoff, being an engineer by profession, was well up to the task. But, as ever, life got in the way and it was only when he retired to the Cape in the late '90s that he got a chance to finish the rebuild. "Every single part of the car was stripped down and carefully rebuilt," recalls Geoff, who fabricated a lot of the suspension components from scratch and paid particular attention to the braking

system, which he rebuilt without the factory inline servo to improve braking feel. He also rebuilt the gearbox four times before he was happy with the way it operated.

At that stage the Europa was in standard spec, with the only 'mod' to the suspension being Geoff's decision to fit the adjustable AVO shock absorbers. "I only paid R1 500 for the car originally and when I bolted the AVOs on I remember thinking: I'm doubling its value!"

It was during the rebuild that Geoff realised that the Renault engine's Lotus bits had been nicked. "The car had spent time with a racer down in Meyerton and I think whoever had it kept the bits." Of course there's no shortage as far as knowledge of tuning Renault engines thanks to fans of Gordinis and Geoff was able to restore some of the performance by using VW pistons, among other tweaks. But the lack of originality and a desire for more power – he reckons the claimed output of 78bhp is more like 60-70bhp – led him to consider the Toyota power unit a few years on.

That decision might still seem surprising but if your Lotus knowledge extends to modern fare, you'll know that Japanese power in Lotus is nothing new: the front-drive Elan (M100) of the late '80s boasted Isuzu power (thanks to then-GM ownership) while more recently, the brand's seminal Elise/Exige range switched to Toyota power after the supply of Rover's K-series dried up, and has become even more coveted as a result.

For his Europa, Geoff went for a variant of the 4A-GE featuring the Japanese carmaker's Variable Valve Timing (VVT) system on the intake camshaft to optimise the power delivery. The engine also features individual throttle bodies on the fuelling system which make it easier to transplant – although the throttle body setup did require an aftermarket engine management system, which was quite fiddly to optimise.

Weight-wise, the Japanese engine was largely similar to the original and, once located in the engine bay, the only real complexity was re-engineering the gear linkage to go around the block. "I used a cable-operated system for the front part and engineered my own solution for the rear of the linkage." Surprisingly the cooling system is standard Europa. "It was marginal with the Renault engine but it actually works better now despite the Toyota unit having double the horsepower, which is probably thanks to a more efficient water pump."

And the result? One very quick Europa! It's not been pitted against a stopwatch but Geoff has enjoyed it immensely in historic racing at Killarney. With a redline of 8000rpm (as opposed to 6500 on the Renault motor) it delivers a serious surge of acceleration, but it's the tractability that most impressed Geoff after he finished the transplant: "With the Europa being so light the Toyota engine feels totally flexible and will pull all the way in third gear; it's almost like having a V8!" That would have impressed Colin Chapman, who was a great advocate of 'less is more' when it came to performance. 🏁

Thanks to: Geoff Ford and Crossley & Webb ([www.crossley-webb.com](http://www.crossley-webb.com)) where the car is for sale.

With a redline of 8000rpm (as opposed to 6500 on the Renault motor) it delivers a serious surge of acceleration, but it's the tractability that most impressed Geoff



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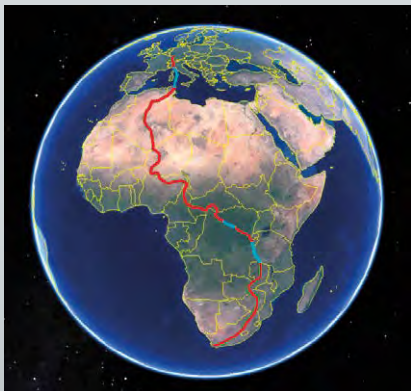
# CONQUERING THE HEART OF DARKNESS ON FOUR WHEELS



Last year's September issue featured Cape Town-based Lancia specialist Felix Furtak's 40-year relationship with the Lancia brand and a Beta coupé, a car that was crashed, rolled and chopped to make a convertible before it was driven across Africa as part of a bet. That was 25 years ago... before the age of the internet, cell phones or GPS, which made the 15 000km journey a remarkable achievement, as **Graeme Hurst** discovers.

**A**s the Dark Continent, Africa's dished up some unique travelling experiences over the last 200 years. Only the proliferation of today's communication and satellite technology arguably now makes each crossing increasingly less unique.

But, rewind just 25 years and a trans-



continental blast was indeed a singular experience. One that, in the mind of Felix Furtak, echoed the opinion of Joseph Conrad, author of the book *The Heart of Darkness*, following his travels in the Congo back in the late 1800s.

That's certainly the philosophical position he took on several occasions when the going got tough during his drive from Germany to Cape Town back in 1991/2: "To be alone in the jungle, with hardly any cash, in a 16-year-old Italian car with a reputation for poor reliability and a broken clutch – but an unrivalled power-to-weight ratio on the continent – often 1000km away from the nearest phone and with Freddie Mercury on the sound system while the African sun boils down on your head... that was a truly unique experience."

And it was also decidedly risky to his health if things went wrong. Like when blasting 700km across the Sahara: "There was no road, just thousands of tracks

running in the general direction and a large barrel as a marker every two or three kilometres... if you missed the marker and got lost you died," recalls 54-year-old Felix, who originally only set out to cross the famous desert following a bet with some mates. The same mates who were already amused that he'd resurrected his crashed Lancia after it was written off, repaired and driven (without a roof) some 1200km from England to Germany in the depths of winter.

For those who missed our September issue, the Lancia in question is a 1975 Beta coupé, a 1.8-litre twin-overhead cam sports car that Felix's father bought for his wife when it was a year old. That was back in Stegen in his native Germany. And, despite being too young to drive it, Felix (who was 12 years old at the time) fell for the car in a big way. So much so, he secretly bought it back after it was sold years later.

That led to serious family friction (that remains today!) but it also kicked off a life-long



love affair with the Italian brand during which the Beta coupé has travelled a rocky road in more ways than one: “Many years after my father bought it I was studying in England and had the car with me but while towing it for some repairs it fell off a trailer. I was very upset as it was totally flat,” recalls Felix who wanted to fix it, much to the amusement of the owner of the scrap yard where the car ended up. “He said: ‘Son you will never ever drive the car again’. Now somebody must never say never to me!” adds Felix who bought the wreckage back from the insurers. “I used a big hammer to knock it straight – before driving it from Cardiff to Salford (some 600km away) at night.”

The young German – who was studying engineering at the time – then locked himself in a garage for 12 days and welded it back together. The only snag was he couldn’t get all the bits he needed, most notably a roof panel. “That was a problem so I had to take a strategic decision to rebuild it without

the roof and out of that a complete new car design was born!” That was in 1991. Fast forward a few months and Felix and the Beta were back in Germany where, on one evening out, his mates goaded him.

“‘Felix, you and your old scrap car, you will never get anywhere’. And then I said to the guy, ‘I bet you I can get the thing through the Sahara before Christmas.’” Things got serious when a mate put 500 DM on the table. “That was in October – rather short notice as the car wasn’t licensed as it was on trade plates and had been changed structurally.” Felix got that seen to by submitting some engineering drawings to prove that the Beta was safe before roping a student friend, Robert, from England in to join him. With the car sorted – and a carnet du passage in hand, not to mention passports boasting the necessary visas – the

pair headed off in the Beta – which already had 167 000km on the clock – over the Alps for Genoa on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

From there they took a boat to Tunisia and drove on to Algeria, across the Trans Sahara Highway – a challenging route but one that was at least mostly on tarmac – to Tamanrasset. That was where things started to get interesting, as the road ended. Ahead lay Niger and nearly 500km of sand. Undeterred, the pair made plans to tackle it but didn’t get much support from fellow travellers: “We faced very harsh criticism for our choice of transport. They were all in big four-wheel drives and they said: ‘You

**The young German – who was studying engineering at the time – then locked himself in a garage for 12 days and welded it back together**



made it here now be happy about that and go home!”

Felix and Rob were frustrated until they bumped into some German travellers with a diesel VW Passat who were clearly worse off: their car had a leaking head gasket; hardly the first choice for crossing the world’s most arid region. Especially since it was loaded to the gunnels with household fittings including a toilet, which they were transporting. But the Passat guys had one attraction: “They had cooking equipment but no tools. For us it was the other way around.”

But before leaving, Felix had a sump guard fabricated by a back street ironmonger and the ride height raised by inserting some wooden spacers between the body and the top of the shock turrets. “The guy who made them was a music teacher from Sudan.” He

was a taste of the many characters with fascinating backgrounds that Felix would meet on his journey. The rather motley sight (an overloaded Passat and cut-down Lancia) then headed off on the 21<sup>st</sup>. “We had nine days to go and 470km so we were quite safe with the bet,” adds Felix.

Unsurprisingly the going was very tough, with the Passat proving thirsty water wise and the Lancia experiencing clutch problems. “Sand got into the bell housing and baked onto the clutch plate which then got stuck to the pressure plate.” With a strip down being a six-hour job and pointless (as it would just happen again) Felix simply resorted to push starts to get going, although that made stops to attend to the Passat – which often got stuck in the sand – tricky. “They would all push the Beta and then I would drive around in circles waiting for the Passat to get going!”

Felix also had to perfect his driving technique in the desert. “The trick is to be fast enough to not get stuck

in the sand but slow enough so that the rock that hits you doesn’t cut your sump!” And there were plenty of wrecks about as testimony to the worst that can happen, while the sheer scale of the landscape was thought provoking. “Being in the desert is a very deep, spiritual experience during which you see your own size.”

Still there were plenty of people about on occasion, some of whom were amusing: “There was an old guy who was a real pro at driving cars through the Sahara but would only drive a Mercedes. He had no tools or parts, just a camping chair, so he could wait and watch the others when they broke down,” recalls Felix. The landscape also provided amusement on occasion: “The border between Niger and Nigeria is a funny thing as there is no border, but in the middle of the desert there are three huts: one for the Niger official, one for the guy from Nigeria and the third as a shebeen. And you must find them to get your passport stamped.”

Once in Nigeria, Felix was able to fix the clutch. “There was a Fiat agent in Kanu and I could get a new clutch which is common

**The trick is to be fast enough to not get stuck in the sand but slow enough so that the rock that hits you doesn’t cut your sump!**



A helper holding the wooden spacers used to increase ride height.



with a Lancia." With the bet over and won, his co-driver flew back to the UK but Felix didn't fancy reversing his route. "I thought, well the car is still driving and the clutch is ok so let's go forward", adds Felix who recalls being shocked by the cars coming the opposite way out of the Congo. "The vehicles were all beaten up and the people were totally finished." But Felix was encouraged when the same travellers admitted that it was possible in principle.

Now alone, Felix's route took him east into the north of Cameroon, where he was amused to find former colonial influences: "In the former French colonies there were signs of culture and cafés but in the British colonies you can't eat. In the German ones everything looks neat and clean."

By the time Felix reached the Central African Republic the Beta was proving reliable but the road conditions were getting very tough. The soft dry sand of the Sahara had given way to more sand but this time with trees on either side of the road, making sliding off course rather treacherous. And the Lancia's clutch was soon up to its old

tricks. Only this time there was no one to push if he got stuck. "I just had to go foot flat and turn up the music and hope for the best." When he did get stuck, Felix had to sit tight and wait for someone to come along to help.

When Felix made it to Bumba in the Congo, he decided he could do with a working clutch but he wasn't keen on stripping the gearbox out to sort it. "It's a six-hour job and if you lose or break one bolt you are stuffed." Instead he came up with a MacGyver solution. "On the Congo River I found a guy with a four-wheel drive and he reversed me into the river on a rope and I ran the engine to wash out the sand." The stunt worked and Felix motored on, although the release bearing lost its grease in the process and started screaming a few weeks later.

Felix was just over a month into his journey and had covered about half the distance he would do. And, for the first time, opted to 'cheat' by taking a barge up to Kisangani, as

the route by road was deemed unsafe. A deal was done and the Italian coupé-cum-convertible was rolled onto the barge using gum poles. Before loading, the Lancia had been the subject of much admiration, with plenty of offers to purchase it. "Back in Europe nobody wanted the car but in Africa everyone wanted to buy it. One guy wanted to go hunting in it and offered to swap it for his Range Rover!"

However the locals on the barge weren't so keen on it. "There were people on the barge trading up and down the river and it was clear the captain took cars and just pocketed the money and everyone else had to make space. One woman was very unimpressed and just put all her stuff on top of the Lancia!

On the Congo River I found a guy with a four-wheel drive and he reversed me into the river on a rope and I ran the engine to wash out the sand



Next to it was a cage of live pigs.”

The barge, which originated in Kinshasa, plodded along at 5km/h for a week to Kisangani. “It was very hot and humid with no air movement and the locals would slaughter and cook animals to eat and trade all the way along. It was a whole economy on that barge.”

At Kisangani, Felix made up for his short cut by defying local travellers’ advice to avoid the direct route to Bukavu instead of the long way round, east via Kampala. “There was a great smooth road through the jungle but it had a bit missing in the middle but I figured I would make it across somehow.” He found a Congolese student hitchhiker who was happy to pay for the fuel in return for a ride and the two set off. “The conditions were perfect, like an autobahn through the jungle, but after 1000km the road stopped and there was barely a footpath in its place.”

Undeterred, the duo carried on, with the student eventually hiring a local porter to walk ahead and signal which way to steer and when to slow down or speed up. Puddles in the road had to be tested for depth (and in some cases filled) to avoid wrecking the car but Felix still managed to take out the fuel tank. “The tank got cut and we were losing petrol with nothing to catch

it in but the student just shouted for soap, which he used to repair the leak.” Repairs were a little more involved when the sump took a knock and lost all its oil. “I bartered precious fuel for Pratley’s Putty but it would only work from the inside, so I had to spend a whole day to take the sump off.” That was before Felix had to trade more fuel for the used oil from a motorbike to refill his sump. And all this while he was suffering from full-blown malaria!

By the time he reached Burundi the intrepid German traveller was ready for another break and opted to board the *MV Liemba* – the famous former German steam-powered warship-turned-ferry that’s been plying the length of Lake Tanganyika for more than a century as part of a vital lifeline in East Africa. A week on, the *MV Liemba* was in Zambia and Felix was ready to set course for the bright lights of Lusaka – but not in the way he expected, as the Beta refused to start on the quayside. “A camshaft was seized and the cambelt tensioner had gone.” It had last been replaced ten years before, back in Manchester.

Not wanting to strip the cylinder head in the jungle, Felix convinced two Swiss guys in a Range Rover to tow him 800km to Lusaka! There he was able to call on a machine shop to fix the camshaft but he also decided to sort what he thought was a faulty oil pressure light. “The light had been on since the Congo but I thought it was just Italian electrics.” Turned out the dented sump had been pressed against the oil pickup, starving the

twin-cam’s lubrication system. “I had done 1000km with no oil pressure!”

After Zambia, a lack of funds and time meant Felix had to speed up if he wanted to make Cape Town. He crossed Zimbabwe, with a stop at Lake Kariba, in just six days before arriving in Johannesburg where he visited TAK Motors, the official Lancia importers. “Little did I know when I saw their workshop and parts store that I would one day take over their stock!” TAK’s team offered to replace the Beta’s extremely ropery sump free of charge but, despite being the official agents, they botched the job and a few hours later Felix was under the car on the streets of JHB redoing it himself when the drive shafts came loose.

From there he headed down the N1 to Cape Town, arriving at Cape Point on the fifth of March 1992 after 15 515 km and 74 days. And that’s when the Beta’s clutch finally caved in for good. Undeterred, Felix convinced a gentleman he got chatting to in the car park to tow him to Viglietti Motors in Cape Town. “It was late by the time I got there and I had nowhere to go, so I slept in the car outside the workshop.” The next morning Felix met Gabriele Viglietti who gave him a used clutch and Felix did the job himself. And so began a 25-year-long friendship which set him up as the leading Lancia specialist he is today when he later returned from Germany to settle on our sunny shores for good, complete with the keys to his Beta which is still in daily use, 228 900km and 40 years later. 🇮

Thanks to: Felix Furtak SA (021 447 7616; [www.transafrica.lancia.cc](http://www.transafrica.lancia.cc))

Not wanting to strip the cylinder head in the jungle, Felix convinced two Swiss guys in a Range Rover to tow him 800km to Lusaka!



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# DESIGNER — BRAND —

Our next personality in **Jake Venter's** fictitious Moments in History interview series is Dr. h. c. Ferdinand Porsche. He was born on 3 September 1875 in Maffersdorf, Bohemia (now called Vratislavice nad Nisou, Czech Republic). His father was a tinsmith who tried very hard to get his son to follow in his footsteps, but young Ferdinand wanted to study electricity and a relative helped him to land a job at the Bela-Egger Electrical company (now famous as Brown-Boveri) in Vienna when he turned 18. He formally attended evening classes at the Vienna Technical College and informally also attended lectures at the local university. His mind absorbed knowledge at an amazing pace and after four years he was made head of the test department and chief assistant in the calculating department.

I interviewed Dr. Porsche on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1950 at the Solitude castle near Stuttgart. It was his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, and a special party had been arranged for him at the castle. By that time at least one thousand Porsches were on the road, and owners came from all over Germany and Austria to wish him well. He shook hands with all of them, and spoke a few words. I turned up in the hope that I would get a chance to interview him, and had to negotiate with Karl Rabe, his right-hand man since the early thirties. I was only granted a ten minute interview because, as Herr Rabe put it: "Doctor Porsche has no patience with non-technical people. In fact, he even got away with addressing the pre-war German leader as Herr Hitler instead of *Mein Führer*, as protocol demanded." However, once he started talking Dr. Porsche relaxed and I ended up spending almost an hour with him.

## — THE INTERVIEW —

**JAKE:** Today must be rather special for you. The first car with your name on the bonnet seems to be a sporting and commercial success.

**PORSCHÉ:** Yes, but you know, I've had so many successes in my life that it's difficult to get really carried away. Besides, engineers always keep their feet on the ground. I must tell you that today somehow reminds me of an April day in 1924 when lots of people also wanted to talk to me and shake my hand. In the spring of 1923 I joined Mercedes with much trepidation,

because I knew the Swabians were even dourer than the Scots and would give an Austro-Hungarian a hard time. They lived up to their reputation, and told me my doctorate from Vienna was worthless. My first task was to sort out the racing car they intended to enter in the 1924 Targa Florio. It was a supercharged two-litre, four-valves-per-cylinder twin-cam four, designed by Paul Daimler for the Indianapolis race in 1923, but it was slow and unreliable. I made a number of changes and even drove the car myself at racing speeds. Christian Werner won the race, and our three cars won the 2-litre class. Stuttgart went wild with ecstasy after the previous failures. The team was driven in a procession through the streets; the major made a speech and I was given an honorary doctorate by the Stuttgart Technical University. I was even told that my Austrian doctorate was well deserved. (Laughs).

**JAKE:** Doctor, you've been responsible for so many different designs that it would be impossible in the short time available to even mention each one. I therefore propose that we talk about what I consider to be your most significant automotive designs at each of the companies you worked.

**PORSCHÉ:** That's fine, but I won't leave you in any doubt if I don't agree with your selection.

**JAKE:** The Lohner-Porsche battery/electric of 1898 must be your first ground-breaking design.

**PORSCHÉ:** Yes it was, but there were already

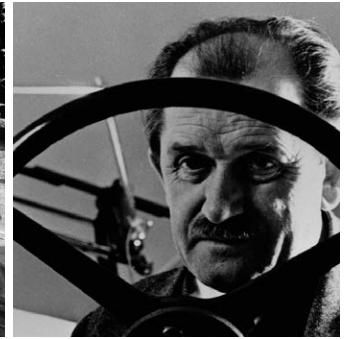
a number of electric cars on the road. My car was the first with front-wheel drive and four-wheel brakes. I used battery-powered hub motors of my own design next to the front wheels that could also be energised to act as brakes. Later, some Lohner-Porsches were built with hub motors at each wheel to provide four-wheel drive.

**JAKE:** You abandoned battery power soon afterwards.

**PORSCHÉ:** Yes, electric cars were popular in those days because nobody wanted to change gears. Most gears had straight-cut teeth and most clutches had a fierce in-out action. However, the batteries were very heavy and did not give much of a range, so by 1902 I replaced the batteries with a German Daimler engine that was able to charge the batteries while driving, to create the Lohner-Porsche Mixte system. I kept the front-wheel hub motors and some versions also had rear-wheel hub motors. We sold cars, busses and trucks with this layout and later saw the system adopted by most diesel locomotives.

**JAKE:** In 1906 you joined Austro-Daimler, where your first automotive success was the 5.7-litre single overhead cam model that came first, second and third and won the team prize in the 1910 Prince Henry Trial.

**PORSCHÉ:** Yes, I drove the winning car with my wife as passenger and really enjoyed the competition.



**JAKE:** This model featured a very pretty aerodynamic body that was tulip shaped in cross section. Where did this shape come from?

**PORSCHÉ:** I tried to reduce the frontal area as much as possible by making the car wide across the passenger's hips, but narrow lower down where the legs don't need so much space.

**JAKE:** You also designed the much-admired ADM model that carried Austro-Daimler into the '30s, just before you left.

**PORSCHÉ:** Yes, this model was further developed by Karl Rabe, who took over from me at Austro-Daimler. I was so impressed that when I started my design consultancy I made him my senior assistant.

**JAKE:** I know we agreed not to talk about your aero engine designs, but they did bring you a number of honours, including your honorary doctorate from the Vienna Technical University.

**PORSCHÉ:** Yes, that's the one the Swabians laughed at – until Mercedes won the 1924 Targa Florio.

**JAKE:** You left Austro-Daimler under a bit of a cloud?

**PORSCHÉ:** (Laughs). Yes, the board felt that the models were changing so fast that the spares department couldn't keep up. I protested and walked out in a huff. The truth is, I had an offer from Mercedes and

was itching to go to Stuttgart.

**JAKE:** It took you quite a long time to settle at Mercedes.

**PORSCHÉ:** Yes, they hated my habit of suddenly appearing in the workshop or drawing office and asking awkward questions. My predecessor, Paul Daimler, (Gottlieb Daimler's son) was aloof and could only be approached by appointment. But once the Targa Florio car started to win races I could do nothing wrong.

**JAKE:** The SS series of cars, ending in the SSKL that enabled Caracciola to win the 1931 Mille Miglia, is the best known of your creations at Mercedes. This car, as well as your other designs at Mercedes, was equipped with single overhead camshafts, and yet the smaller Mercedes engines built during your reign were fitted side-valve units. Was that done to save money?

**PORSCHÉ:** That was the Benz influence. A side-valve engine is too inefficient for me to consider but the 1926 merger between Mercedes and Benz resulted in some very conservative Benz directors and engineers getting far too much say. My influence diminished accordingly and the tension between me and the conservative element in Stuttgart grew to such an extent that I was asked to go on a fact-finding trip to the USA. Upon my return I was employed

as a consultant. This didn't suit me so in January 1929 when Steyr offered me the job of chief design engineer, I accepted.

**JAKE:** You didn't stay there for long. I suppose the 1929 stock market crash is to blame.

**PORSCHÉ:** Yes, one of the Austrian banks that owned a lot of Steyr shares failed, and Steyr was taken over by Austro-Daimler. I was unemployed but did a lot of soul searching and ended up doing what I should have done a long time ago. Dr. Anton Piëch (who married my daughter Louise) and I founded an automotive consulting agency in Stuttgart on the first of December 1930, with financial backing by the racing driver and financier Adolf Rosenberger.

**JAKE:** You were able to attract a team of really good engineers.

**PORSCHÉ:** Yes, among them were Karl Rabe and Reimspiess (both from Austro-Daimler), Erwin Komenda (who later designed the

**Dr. Anton Piëch (who married my daughter Louise) and I founded an automotive consulting agency in Stuttgart on the first of December 1930, with financial backing by the racing driver and financier Adolf Rosenberger**

body for the Beetle), and Josef Mickl, who joined as a calculations and aerodynamics engineer. He designed the body of the Auto Union racing car. My son Ferry was also experienced enough to join me from the start.

**JAKE:** Your design team came up with quite a number of interesting designs but I propose to ask you only about the Auto Union racing cars and the KdF-Wagen or Volkswagen type 1 (Beetle).

**PORSCHÉ:** That's fine. Both of those designs are close to my heart.

**JAKE:** You were part of the Auto Union team from the start, until the end of 1937. How did it start?

**PORSCHÉ:** The new GP formula, in force from 1934 to the end of 1936, tried to reduce speeds by limiting the maximum weight to 750 kg – without fuel, oil, water and tyres. This formula appealed to me because I knew I could design a car that would be faster than the racing cars of the day, not slower. Rosenberger had a bit of money – and could find more – so we formed a new company to build this car in November 1932. We were lucky because Auto Union was formed soon afterwards and they decided to go racing. They came to me one day in 1933 and asked me to design them a car. I opened my desk drawer and pulled a layout sketch out. "Here it is", I said. "I've been expecting some sugar daddy to turn up."

**JAKE:** You did not design all the Auto Union racing cars.

**PORSCHÉ:** My first car became the type A Auto Union. I later improved it by increasing the capacity and the power output to create the type B, and finally evolved the type C from it. I then left Auto Union to concentrate on the Volkswagen project. The later cars were not my responsibility.

**JAKE:** Apart from the rear engine layout, what are the major differences between your cars and the Mercedes-Benz designs?

**PORSCHÉ:** The Auto Unions were considerably cheaper to build, with only a single camshaft to operate the valves for 16 cylinders, a simple cylinder block casting instead of forged barrels and welded-on water jackets. I also concentrated more on getting a lot of low-down torque, rather than a high-power output.

**JAKE:** Was the Volkswagen the result of a lifelong dream to build a people's car?

**PORSCHÉ:** I would not say it was a lifelong dream, but I've certainly wanted to build a good small car for a long time.

**JAKE:** I've read so much about the way the Volkswagen was developed and tested that I've only got a few questions. It seems to be the only car that can be driven all day at maximum speed without overheating or wearing out at an alarming rate. Was that feature a part of the design brief?

**PORSCHÉ:** No, that was my idea. As soon as people started using the new autobahns that were built in the '30s they discovered that many cars could not take continuous full-throttle running. I gave the Volkswagen a good cooling system and chose a short stroke to reduce inertial loads, as well as an overdrive top gear to reduce engine speed.

**JAKE:** I hesitate to ask this question, but it has been suggested that you've used some of Hans Ledwinka's (Tatra's chief engineer) patents in the Volkswagen. Is this true?

**PORSCHÉ:** (Laughs). Yes, but I don't think Hans holds this against me. We had technical discussions from time to time. Sometimes he looked over my shoulder, and sometimes I looked over his shoulder. Tatra may well feel cheated, and in 1938 I told the Volkswagen management that some of their patents had been infringed. I was told that it would be taken care of but after Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia, nothing further was done.

**JAKE:** We've come to the last question. Did your post-war imprisonment by the French make you bitter?

**PORSCHÉ:** No, it didn't because during this trying time I was helped by two famous Frenchmen: Charles Faroux, the doyen of French motoring journalists, and Jean-Pierre Wimille, the French racing driver. And later, when it looked like my beloved Volkswagen project would simply collapse, Major Ivan Hirst of the British Army saved the Beetle factory by getting the production lines going, building more than 1 500 Volkswagens during the last half of 1945, and persuading the British Army to order 10 000 vehicles at the beginning of 1946. 🇬🇧

#### — TIMELINE —

**1893 TO 1898:** With Bella-Egger.

**1898 TO 1906:** Chief designer at Jacob Lohner and Company in Vienna.

**1906 TO 1923:** Chief designer at Austro-Daimler, initially the Austrian branch of Mercedes. By 1916 he became the managing director and was also awarded an honorary doctorate by the Vienna University of Technology. To this day the letters h.c. (honoris causa) are still part of the Porsche company name.

**1923 TO 1929:** Technical director at Daimler Motoren Gesellschaft (Mercedes) in Stuttgart. In 1924 he was awarded a second honorary doctorate by the Stuttgart Technical University and later also received the honorary title of professor.

**1929:** Went to Steyr Automobiles (Austria) for a brief period, but the collapse of the stock market in that year led to his unemployment.

**1931:** Started an engineering consulting company. Famous designs were the V16

Auto Union racing car and the Volkswagen Beetle. During WWII military vehicles and tanks, such as the famous Tiger, were penned for the Wehrmacht.

**1945:** On 15 December the French government arrested Porsche, his son Ferry, and a family member Anton Piëch as war criminals. Ferry was freed but Porsche and Anton remained in a prison for 20 months without trial. Porsche's health deteriorated during this time. They were set free after Ferry designed a racing car (Cisitalia type 360) for an Italian and used the money to bribe officials.

**1950:** In November Porsche visited the VW factory in Wolfsburg and spent some time with Heinrich Nordhoff, who is today given the major credit for putting the Beetle on the map. Porsche was delighted to see that hundreds of cars were coming off the line every day.

**1951:** On 30 January Porsche died of a heart attack.

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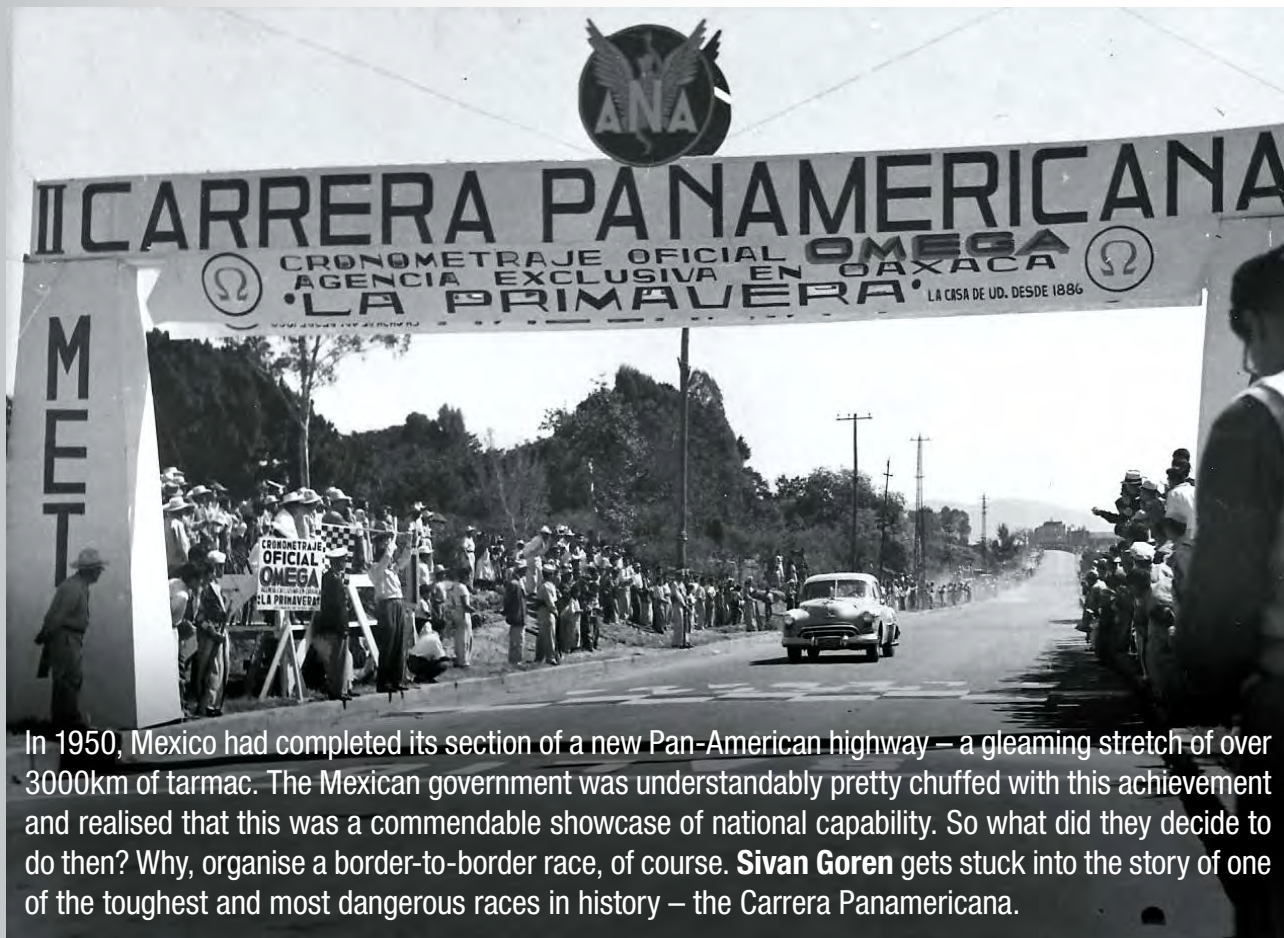
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# DICING WITH DEATH



In 1950, Mexico had completed its section of a new Pan-American highway – a gleaming stretch of over 3000km of tarmac. The Mexican government was understandably pretty chuffed with this achievement and realised that this was a commendable showcase of national capability. So what did they decide to do then? Why, organise a border-to-border race, of course. **Sivan Goren** gets stuck into the story of one of the toughest and most dangerous races in history – the Carrera Panamericana.

The inaugural race drew 132 competitors from all over the world. But because it started at the border with Texas, it was especially attractive to all types of American race drivers from Indy cars to NASCAR

The first Carrera Panamericana (meaning 'Pan-American Race') began on 5 May 1950.

The north-south race started at Ciudad Juarez, near the American border with Mexico, and finished at Ciudad Cuauhtémoc near the Guatemalan border. It was held in nine stages over six days and entry was open to stock five-seater sedans. There were significant changes in elevation throughout the race: anywhere from 100m to 3195m above sea level, which necessitated various modifications, including the rejetting of carburettors to cope with thinner air.

The inaugural race drew 132 competitors from all over the world. But because it started at the border with Texas, it was

especially attractive to all types of American race drivers from Indy cars to NASCAR (in fact Bill France, the founder of NASCAR, was there for the first race as well as later races). However, many of the competitors were ordinary unsponsored citizens from the United States, Mexico, and elsewhere.

The first year was dominated by American wins – for both cars and drivers. The very first winner was Hershel McGriff, a 23-year-old racing driver in an Oldsmobile 88. Story goes that he had bought the car for \$1 900, which turned out to be a great investment considering that his winnings amounted to around \$17 200! The best placed European car was an Alfa Romeo sedan driven by Italian driver, Felice Bonetto. Right from the start this race began two major themes: the growing competition between the American and European cars, and the sad casualties that came from the entrants' desire to win



Car parade prior to the start of the 1951 event.



Karl King/Hans Klenk Mercedes-Benz 300SLR after hitting a vulture on the 1952 event.



Hans Herrmann Porsche 550 Spyder. 1954.



Jaroslav Juhan Porsche 550 Spyder. 1954.

at all costs. In its first year, four people (including one spectator) were killed during this event. And that was just the beginning...

1951 saw the race being run from south to north instead, beginning in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas and finishing in Ciudad Juárez, this being due to lack of accommodation for race drivers, crew, officials and press. However, a welcome side effect of this was that it allowed US drivers to finish at their own border. Another major change was that the race was held in late November instead of early May, as it had been the prior year.

This year also saw a change of fortunes for the Europeans when, for the first time, a European manufacturer entered a 'factory' team. Several cars including a 212 Export LWB Vignale were entered by Ferrari (although these did not technically satisfy the requirements of the saloon car category) and this resulted in first and second places. But

not only did the Americans still manage to nab top places – maddeningly for the Europeans, they also did this in ordinary cars. Bill Stirling, a salesman from El Paso, Texas, placed third in a Chrysler Saratoga and well-known race car driver Troy Ruttman followed him in a flat-head Mercury he had reportedly bought for \$1 000 in a used car lot in California! Despite driving every-day cars, they both still bested several factory Lancias and Ferraris.

In 1952, the previously single-class race was divided into two: Sports Car and Stock (saloon) Car. This was done so that the heavier US machines would not have to compete directly with the zippier European sporty numbers. By this time, major car manufacturers around the world were sitting up and taking notice – one being Mercedes-Benz. In true German fashion a team of

drivers, mechanics and Mercedes 300 SLs was sent. The team managed an impressive first and second in the sports car category. This is even more remarkable because during the race a vulture flew through the windscreen of the winning car, smashing it and rendering the co-driver and navigator, Hans Klenk, briefly unconscious. Despite bleeding badly from facial injuries caused by the shattered windscreen, Klenk ordered driver Karl Kling to maintain speed, and valiantly soldiered on until they stopped for a tyre change almost 70km later. It was during this race that innovative pre-prepared

**But not only did the Americans still manage to nab top places – maddeningly for the Europeans, they also did this in ordinary cars**



Giovanni Bracco Lancia D23 Pininfarina. 1953.



Bob Estes-entered Lincoln Capri. 1953.



Javier Velazquez Jaguar C-type. 1954.



Hans Herrmann Porsche 550 Spyder. 1954.

'pace-notes', which allowed Klenk to identify and communicate upcoming road bends in rapid shorthand to Kling, were first used and it is claimed that this method is used in all motor sports involving a navigator today because this system proved so effective. American Chuck Stevenson won the saloon car class in a Lincoln Capri, his first of two consecutive victories in the event.

In 1953 yet another change was made to the classes when both existing classes were further divided into Large and Small categories, the size referring to engine capacity. In the Sports Cars category, the groups were under and over 1600cc; in the Saloons under and over 3500cc. This was done because by this stage the number of entrants was high, and there was a diverse range of cars entered. The trend of the past few years continued, with the Europeans dominating the Sports car category and the Americans winning the Stock Car category.

Large Sports Cars was won by Juan Manuel Fangio of Argentina in a Lancia and Small Sports Cars was taken by José Herrarte from Guatemala in a

Porsche. Chuck Stevenson of the United States again took a win in a Lincoln in Large Stock Cars and Small Stock Cars was won by another American, C.D. Evans, in an ordinary 6-cylinder Chevrolet. Sadly though, this year proved to be the bloodiest yet, with nine people perishing.

The final race took place in 1954. By this time, it had changed quite substantially from the first race in 1950, and had become highly professional. To prove that, consider this: race winner Italian Umberto Maglioli drove his Ferrari home in just over 17 hours and 40 minutes – approximately 10 hours faster than the 1950 winner and for one 365km stage averaged an incredible of 222km/h. The stock car class was taken by Ray Crawford in yet another Lincoln. Two new classes also came into effect in 1954: the European stock car class was won by Sanesi of Italy in an Alfa Romeo and the small US stock car class was won by Tommy Drisdale in a Dodge. Californian hot rodder Ak Miller became famous by making fifth place in his Oldsmobile-powered 1927 Ford body on a 1950 Ford frame, nicknamed 'El Ensalada' (the salad) by his adoring Mexican fans.

**Sadly though, this year proved to be the bloodiest yet, with nine people perishing**





Trevoux and Armando Gonzalez Packard. 1954.



Jaroslav Juhan-entered Porsche 550 Coupé. 1963.



Giuseppe Scotuzzi/Antonio Stagnoli Ferrari 375MM. 1954.



Porsche 356 1500 S Cabrio. 1952.

But the final year of the Carrera Panamericana, which resulted in the deaths of seven more people, cemented the race's reputation for not only being a challenging one, but also one spectacularly high in driver and spectator casualties. With every year of the race the stakes had got higher, the cars faster, and the death toll rose. However, it wasn't the dangers of this race as such that finally resulted in its cancellation. On 11 June 1955, 83 spectators and one driver were killed during the 24 Hours of Le Mans race. It was then that the organisers of the Carrera Panamericana realised that their much more freely-regulated race, with not much emphasis on safety, was no longer feasible and the race was finally canned. This came at a time when the Carrera Panamericana was just beginning to attract the best racers and car makers in the world. It was a huge blow to motor racing, but it also marked the end of an era. Safety was now firmly established as an absolute non-negotiable in modern racing – for both drivers and spectators – and there simply wasn't place for a fast-and-loose event such as the Carrera Panamericana, which had taken a

staggering 27 lives in only five years.

The race was resurrected in 1988 by Pedro Dávila, Loyal Truesdale, and Eduardo de León Camargo, and runs a 7-day, 3200km route which copies some of the original course. It is run with official backing on special closed stages of the public road network and fast-transit sections through central Mexico at speeds approaching 260km/h, with 80-100 cars competing in ten classes.

In its time, the Carrera Panamericana became a legendary, if short-lived, race. So much so, that it provided inspiration to another legend in motoring – and one that had been a participant in the race itself – Porsche.

First introduced on the Porsche 356A Carrera in 1955, the Porsche's 'Carrera' moniker makes reference to Porsche's success in the 1953 Carrera Panamericana, when a 550 Spyder driven by José Herrarte won the Small Sports Car category. After launching the Porsche 911 in 1963, it took

a full decade before the flat-six sports car was treated to the famous Carrera badge. However, when it did arrive, a legend was born: the Porsche 911 Carrera 2.7 RS. The Carrera RS introduced Stuttgart fans to Rennsport variations of the Porsche 911 and proved so popular that for 1974, the range-topping Porsche 911 was also given the Carrera badge.

If this was not enough of a tribute, in 2009 Porsche named its newly-released offering Panamera in yet another nod to the legendary race that captured the imagination of drivers and spectators the world over. 🏁

**But the final year of the Carrera Panamericana, which resulted in the deaths of seven more people, cemented the race's reputation for not only being a challenging one, but also one spectacularly high in driver and spectator casualties**

# CROSSING THE BORDER



With enthusiasm for the Carrera Panamericana floating around the office, **Stuart Grant** thought it best to stage his own border-to-border sprint. Debate arose as to whether to make use of a fast saloon or sports car. In the end the solution was simple: take a brand that excelled in the original; a 4-door car that seamlessly combines the attributes of a large sedan with those of a sporting Gran Tourer. Take a Porsche Panamera! And the fact that Porsche chose this model name to celebrate its success on the legendary race made it a no brainer.

**T**he chosen route was from the southern edge of Gauteng, up the western side of Johannesburg, through the Cradle of Humankind and on to the border of the North West province. The vehicle: a 2017 Porsche Panamera 4S.

Compared with the first-generation Panamera the 2017 model features a lower roofline, higher rear end and shapelier back wheel arches that not only make the car look wider and more squat but also move it closer to looking like a larger 4-door 911 – despite the engine being up front. And is it just me or is there a resemblance to the back end of the Porsche 550 coupé that took part in the 1953 Mexican race? Maybe the silver paintwork is creating this impression, or possibly the relatively short overhangs? But whatever it is, I did have an overwhelming urge to slap some yellow roundels and the number 154 on the doors.

It's not only the body that is changed in the 2017 car with a choice of two new engines, an 8-speed PDK gearbox and interior refresh. While a 3996cc V8 twin-turbo with 404kW on tap is offered in the Panamera Turbo, the 324kW delivered by the 2894cc V6 twin-turbo

we had was more than ample. In this guise, with the optional Sport Chrono Package, the top speed is claimed to be 289km/h and from standstill the 100km/h mark comes up in 4.2 seconds – enough to push you and the navigator firmly back in the leather-clad bucket seats and leave you wondering why you'd need any more.

Traction is handled by an all-wheel drive system and swapping through the eight cogs can be done in either a fully automatic way or manually by flicking the paddles that rotate with the steering wheel. There is no other way to describe the dual-clutch transmission, known as PDK in Porsche speak, other than phenomenal. If you are a dyed-in-the-wool manual fan that believes the only way to shift is with a knob then do yourself a favour and sample PDK. The technical gurus can explain to you how it works but for now all you need to know is that the gears are preselected and ready for an instantaneous ratio swap. It's silky smooth in auto or manual; you will never be able to beat it with a manual and it even blips the loud pedal on downshift.

Despite measuring in at 5049mm long and 1937mm wide and tipping the scale at around 1 900kg, the Panamera manages



to shed metal bulk when being driven enthusiastically, thanks to the coil springs and adaptive dampers limiting body roll. Steering is well weighted and offers the type of feedback and accuracy that a few years ago would only be found on the ultimate sporting machines. In the world of large luxury sedans the Panamera has to take the title as the one to have if you fancy yourself as a real driver.

This doesn't mean it's devoid of any of the technology and high-end lavishness expected from the segment though. There's a nod to the past with an analogue rev counter mounted centrally in the gauge cluster but the rest is all cutting edge. Flanking this are two screens that can be configured to mimic Porsche's traditional five-dial appearance and give you stats like trip information, time, temperature, tyre pressure, G-force... and the list goes on. You can even get one side to display your navigation on a night vision screen or, believe it or not, lap timer.

There's a large, centrally-mounted touchscreen in the upper dash, which gives you access to every feature you need. If you need to find a radio station it is here. So too is the climate control, the suspension

setting, phone syncing, iPod fiddling and navigation – and when parking, your front, rear and even bird's eye view camera angles will show up here. It's not rocket science to use either and if you are accustomed to using a smartphone you'll be able to get the hang of it quickly. But just in case, a large number of these functions can also be controlled from a more traditional-looking layout on the centre consol.

Rear passengers get an equally impressive control panel at the back, so while being chauffeured off to their next meeting they can customise their own space for ultimate comfort. If, or should we say when, your driver is persuaded by the Porsche into some spirited driving, the rear occupants will stay firmly put in a pair of supportive buckets.

Porsche's Panamera 4S is a car for all occasions and much like the race it's named after, crosses the border and blurs the lines as far as which genre of car is best for a job. It blows wide open the idea of needing both a sporting GT and a big luxury saloon segment – and blows your mind at the same time. **G**

In the world of large luxury sedans the Panamera has to take the title as the one to have if you fancy yourself as a real driver

# TRAILBLAZER



Sometimes you come across an object that is not only ridiculously awesome but also has a story – not necessarily one relating to the specific object itself, but more about how it came to be. Such is the case with the object in question: an old Pyrene fire extinguisher. The story of this particular one, other than the fact that it was found years ago in the basement of the old Newtown Branch of Standard Bank in Johannesburg, is not known. But the story behind how it and many more of these fire extinguishers came to be, as **Sivan Goren** discovered, is an interesting one.



**T**he story begins as far back as 1907, when a Scottish engineer had a brilliant idea for a fire extinguisher. Well, at least he thought so but it seems that no one else in the UK felt the same, and unable to get financial backing, he wound up taking his idea all the way across the sea – to the US of A. It was here that he eventually established what became known as the Pyrene Company of Delaware, in 1909. Then in 1914 a British offshoot, The Pyrene Company Limited, was founded by an American businessman in London and in 1920, a factory to manufacture fire extinguishers was established.

Pyrene pioneered the use of CTC (Carbon Tetrachloride) using a hand pump to expel

the liquid onto the fire. The liquid would then vaporise and extinguish the flames by inhibiting the chemical chain reaction of the combustion process. The extinguishers were not pressurised, so could be refilled when low or empty with fire extinguishing liquid. Sadly, at the time, no one was aware of the fact that CTC vapour is highly toxic and potentially even more hazardous than the fire it was designed to extinguish, and several deaths occurred from using these extinguishers in confined spaces. Somewhat ironically, Pyrene conducted shocking and fear-inducing advertisement campaigns to sell their fire extinguishers, with lines like: 'After they're gone, when you are all alone and the memory that weighs upon the heart

returns, the knowledge of what might have been prevented by a Pyrene Fire Extinguisher tortures you'.

The very earliest fire extinguishers were available in different materials, including enamelled metal, copper, brass, or nickel plated. During WWII, copper became scarce and brass was generally used. The 1916 patent saw various types of extinguisher on offer. Later, 'Pyrene Junior' fire extinguishers were developed for cars, boats and bikes. By 1924, The London General Omnibus Company (the principal bus operator in London between 1855 and 1933) awarded Pyrene the contract to supply all its vehicles with pump fire extinguishers. Over the years Pyrene fire-fighting systems were also

# Pyrene Protection

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# Pyrene

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installed in a number of the world's ships – even the famous *Queen Mary*. During WWII, the demand for fire-fighting equipment was high, and Pyrene were contracted to supply many companies and institutions.

Pyrene was taken over by Chubb and Sons in 1967 and continued to operate under the name Pyrene until 1971 when Chubb Fire Security Limited was formed. CTC extinguishers were withdrawn in the 1950s because of the chemical's toxicity, and fire-fighting technology has come a long way since then. These days, though, the old CTC fire extinguishers have become sought-after collector's pieces. Interestingly, most collectors of Pyrene fire extinguishers are also collectors of classic cars. Pyrene

extinguishers were fitted to most commercial vehicles between the 1920s and '60s, and many perceive that installing one in their classic car adds authenticity, not to mention the cool factor.

So whether you want a period accessory for your classic, or you just think it looks good as an unusual ornament in your home, you can't really go wrong with these vintage fire fighters. Just be sure that your CTC extinguisher is emptied of any remaining liquid by a professional before you add it to your collection. And if you are looking for something a little different, the old Pyrene adverts have a distinctive style all of their own and have become almost as collectible as the extinguishers they advertised. We

also managed to track down a small Gacos extinguisher made by George Angus & Company in Johannesburg, with both English and Afrikaans etched into its brass casing – and it even has its original wall bracket. A definite must-have collection of fire-fighting memorabilia – arguably the ultimate 'hot' addition to any man cave. **🔥**



# TO HELL & BACK

Sunday 12 March 2016 was, for Samantha Anderson, one of those days that would have been better spent curled up in bed with a good book. At exactly six o'clock that morning she'd set off at the head of the pack for the second and final day of the annual Durban-Johannesburg Rally for pre-1936 motorcycles. Ten minutes later, the Durbanite found herself standing on the side of the road watching her father Stuart's irreplaceable 3 ½ hp 1909 Humber – the oldest machine in the event – being consumed by flames. **Gavin Foster** takes up the tale and how against all odds the bike was repaired in time for the 2017 DJ.

“It was just after the start at Newcastle when I suddenly felt there was something wrong with the bike. I looked down and all I could see were flames. The fuel tap had come away from the tank, which was full,” she explains. “When I looked

back there was a long trail of flames following on the road too. The engine died and it took me about three or four seconds to feel that I was burning as well, so I threw the bike down on the ground, jumped

over the Armco and rolled around in the wet grass. I was soaked with petrol and my leg was burning, but luckily there was a truck mechanic on his way to work who had fire extinguishers in his van. I don't know how long it all took, but when I was no longer on fire I stood and watched that motorbike burn and burn.”

A distraught Samantha frantically phoned her boyfriend and crew boss, Kevin Tebbutt, three times in a couple of minutes telling him that the bike was on fire and asking where he was. “The flames had burnt through my leather boot and got going on my foot – I still have the scar. Then Kevin arrived and said ‘Oh! You're not joking!’ He'd been refuelling

When I looked back there was a long trail of flames following on the road too. The engine died and it took me about three or four seconds to feel that I was burning as well



Samantha and Kevin Tebbutt testing the Humber prior to the 2017 event.

the van.” That was the first time Kevin had been further than about 50 metres from Samantha since they left Durban at 6am the day before. “It was very traumatic,” says Samantha. “I think I cried for about an hour, and then phoned my father to tell him his motorbike had caught alight. He didn’t say anything other than to check that I was alright, then called back half an hour later to find out how bad the bike was.”

Derek Watts of Carte Blanche fame, also a keen motorcyclist, was covering the DJ for the prime-time TV show and his prognosis was grim. He reckoned the bike was irreparable and expressed surprise when those in the know predicted that it could be

salvaged and would be back at the DJ in a couple of years. He and the pundits were all wrong. Sam’s father, Stuart Anderson, took nine months to rebuild the ancient Humber, fabricating lots of parts. He handed it back to Sam a week or two before this year’s event to give it a shakedown and make sure it was once again ready for the almost 700km ride. And he’d made a couple of improvements. The new handmade aluminium fuel tanks now have the tap at the rear to stop spillage dripping onto the spark plug lead, and there’s now a clutch – an adapted Honda dirt bike unit – on the end of the crank, meaning that the engine doesn’t stall every time the single-speed bike comes to a stop.

#### — HUMBER —

English manufacturer Thomas Humber started making bicycles in the 1870s, and put a number of motorised cycles on show at the International Horseless Carriage Exhibition in May 1896. The company was that year lauded as the first British manufacturer to offer a practical motorcycle, using bought-in engines in bicycle frames, and also dabbled in tandem motorcycles with electric motors, as well as branching out into car manufacture. Although their motorcycles were quality items, their cars proved to be a better business proposition so the factory dropped motorcycle production between 1905 and 1909, when



Samantha doing her first DJ on the 1929 AJS that her great-grandmother gave to her.



The Humber after the 2016 fire.



The Honda clutch fitted to the Humber.



Sam with the hard-luck trophy she got at last year's DJ.

they introduced the pedal-assisted 3.5 hp single-cylinder belt-driven 500cc model as owned by Pietermaritzburg's Stuart Anderson.

Even with so many irons in so many fires Humber wasn't afraid to experiment: They introduced a 3.75 hp V-twin motorcycle engine with a master conrod on which the secondary one hinged, and in 1913 came up with a horizontally-opposed three-cylinder engine with one forward-pointing 373cc cylinder being offset by a pair of rear-facing 185cc pots that shared a common combustion chamber. The 3.5 hp

pedal-assisted 500cc motorcycle soldiered on until 1916, though, when the factory reduced engine options to flat-twins only. Between 1923 and 1931 they expanded their range again using a range of engines including a 350cc bevel-drive overhead camshaft motor, but in 1931 pulled the plug on motorcycle production. The highlight of the marque's motorcycle history was Percy Evans's victory at the 1911 Isle of Man Junior TT on a 2 ¾ hp side-valve V-twin. Humber riders took six of the first 18 places and every Humber that started the gruelling race made it to the end.

says Stuart Anderson of Pietermaritzburg. "He had six or seven bikes and one day asked me if I wanted them so I took the lot. I wasn't initially all that keen on the Humber although I loved classic bikes. It was all in pieces and I reckoned it was a veteran bike that should rather be in a museum somewhere. What got me going, though, was the Ladysmith to Durban veteran run. I also got motivated when the marque specialist in London told me that it was the only existing one he'd heard of. That got me very interested and I restored the old bike in about 1980. Everything was rusted to hell and gone; it was throw-away stuff. I had to organise mudguards and wheel rims and the front forks were vrot but I used a set of an AJS – they were identical. The spokes and things were all replaced with new, and the fuel tanks had rusted through so I had to make new ones. I used a 1942 Harley-

**Humber riders took six of the first 18 places and every Humber that started the gruelling race made it to the end**

— STUART'S HUMBER —

"The bike came my way through my wife's uncle, an engineer on the railways and bike enthusiast who found it in the Colenso area many, many years ago,"





Samantha and Kevin Tebbutt testing the Humber prior to the 2017 event.

Davidson 10/12 piston because it was the right diameter. I rebuilt the flywheels and I put a proper roller-bearing big-end bearing in rather than the original bronze bush. I rebuilt the original carb but it gave me so much hassle that after the first run I fitted a more modern one which is much better and makes the bike easier to ride. I still have the original one though.

— RIDING THE DJ —

Riding the DJ is never easy, and doing it on a 108-year-old bike that needs to be pedalled on the uphill can be a real ordeal. The event, open to motorcycles registered before 1 January 1937, is a regularity trial where competitors, who aren't allowed to use speedometers or odometers, are penalised for passing through checkpoints earlier or later than their scheduled times. Riders count lamp posts and white lines

with one eye while keeping the other on a stopwatch to determine their speed, but on the Humber that's more difficult because Samantha has to pedal furiously on the uphill just to keep going, never mind maintain the prescribed pace. Because the bike has only one gear (and until this year no clutch) the engine stalled every time the bike stopped and she'd have to get a push or start pedalling to get it running again, but the modified Honda clutch Stuart fitted has made that a little less onerous this year. Then there's the matter of oil. The Humber uses a constant-loss lubrication system with no powered oil pump, so Samantha has to work the hand pump on the fuel tank by her right knee before she starts, before tackling long hills, and every 10km or so elsewhere. While all this is going on, she also has to worry about all the much faster-moving traffic that passes her along the way. "It all

helps me beat the boredom, though," says Sam. "You have something to think about rather than how sore your bum is or how tired your legs are or how you'd just love to have a glass of wine."

For Samantha the biggest challenge is rain, because the belt drive to the rear wheel slips when it gets wet. "In 2015 my brother Jayson towed me 100km in pouring rain on his big 1918 Harley and didn't go slowly – he scared me witless. He said all he could see behind him was this yellow blob. I won't do that again. I'd rather retire, put the bike on the trailer and if the rain stopped ride it again to finish unofficially."

After all Stuart and Kevin's hard work Samantha sadly failed to finish this year's DJ on 10-11 March. The bike performed beautifully until Heidelberg, where the magneto went on strike and stopped delivering spark. 🚫

# IN THE FAST LANE



To many the thought of Paige Lindenberg powering a hulking great 1968 Ford Fairlane around our racetracks might be an odd one. Sure, it is not a vehicle we all immediately think of as an ideal circuit race car but as **Stuart Grant** discovers the model, named after Henry Ford's estate, Fair Lane, near Dearborn, Michigan does come with a bit of race breeding.

In America the Fairlane was initially launched as a full-size segment vehicle in 1955 but by 1962, when in its third generation, it shrank down in dimension and was reclassified as a mid-sized offering. It was at this stage that the idea of marketing the car through competition arose. At first the chosen form of motorsport was drag racing and Ford prepared some of its 2-door Fairlanes, fitted with 289 cubic inch V8 motors for the 1963 season. By 1964 these saw Ford's new 427 (7-litre) shoehorned in and the legend of the Ford Fairlane Thunderbolt was born.

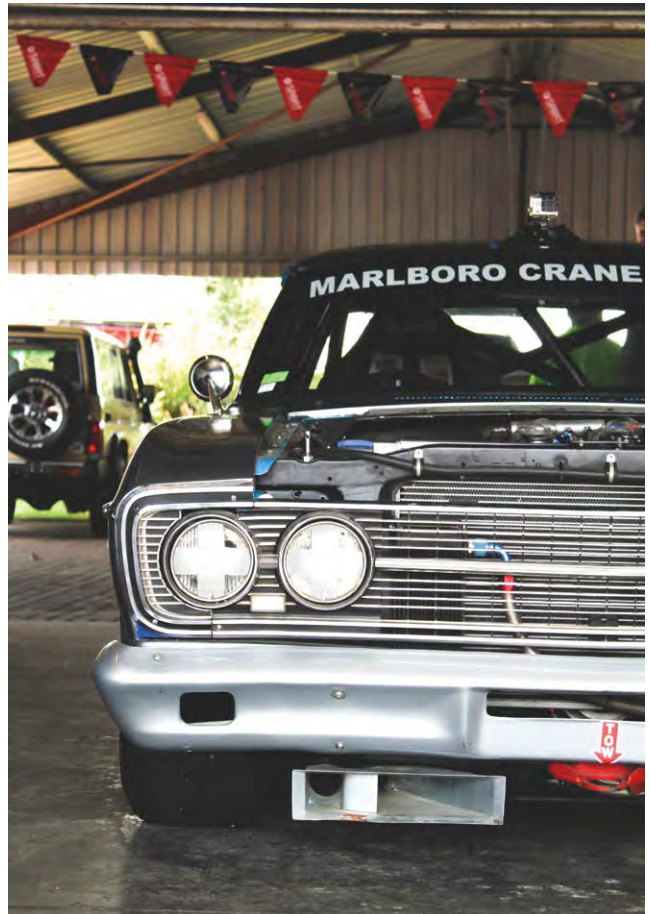
There were a hundred Thunderbolts built, not at the Ford plant though but at Dearborn Steel. Here the factory bodies were lightened by the fibreglass doors, bonnet, front wings, front bumper and Plexiglas side and rear windows. The list of other weight-saving measures was immense with sun visors, radio, heater, passenger-side windscreen wiper, arm rests, rear-window cranks, mirrors, sound deadening material, carpeting, boot mat, wheel spanner, jack and spare deleted from

the supply sheet. Front seats either came as lightweight items from Ford's police package vehicles or basic bucket seats from the Econoline van parts bin. Even the high-beam headlights were scrapped in favour of mesh air intakes that forced air directly into the Holley 4-barrel carb.

A tubular exhaust manifold, aluminium scatter shield designed to contain a disintegrating clutch, electric fuel pump, heavy-duty traction control bars and asymmetrical leaf springs, locking diff and auxiliary gauges made up the specialist race equipment that helped a 'stock' 425hp Thunderbolt complete a quarter mile in 11.61 seconds at 124.8mph during November '63.

It took a year for the Fairlane to move from the straight-line competition to something with a few corners. NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing), which ran on both oval and road circuits, were investigating the use of monocoque saloons and had Holman Moody (the then-official racing contractor for Ford) build a '64 Fairlane to the NASCAR specs as a test mule. Fireball Roberts tested the car at Daytona and went quickly, but to further prove its point NASCAR got the team to run it in the Continental sportscar race at

By 1964 these saw Ford's new 427 (7-litre) shoehorned in and the legend of the Ford Fairlane Thunderbolt was born



Daytona. Dispelling the myth that NASCARs don't corner in both directions Fireball drove the Fairlane in second behind A.J. Foyt's Cooper Monaco. With the point proven the HM Fairlane was flogged across the pond to Alan Mann Racing, where it competed successfully in a number of events before being sold off and disappearing off the charts.

For 1967 NASCAR allowed Ford to run the 427c.i. lump in the Fairlane and it went well, with the Parnelli Jones Fairlane 500 taking victory at the January Riverside500. A Fairlane driven by Mario Andretti scooped the Daytona 500 in February, ahead of Fred Lorenzen in another Fairlane 427. Fairlanes won again at the Atlanta 500 in April, with Cale Yarborough taking first and Dick Hutcherson second. At the Atlanta 400 in July it was four Fairlanes in a row – Cale Yarborough, followed by Dick Hutcherson, Darel Dieringer and David Pearson.

1968 saw the sixth-generation Fairlane launched. It was bigger and heavier than its predecessor and the 2-door GT version (the choice of Fairlane racers all along) and the fastback styles were moved under the Torino banner, basically ending the appearance of the Fairlane name on American race results.

But not in Australia of course. No, Down Under they did things a little differently. Australia assembled American Fairlanes between 1959 and '64 but dropped the model name from its sales charts with the arrival of the American Galaxie. The badge returned again in March 1967 as a full-blooded Aussie Fairlane 500 4-door, designed and built in Australia. Although it was based on the Falcon, its slightly larger body dimensions saw it classed between the Falcon and the top dog Galaxie. Power supply initially came from a 3.3-litre straight-six or optional 289 (4.7-litre) V8 but coinciding with a minor facelift (or tail-lift as the only cosmetic change occurred at the back lights), these capacities were bumped up to 3.6 and 4.95 litres respectively.

Because of its slightly larger proportions and few extra kilograms (1 495kg) when compared to the Falcon (1 445kg) it's based on, most Ford racers unsurprisingly didn't opt for a Fairlane as a track machine. A few pop up on result lists but for the most part it's the Falcon GT that was the top of the pops racing saloon and became

a synonymous with the famed Mount Panorama Circuit in Bathurst (especially in its later 351 inch/5.8-litre guise). As fellow users of right-hand drive vehicles, South Africa received the Australian Fairlane 500 and two years later we rebranded the Falcon GT as the Ford Fairmont 351 GT.

Many of our 351 GTs have left our shores, going to Australia where they are modified to look like Falcon GTs. Those that have stayed here are cherished in collections and are too rare to mess about with on track, so the closest you'll get to a Bathurst racer is a '68 Ford Fairlane.

Fitted with a warmed-up 302 engine, worked suspension, a 4-speed gearbox, Wilwood brakes and the like, the Lindenberg Racing car would look the part hurtling down Conrod Straight on Mount Panarama and keeps the Fairlane's motorsport history alive. 🏁

The badge returned again in March 1967 as a full-blooded Aussie Fairlane 500 4-door, designed and built in Australia



Photos by Etienne Fouche

## ABOVE THE BAR

While (finances depending) it's easy to go out and buy a restored classic, most of us at some stage or other feel the need to rebuild something. It could be our inner desire to help out forlorn and forgotten machinery, or perhaps to recreate something we got new in our formative days for nostalgic purposes – maybe even chop and modify it to a level we figured the factory should have done in the past. Car builds offer heaps of enjoyment and when done you can drive them with one, two or more occupants but there is one downside – they take up parking space. **Stuart Grant** finds the solution to this at Hamptons Executive Cars.

**T**he answer is simple. A classic motorcycle. In the same way a car project does, rebuilding a bike will test your skills, transport you down memory lane, give you something to ride and put a smile on faces as you scoot on down to the local coffee shop. Hey, the compact dimensions even mean that the restored beauty can double as decoration in your man cave or, if you are handy with a rawlbolt and drill, even hang above your bar.

And although some money will be spent in the process you can put your mind at ease because classic bikes, like cars, are now a viable investment with well-restored examples fetching decent money the world over. It's not only the older British bikes like Vincents, AJS, Triumph, Norton and BSA that are commanding top prices – those in the know are also hunting out the likes of BMW, Ducati,

Moto Guzzi and even the Japanese icons from the 1960s through to the early 1990s. The support industry and online community is vast and spares supply is simply a click of the mouse button away.

As seen previously, Hamptons currently has a large supply of restored classic 2-wheelers. But even more exciting for those of us looking for a tinker is the range of Japanese restoration bikes. Yamaha and Suzuki are the dominant brands and the projects range from basket cases through to almost complete units. While some of the lots might look like bare skeletons, the boxes packed to the brim in storage indicate that most parts are present and correct and with a bit of elbow grease will add up whole.

Inspired by a beautifully restored Yamaha Trail 50 behind the bar counter, our minds started racing, wondering what our first choice would be to get stuck into. Would it be one of the four Yamaha RD350s? Or any of the quartet of Yamaha YR3s (the RD's predecessor)? The pair of 1960s pressed

And although some money will be spent in the process you can put your mind at ease because classic bikes, like cars, are now a viable investment with well-restored examples fetching decent money the world over



steel frame Yamaha YL1s would be the perfect size to hang from the wall, as would either of the two Suzuki GT50s. No, for me the answer sat on its own in a corner. Without fairing or bodywork it took a while to unravel what it was, but the sight of four exhaust pipes and 2-stroke expansion boxes gave the game away – a super-rare Yamaha RZ500.

Although Giacomo Agostini introduced Yamaha's 2-stroke prowess to the Grand Prix racing world with championship honours aboard a water-cooled Yamaha YZR500, it was Kenny Roberts giving the brand three consecutive GP titles that got fans dreaming of what it would be like to pilot a 500cc 2-stroke GP machine.

In 1984 Yamaha gave them a chance to get just that bit closer to making this thought a reality when it launched the 500cc V4 RZ500. The road bike borrowed lots from the 1983 Roberts machine, like the same basic engine configuration (50-degree, twin crank V4 with YPVS exhaust power valves). In both GP and road trim this lump sat neatly in a boxed

section perimeter-style frame and even the racy removable cassette-style 6-speed gearbox was part of the RZ package.

For reliability, user-friendliness and maintenance requirements the RZ did however have a few compromises. As the YPVS hardware was mounted between the engine V on the road bike the space for big-throat carbs was cut down, resulting in the use of smaller units sitting off to the side of the V. The racer's rotary valves were replaced with reed valves to achieve a broader, more road-oriented power band. The lower two exhaust pipes sit as one would expect on a two-stroke running alongside the swingarm, while the top pair exit under the seat area after crossing over each other just behind the exhaust ports – this done to maintain a tuned length without protruding out of the back of the bike.

Performance is said to be explosive, and reading up on riders' accounts emphasises that it took a brave rider to wind it all the way to the 10 000rpm redline. Power delivery is

of a proper 2-stroke characteristic – anything but linear or consistent. Apparently there is nothing below 6000rpm and the long first gear means a lot of clutch slipping is needed to get it rolling. Once it passes the 6000 mark though things start happening and by 7000 you are doubting why you are riding the thing. It picks up speed at an insane rate, the front wheel goes light and you have to work quickly through the close-ratio gears.

Thankfully the race breeding sees to it that the handling and the brakes come from the top drawer but you still have to play the gearbox like a maestro to ensure you don't drop out the relatively small 3000rpm power band.

If you fancy yourself as a bit of a Kenny Roberts then this is the project bike for you. If, like me, your riding skill isn't quite up to scratch then the next plan would be to upgrade your childhood Kenny Roberts poster into a real 3D wall hanging. 🏍️

For more information on the restoration bikes visit [www.hampton.co.za](http://www.hampton.co.za).

# BLAST FROM THE PAST

**Gavin Foster** takes the latest RS incarnation, in the form of the new Ford Focus RS, for a blast.

**T**he Ford Escort RS1600 was the car that started the Ford RS phenomenon. Created as a result of Ford's success on the international rally scene with the Ford Escort Twin Cam, the Ford Escort RS was born as a result of a collaboration between Ford AVO (Advanced Vehicle Operations – the division of the company that built performance Fords) and the RS (Rallye Sport) dealer network that marketed them.

The Ford Escort RS1600 engine was based on the 1557cc Kent motor in the Twin Cam, but Ford AVO had teamed up with tuners Cosworth to improve the twin-cam engine by developing a 16-valve 1599cc cylinder head, in order to keep Ford winning on the international rallying front.

In 1970, when the first Escort RS1600 was produced at Ford's Averly plant in south Essex, it delivered 120bhp – outstanding for the time. The Escort RS brought performance to the masses thanks to a reasonable selling price, plus a top speed of 180km/h from a car that weighed just 870kg.

The Ford Escort RS1600 paved the way for other iconic Ford Escort RS models such as the first-generation Escort RS2000, RS200 and the super-successful RS1800 World Rally Car.







Serious technology? Tick. Blistering acceleration? Tick. Supercar top speed? Tick. Razor-sharp steering and handling? Tick. Horribly expensive? Tick. The Ford Focus RS is all of these things, as well as hard, harsh, strident and a little brash and hard to live with every day, so it surely qualifies as the real deal – a seriously competent performance car, straight out of the box. It's also a family hatch, a R700 000 shopping trolley with 257kW of power – that's a whopping 350 old-fashioned horsepower that'll take it to 100km/h in around 4.7 seconds and dispense with the standing-start 400m dash in 13.3 seconds on its way to a top speed of 266km/h. The question is, is it an instant classic? There's a lot of ferocious opposition in the hot hatch sector out there at the moment, and most of its rivals would be a lot easier to live with than the rambunctious Ford.

**It's also a family hatch, a R700 000 shopping trolley with 257kW of power – that's a whopping 350 old-fashioned horsepower**

The Focus RS is close to being a pukka race car on the road, which means it feels very rough around the edges. It shares its 2.3-litre turbo EcoBoost engine with the current four-cylinder Mustang that is itself a lively performer, but the RS benefits further in that the state of tune it uses blesses it with 257kW of power and 440Nm of torque, compared with the 233kW and 430Nm of the bigger, heavier pony car. It's interesting to note that the Focus RS is pretty evenly matched with the more powerful 5.0-litre 306kW Mustang V8 in a drag race and on top speed, and I'll wager that it'll also be quicker around a race track, with its all-wheel drive and dynamic torque vectoring giving it the feel of a well set up rear-wheel drive car around corners. As is the norm these days, the RS comes with a raft of electronic gismos including four drive modes ranging from road to sports to race to drift, with the

last arranging to deliver all the torque to the real wheels only when you feel like showboating in a parking lot. Switching between modes affects suspension and steering sensitivity, as

well as exhaust note and throttle response, and there's a very entertaining launch-control mode that also allows you to charge through the 6-speed manual gearbox under acceleration without lifting your foot off the gas pedal.

Ford was rather stingy with the RS, allocating it for just two days to each journalist, and over such a short period on public roads it's not easy to come close to establishing a very quick car's limits. I played with it enough, though, to appreciate just how hard it pulls, how precisely it turns, how it sticks to the road when flung into a corner, and how quickly it stops when those Brembo four-pot callipers put the clamps on those massive discs. As with so many other cars that have taken a step too close to the line separating great real-world everyday cars and uncomfortable track-focused exotics, the Ford would be fun to drive once or twice a week when you need cheering up, and double as a family commuter for short periods. I reckon, though, that a Focus or, even better still, Fiesta ST would be a much more appealing package for fun and for everyday use without breaking the bank. **👍**



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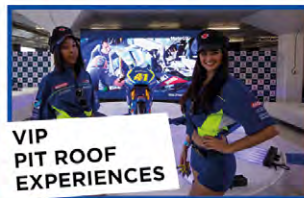


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ACME – HOLLEY SPEED SHOP CHEVROLET C10  
SCALE 1:18 | R2 200



MINICHAMPS – MCLAREN F1 GTR  
#39 LE MANS 1997  
SCALE 1:18 | R2 200



SPARK – ALFA ROMEO 33/2  
#39 LE MANS 1968  
SCALE 1:18 | R2 950



SPARK – PORSCHE 919 HYBRID  
#17 LE MANS 2015  
SCALE 1:18 | R2 650



SHUCO – MERCEDES-BENZ MARTINI  
PORSCHE TRANSPORTER  
SCALE 1:18 | R7 500



MINICHAMPS – FORD ESCORT II RS 1800  
CASTROL ARMIN HAHNE ZAKESPEED  
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WHITEBOX – ALFA ROMEO GIULIA GTA  
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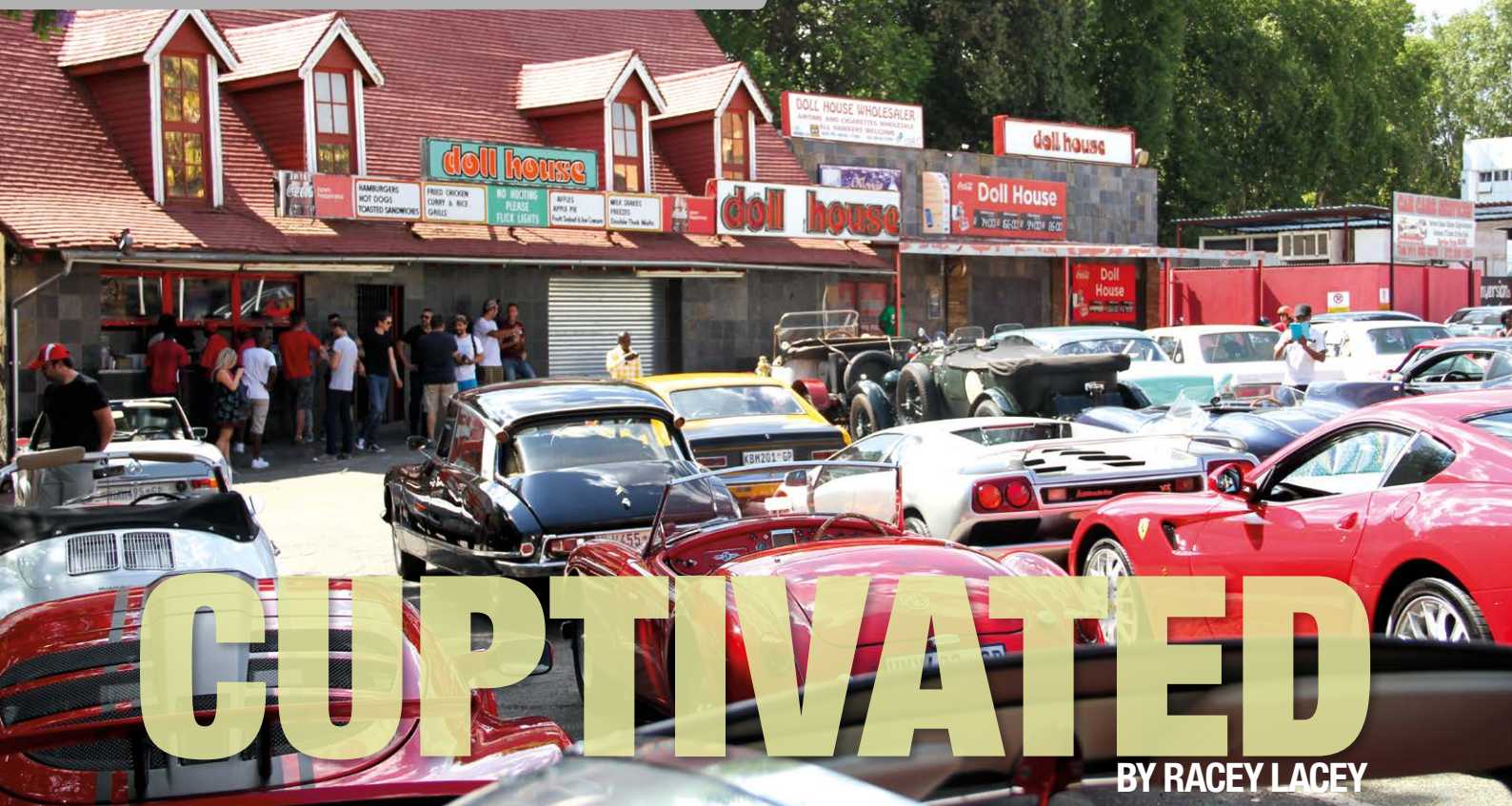
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# CUP TIVATED

BY RACEY LACEY

The past few decades have seen remarkable advances in motoring technology: from safety features like the airbag and ABS to power steering and on-board navigation, the modern car is a completely different animal from the somewhat more primitive beasts of yesteryear. But cast your mind back a few decades and you will remember a simpler time long before internet banking and smartphones; a time when rear seatbelts and side mirrors were considered luxury extras. A time before the most significant and life-altering motoring innovation of our time: the cup holder.

For most of my childhood my family would take a much-anticipated annual trip to the coast for the holidays. Mom and Dad would pack the car to the brim, throw us kids in the back and set off. But instead of stopping at the first 1-stop petrol megacity for a hurried coffee and snack like most people do these days, back then we would stop off at a designated roadside picnic spot, complete with concrete tables and benches. Our fare would consist of slightly soggy wax paper-wrapped sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, and a thermos of overly-

sweet Ricoffy, decanted into cheap plastic cups. We would take our time, stretch our legs, take in the scenery and fresh air and then continue the journey.

Back in the 'old' days, this is pretty much how things were the world over. Apparently the idea of eating and drinking in the car never really occurred to people back then. It was only when roadhouses and 'drive-thrus' became all the rage in America in the '50s that the idea of eating in cars – and therefore the need for 'refreshment holders' – really took hold. Several ideas floated around and some prototypes were even manufactured, but it wasn't until the '60s when the idea really took off commercially. Trays that would hook into the window well of the door became available, and were fairly commonplace as aftermarket accessories by the '70s. These were all well and good but still did not solve the conundrum of how to drink and drive, as it were.

But all this changed in 1983, when Chrysler invented that quintessential American automobile – the minivan – and with it included two proper cup holders set into the plastic of the dashboard. In the next few years the idea caught on, with more and more manufacturers including cup holders as standard. But even as recently as 1989 American media company *US News and World Report* was still scathingly calling cup holders 'cranies for drinking cups' and

Our fare would consist of slightly soggy wax paper-wrapped sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, and a thermos of overly-sweet Ricoffy, decanted into cheap plastic cups





insisting that they were nothing but a ‘future frill’. It’s possible that they, like the designers of the past, had naively assumed that people of the future would actually stop driving and get *out* of the car to drink. Fancy that!

It took a high-profile lawsuit involving fast-food giant McDonald’s in 1994 for the humble cup holder to become as ubiquitous as it is today. 79-year-old Stella Liebeck sued McDonald’s after spilling scorching hot coffee on her lap while sitting in the passenger seat of her son’s car (a 1989 Ford Probe that clearly did not have cup holders) and suffering 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns. This case had three major outcomes: Stella Liebeck received a large stack of green from McDonald’s in compensation, all hot beverages in America now carry the helpful warning label “Caution: contents hot”, and car manufacturers finally sat up and took notice. Cup holders today are standard even in most entry-level models – and rightly so, if you ask me.

Just how crucial these vehicular beverage holders actually are was highlighted to me just a few weeks ago, while on an impromptu pre-sunrise classic car run. Picture the idyllic scene: The Driver and I, setting off in his cherished classic firecracker, ready for the open road, adventure and Instagram-worthy photo opportunities. The first stop, of course, was at the nearest coffee shop (admittedly the only one that was open at such an

ungodly hour on a weekend morning). While The Driver filled the car’s tank and tinkered importantly under the bonnet, I set off to order two of the largest, frothiest caffeinated beverages known to man. It all went horribly wrong, though, when I attempted an ill-advised balancing act of coffee cups, hand bag and sunglasses while sliding gingerly into the low-slung seat. As I watched in horror, the contents of one of these mammoth-sized cups flooded the foot well of the passenger side in dramatic slow motion. Had there been even one cup holder present, this disaster could have been easily averted. Alas, car makers of the ‘70s did not have this foresight and the result was a sticky experience for my feet and no coffee for me – not to mention a most awfully vexed Driver.

Luckily for me, the designers of my (modern) car must share my enthusiasm for on-board refreshment and installed an extremely conveniently-located cup holder that is so close to the steering wheel that it barely requires me to move my hand off it. And its proximity to the aircon vent means I can keep my cold drinks cool or quickly bring hot drinks down to drinkable temperatures (in the case of boiling hot coffee à la McDonald’s). So no matter what, my drink is always in safe hands. My cup runneth over. 🍷

Alas, car makers of the ‘70s did not have this foresight and the result was a sticky experience for my feet and no coffee for me



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
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