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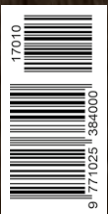
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## PETAL TO THE METAL

**T**o celebrate the arrival of spring we've jumped in and given the October issue a somewhat floral theme, with two articles that feature vehicles with flower names: the locally-built Protea and the Lotus, which to the best of our knowledge are the only two botanically-titled cars made. Do you agree? If you can think of any more then drop us a mail.

In the Protea article we team up the one-off aluminium racer with an MGA Twin Cam – a natural comparison when you see that these were the actual cars that shared the podium in the 1959 Hesketh 6 Hour.

Sivan Goren's Lotus story celebrates 60 years of the acclaimed Seven with a look into the early car years of Colin Chapman and how pushing motorsport and design boundaries resulted in arguably the most copied machine of all time – imitation is the sincerest form of flattery after all, isn't it? We take a look at a trio of Group N race car replicas that show off some spring colours and raise the question of whether this is the way forward in historic

racing on the local front.

The birthday wishes continue with Graeme Hurst tracking TVR's 70-year history. Oh yes, and the rather bizarre rotary-engined NSU Ro80 covered on page 52 also reaches a milestone – 50 years.

Mike Monk tests a 1922 AC Model 12 before getting stuck into part two of his personality piece on Mario Massacurati. Gavin Foster looks at Katja Poensgen, the only female to have scored points in World Championship 250cc Grand Prix motorcycle racing, and Jake Venter conducts a fictitious interview with Gottlieb Daimler of Mercedes-Benz founding fame.

Regular spots are kept for Terry Illman's Classic Rally Class report, a Carbs & Coffee visit, classified adverts, a scale model fit for any Christmas list and of course your letters – please keep them, and any correspondence, coming to info@classiccarafrica.com as this is just as much your publication as it is ours.

Let's keep talking cars, bikes, people and Africa.

**Stuart**



## OILY RAGS TO RICHES



One of the country's most original classic car events, the annual Oily Rag Run, will take place on Sunday 22 October. The brainchild of FMM's consultant engineer Dickon Daggitt and co-sponsored by FMM and classic car specialists Crossley & Webb, the run is for pre-1967 unrestored cars and will start at the museum and take in a scenic route of 125km to C&W's showrooms in the Gardens, Cape Town. The event always manages to attract an eclectic mix of vehicles and usually one or two 'never been seen before' entries.

After a coffee and croissant breakfast, entrants will depart FMM at 09h30 and follow a schedule taking the vehicles across the Cape through the Perdeberg to the West Coast towards Milnerton, then along the coastline into Cape Town. Lunch will be served at Crossley & Webb to the accompaniment of some live, big band melodies,

followed by a prize giving. Apart from the FMM prize for the most original car taking part, the C&W Skorokoro Shield will be awarded to the 'most oily rag car' (ie, the tattiest) as voted for by the competitors. Adding to the Oily Rags will be Glad Rags – entrants will be encouraged to dress up in some swing era costumes, clothes that were popular during the big band jazz period from 1935 to 1946.

Cost is R300 for the car, driver and navigator, which covers refreshments at FMM and lunch. Additional passengers can take part at R150/head. Non-competitors can also join in the before-and-after activities but only if registered through an entry. Costs are R60/head for the start (including breakfast) and R100/head for the finish (including lunch). This year a new feature will be a cruise bus provided by RockStarCars. The classic 35-seater Bedford will collect VIP guests at C&W, transport them to FMM for breakfast and the start, follow the route and return to C&W for lunch and the prize giving. Cost for this VIP travel option is R200/person.

Application for entry forms can be obtained from Brian James on 082 552 0586 or e-mail [brian@brabek.co.za](mailto:brian@brabek.co.za).

## IN THE GROOVE TOO

In the second round of FMM's slot car challenge evenings, 14 competitors took part. The race format was for each driver to have three minutes to put in as many laps as they could, one session in the inside lane, another in the outside. From the combined total, the fastest drivers moved through other rounds to a final. As the evening progressed, the competition got steadily hotter. At the end the surprised winner was curator Wayne Harley and his Fiat Abarth with 61 laps, who beat Marius Brink and his Ferrari 550 by just one lap. Fastest lap went to young Günther Ras with his Audi R8 in 4.6 seconds.

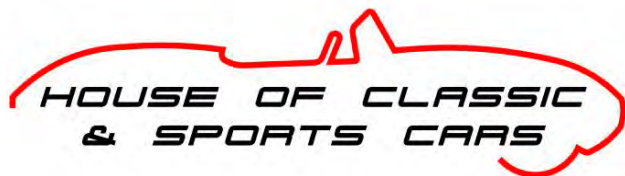
The track and accessories have been donated to FMM by Jon Lederle, who has established numerous club circuits and is a leading light in the hobby.



### 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. Visiting is currently by appointment only – phone (021) 874 9002 to make a reservation. Opening hours until November are – Monday to Friday 10h00 to 17h00 (last admittance 16h00), Saturday and Sunday 10h00 to 16h00 (last admittance 15h00). 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 Deli offers refreshments and a selection of wines produced by Anthonij Rupert Wyne.





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**ALSO AVAILABLE:** 1965 Ford Mustang (Pony), 1970 Mercedes-Benz 280SL Pagoda, 1930's Chevrolet Phaeton (Project), 1954 Chevrolet 3100 Truck, 1975 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, 1968 Jaguar Heritage Mk2 240, 1954 MG TF, 1996 Porsche 993 Targa, 1964 Porsche 356C, 2004 BMW M3 Cabriolet, 1957 Porsche 356 Speedster (Replica), 1953 Mercedes-Benz 300 Adenauer, 1991 Merlin TF2000 (Morgan Kit Car), 1985 Naylor "TF"-1700, 1988 Jaguar XJS V12, 1999 Mercedes-Benz CLK230 Compressor, 1934 Ford Roadster (Streetrod) and 1965 MG 1100.



# 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.classiccarafrica.com](http://www.classiccarafrica.com)) please submit details along with an image or two to [stuart@classiccarafrica.com](mailto:stuart@classiccarafrica.com).

## OCTOBER

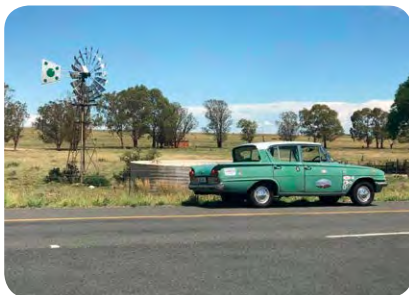
1	POMC Aircooled Show	Pretoria
1	Classics in the Bay	Cape Town
7	Welkom Cars in the Park – HTS Sports Ground	Welkom
14	SA Endurance Series 3 Hour – Aldo Scribante Race Track	Port Elizabeth
15	Killarney Classic Car Show	Cape Town
28	Historic Tour – Red Star Raceway	Delmas
29	Studebaker Club Show Day	Irene

## 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
19	Century Classic Car Run	Cape Town
25	Xtreme Festival – Zwartkops Raceway	Pretoria
26	Blairgowrie Toy Fair	Blairgowrie

## DECEMBER

2	Historic Tour – Kyalami Race Track	Kyalami
16	Mossel Bay Wheels Gathering	Mossel Bay



## 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, Durban



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## 3<sup>RD</sup> CENTURY CLASSIC CAR RUN

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Classic Car Run, organised by the Triumph Sports Car Club (with support from Century City and Western Province Motor Club) takes place on 19 November 2017. The event combines motoring fun and generosity, with funds gathered via donation going to the Children's Hospital Trust. Eligibility criteria: minimum age of the vehicle must be 25 years and the total age of the car and driver must equal or exceed a century. From the meeting point at Century City, cars will travel a route of 100km to the finish at Killarney Race Track (veteran cars get a shorter route). The number of participants is limited to 100 vehicles and R100 donation is required.

Certificates will be awarded as follows:

100 - 124 years	Bronze Certificate
125 - 149 years	Silver Certificate
150 - 174 years	Gold Certificate
175 - 199 years	Platinum Certificate
200+ years	Methuselah Award

Entrants should register individually, requesting an entry form from Tom Dougan on [3rdcenturyclassiccarrun@gmail.com](mailto:3rdcenturyclassiccarrun@gmail.com) by 10 November 2017. Members of the public are welcome to come along and see an eclectic mix of motoring heritage and there's no charge to see the cars or even to take a selfie.



## CLASSIC ONLINE SHOPPING

South Africa's The Float Chamber Speed-Shop has launched its website and online shop that not only gives you weekly local classic motoring stories to read but also offers niche motoring products for purchase at the click of a button. Whether it's the goodies needed to maintain and service your older machine, driving gloves, jackets, clothing, watches or motoring art, this is the place to shop. With Christmas rapidly approaching it's worth a browse.

Go to [www.thefloatchamber.com](http://www.thefloatchamber.com) to start.

## VOLVO SAAMTREK

Have a classic Volvo? Then October is the month to pack your bags and join the Volvo Club South Africa's 36<sup>th</sup> annual National Saamtrek to Aldam Estate Resort – just outside Ventersburg. Running from 20 to 22 October it is a weekend of like-minded people and some of Sweden's finest machinery. In order to participate and for further details on the event join the Volvo Club of South Africa at [www.volvoclub.co.za](http://www.volvoclub.co.za).







# MOTORSPORT FESTIVAL



# 4 NOVEMBER

INCORPORATING THE EXTREME FESTIVAL

Kyalami Motorsport Festival is back with action packed racing on the 4th of November at the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit. The Motorsport Festival will incorporate a round of the Extreme Festival providing a full programme of action packed 2 and 4 wheeled circuit racing action.

Categories racing on the day will include Sasol Global Touring Cars, Engen Volkswagen Cup, Investchem Formula 1600, Hankook Formula Vee, the G&H Transport Extreme Supercars, 111 Sports & Saloons, AutObarn Superhatch, VW Challenge, Red Square Kawasaki ZX10, Bridgestone Challenge, Thunderbikes and Sub 10. The rolling thunder V8 Supercars will once again return making a guest appearance at Kyalami with around 15 cars.

The embankments offer breathtaking views of the Circuit and visitors are encouraged to bring and braai. A grid walk will take place during lunch time whereby the general public may meet the drivers, and see the race cars up-close on the starting line.

The Kyalami Motorsport Festival promises to be a great family day out celebrating local motorsport.

**General access:** starting at R50\*  
**Premium package:** starting at R400\*  
**Pit Pass:** R75\*

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\* Ticket prices will be released in four phases. Phase 1 tickets are limited to 1500 for General Access and 200 for the Premium Package.



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# DELIVERING THE GOODS

September was one of those really rewarding months, with a number of fresh classics leaving the workshop and going home with the owners. There is not much better than seeing a client's eyes light up as they see their car, now gleaming, for the first time in ages. With so many leaving this month, spring at Dino's was a smiley place to be. More good news is that as we've delivered finished vehicles, so new clients have dropped off some new projects to sink our teeth into. So we are smiling too, looking forward to finding solutions to the challenges that always arise with classic jobs and turning a client's vision into reality. Of course there's the less glamorous, somewhat slow and tedious preparation work, but we know that this is what makes or breaks a restoration project so we push on through, dedicated to delivering the exceptional.

Initial assessments have been done to a barn find-looking MGB GT, Porsche 911 Targa and Ford Capri and we await the go-ahead from the clients. As many of you will know, restoring a classic is often a game of hurry up and wait and it's no different for the Dodge Polara and Jaguar E-Type you would have seen in previous months – the wait being for replacement parts on order from the USA and UK respectively. Another project sitting in limbo is a hulking great Chevrolet C10 truck that the owner is customising. The cab is off for repairs and priming before it and the loadbin get dummy installed to see if it fits the heavily modified underpinnings and modern Chevrolet Lumina engine. When we are happy with that the bodywork will come back off for more prepping, paint and detailing. This is going to be a cool project and one worth following.



Ready to rock. The client took delivery of this striking black Corvette Stingray. It arrived in one colour and left another. Being older fibreglass, it had numerous imperfections and even the odd warping but was stripped down to basics, repaired and then shot in black. We handled the final assembly, including fitting the imported red upholstery kits ordered, and the client drove it off.



Another car that arrived one colour and left another. This Alfa Spider arrived in red but the owner wanted to revert back to the original white. With Glasurit's Classic Car Colors library we were able to accomplish this. We replaced all the rotten metal with new and had the upholstery and soft top redone before putting the car back together for the client.



This Dodge Charger went through a full package deal in the workshop. Initially it was just going to be a colour swap but once we uncovered some hidden rot the decision was made to go the whole hog. All bodywork indiscretions were cut out and replaced. The engine bay was tidied up and so too was the interior. And almost immediately after the client collected the finished product, it hit the classic car show circuit.



This '65 Mustang had some rust. But all-new metal is now in place, new paint on and the panels fit like a glove. It's in the polishing bay now so will be ready for the client to take home and assemble in a day or two. Knowing him, and his passion for detail, we know this Notchback 'Stang will be world-class quality.



Last month we painted our own BMW 3.0CSi and, seeing the beautiful lines in fresh paint, couldn't contain ourselves. So we've got stuck into it and made some progress. The suspension has been refurbished and we've already fitted both front and rear. With the hubs, brake callipers, discs and booster in place we are now running the new brake lines up to the engine bay. We are also on the hunt for the correct tan upholstery material. If anyone has any leads on this, please shout.



This Beetle is the third one to come from the same client. He finds reasonably sound cars, strips them, takes them off the pan and then we get to do the bodywork. Once done the client collects and assembles himself. We are busy taking the old paint off to uncover any issues and so far this looks like a well preserved example of the legendary air-cooled machine.



This genuine Porsche 356 arrived as a driving concern in surprisingly good structural and mechanical shape for its age. We stripped off the trim and are fixing any minor body faults before giving it a fresh coat of the original blue colour. Once done we'll do all the panel fitting, assembly and trim fitment so the client can drive it out of here like he drove it in.



Progress on the super rare Maserati Indy continues. As it is a long-term project, we are coating it in primer as we go along – this stops any surface corrosion and grease building up. It now has new floors, sills, door skins, rear-wheel arch sections and spare wheel well. There are a few more areas that need attention and then we will start the final prep for paint and check in with the owner on colour choice.



The rust in the boot that plagued this Mercedes-Benz 450SLC is now a thing of the past. We've cut it all out and then shaped and replaced with new metal. The rest of the body was taken back to a level where we were happy there was nothing horrible left hidden and it is now in the final stage of preparation before the original gold colour is applied. We will assemble this one.





## JAGUAR'S ELECTRIC BEAUTY

Electric vehicles are all the rage at the moment, and while exciting in terms of technological wizardry they more often than not leave much to be desired in the passion, pedigree or classically beautiful department. But that has all just changed with Jaguar Land Rover Classic Works in Coventry recently unveiling one of the classiest electric convertibles we've seen or are likely to see in the future. Enter the Jaguar E-Type Zero...

The E-Type Zero is a restored Series 1.5 Roadster and is totally original other than its 21<sup>st</sup> century powertrain, LED headlights, modified instrumentation and fascia. While it might not sound as good as the



original Jaguar E-Type it is quicker, with a zero to 100km/h sprint of 5.5 seconds.

The Jag E-Type Zero's lithium-ion battery pack that has the same dimensions as the original XK 6-cylinder engine used in the E-Type, and a similar weight. The battery sits under the long bonnet and the electric motor behind the battery pack, in the same location as the gearbox on the E-Type. A new driveshaft sends power to a carry-over differential and final drive and the total weight is about 45kg less than the original. When fully charged, which take 6 to 7 hours, the 40kWh battery will get you 274km.

## BMW SA BUYS ART

26 years ago Esther Mahlangu, a South African Ndebele artist, was the first woman to create artwork on a BMW 525i sedan, turning it into a unique and colourful BMW Art Car. In 2016 Esther was once again commissioned by the BMW Group to refine a BMW 7 Series. The vehicle was on display at the Frieze Art Fair which took place in London in 2016. Simultaneously, the original BMW 525i Art Car was part of the exhibition called 'South Africa: the art of a nation' at the British Museum, functioning as a significant piece and highlighting Esther Mahlangu's key role in South African art.

BMW Group South Africa is now the proud owner of Esther's specially commissioned BMW panels painted in Ndebele art, which have been installed into a new BMW 750Li Individual. The vehicle will form part of BMW Group South Africa's Heritage Collection and will be utilised as a display vehicle at various arts & cultural events, with the blessing of Esther Mahlangu, in order

to preserve her cultural heritage for the people of South Africa.

"I am so glad that BMW brought my art back to South Africa, it is a beautiful car to be shared with the people of South Africa for many years to come," says Esther. "The patterns I have used on the BMW panels marry tradition to the essence of BMW. When BMW sent me the panels to paint, I could see the design in my head and I just wanted to get started! I started by painting the small ones first to get the feel of the surface and then it was easy as the design follows the lines of the panels," she adds.

Mr Tim Abbott, CEO of BMW Group South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, is proud that Esther's work will now be preserved in her home country. "We are delighted to share Esther's legacy with the people of South Africa. Esther embraces her traditional heritage passionately and has dedicated her entire life to the development and promotion of Ndebele art."





# ALFA 33 STRADALE CELEBRATES

One of Alfa Romeo's most iconic cars, the 33 Stradale was first presented on 31 August 1967, offering the near-perfect blend of the racing world and road-going cars. To commemorate 50 years of this timeless Franco Scaglione creation, the Museo Storico Alfa Romeo in Arese is holding a temporary exhibition, a 33-step itinerary that retraces their history, the leading characters involved, and the success achieved.

Starting, naturally, from the prototype of the 33 Stradale, prominently positioned on permanent exhibition in the Museum in front of the illuminated Alfa Romeo DNA display, the exhibition continues with five of the six concept cars derived from the 33 chassis, followed by the 33/2 Daytona, 33/3, 33 TT12 and 33 SC12 turbo racing cars, cementing a history that has had a lasting influence on all Alfa Romeo cars, from 1967 to the present day.

The exhibition, curated by the Museo Storico in Arese, is entitled 33 La bellezza necessaria (33 Necessary Beauty) and is the first of a programme of events the Arese Museum, the Alfa Romeo brand and FCA Heritage will be dedicating to the 33 Stradale's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Underlining the bond between history, an endless source of inspiration for the creation of new models, and the future; balancing innovation with the conservation of the genetic heritage that gives every Alfa Romeo model its uniquely recognisable identity.



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## SHOE-HORNING TRADITION

South Africa has a proud history of taking relatively tame showroom machinery and squeezing in a bigger engine under the hood in the quest for more power. And in one of the coolest moves in recent times this trend continues with the launch of the RTR (Road To Race) outfit and its mind-boggling RTR Ranger and Mustang offerings.

Comprising a trio of Ford Rangers and a Mustang, the RTR range is topped by a pair of 500kW supercharged V8s (RTR Ranger 660 and RTR Mustang). There's also a 325kW V8 RTR Ranger 415 and a 185kW RTR Ranger 250 powered by a warmed 3.2-litre Ford turbo diesel mill. Power is nothing without control and RTR handle this with all of the above seeing various level upgrades to the chassis, suspension, drivetrain and brakes. A few aerodynamic enhancements continue the power theme and the interior trim sees some tweaking.

Designed, developed and built by Justin Price's Port Elizabeth-

based Hi-tech Automotive, with input from powersport ace Peter Lindenberg, the RTR Ranger range is covered by an RTR 4-year/120 000km warranty, while the RTR Mustang has a 3-year/60 000km RTR warranty. RTR machines will be sold and maintained via a network of countrywide Road To Race dealerships.



## THE RIGHT STUFF

Choosing the correct oil for your classic is a hotly contested subject amongst the enthusiast group. Thankfully Motul, the oldest lubricant company around, has gone to the effort of taking the confusion out of the debate with its Classic range. By designing and employing new techniques, Motul Classic lubricants protect historic cars from a range of eras and, together with a fuel stabiliser and valve lubricant, are now available in South Africa:

### 20W50

- Lubricant specially designed for engines built between 1950 and 1970
- Mineral multigrade lubricant with middle detergent level, compatible with elastomer gaskets
- 20W50 oil meets standards of the 1950 - 1970 period (API SF/CC) while benefiting from the advanced technology of the Motul lubricants
- Viscosity perfectly suitable for narrowed running clearances of the engine, due to significant progress at the time in regard to metallurgy, casting and machining
- Anti-corrosion and anti-wear properties.

### 2100 15W50

- Updated version of the 1966-developed 2100 – the first semi-synthetic lubricant in the automotive market
- Developed for naturally-aspirated and turbocharged original engines built after 1970
- Semi-synthetic lubricant, formulated with modern technology detergent level
- 2100 15W50 meets recent standards (API SH/CF) and offers a better cold viscosity in order to reduce wear during engine start
- Lubricant reinforced with a synthetic base (oxidation stability) allowing stay-in-grade viscosity for a continuous engine oil pressure.



### SAE 30

- Lubricant suitable for engines as well as gearboxes built between 1900 and 1950
- Mineral monograde lubricant with very low detergent level for complete compatibility with paper/felt/fabric gaskets
- Low detergent level avoids soot and deposits removing in the lubricating circuit
- Can be used as break-in oil if drain intervals are shortened
- Complete compatibility with nonferrous metals such as brass, bronze, copper
- Reinforced adherence for easier start even after a long period of immobilisation.

### SAE 50

- Designed for engines and gearboxes built between 1900 and 1950
- Mineral monograde lubricant with very low detergent level for complete compatibility with paper/felt/fabric gaskets
- Can be used as break-in oil if drain intervals are shortened
- Complete compatibility with nonferrous metals such as brass, bronze, copper
- Reinforced adherence for easier start even after a long period of immobilisation.

To see what your machine requires visit the oil selector on [www.motul.com](http://www.motul.com).

## CONCOURS SA DATES ANNOUNCED

With around 80 classic cars and an enthusiastic crowd on hand, the recent 2017 Concours was bigger and better than ever. With the momentum in full swing the organisers have already announced the date for the 2018 affair. If you are keen on entering, now is the time to start planning your angle of attack and pulling some long garage hours building, spitting and polishing. Mark your diary for 10 to 12 August 2018.





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## AMG HITS HALF A CENTURY

AMG – worldwide these three letters stand for supreme automotive performance, exclusivity, efficiency and highly dynamic driving pleasure. In 2017, the company founded by Hans-Werner Aufrecht and Erhard Melcher is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In the course of this half-century, Mercedes-AMG has recorded numerous successes in motorsport and through the development of unique road-going vehicles, cemented its position as a highly successful performance brand.

Today, as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Daimler AG, the Affalterbach-based company represents the sporting spearhead of the group. What began as a two-man company now sees around 1 500 employees, but the focus, through the use of cutting-edge technology and a passion for dynamic, emotively appealing products, still has delivering 'Driving Performance' at the core.

Hans-Werner Aufrecht and Erhard Melcher set up their first workshop in an old mill in 1967 as an engineering office and design and testing centre for the development of racing engines. In 1971, the AMG

300 SEL 6.8 of Aufrecht and Melcher, Großaspach (AMG), claimed an out-the-blue victory in class and second place overall in the Spa-francorchamps 24-hour race. With the ball rolling developments flowed fast, and to carry this out a plant in Affalterbach was founded in 1976. In 1984, Melcher independently developed a cylinder head with four-valve technology, the innovative engine being used as a 5.0-litre V8 in the Mercedes-Benz 500 SEC and the principle of 'one man, one engine' was born – and continues today. This engine found its way into the AMG version of the S-Class as well as the mid-sized W124 saloon, which by thumping out 265kW (360hp), was soon christened 'The Hammer' by the media and became part of folklore. If this wasn't enough brand building exposure, in '88 AMG not only constructed Mercedes-Benz 190E racing cars, but was also responsible for their deployment in the German Touring Car Championship (DTM). The 190's winning ways are still remembered today by fans the world over.

Close collaboration with Mercedes-Benz began in

earnest during 1990, and from 1991 AMG embarked on the development and production of sports versions of Mercedes-Benz vehicles, with the C36 AMG of 1993, the first vehicle on the market to result from the collaboration agreement with Daimler-Benz. With sales of 5 000 units up to 1997, it became the first best-seller. And the rest, as they say, is history. DaimlerChrysler owned 51% of Mercedes-AMG by 1999 and the likes of the supercharged C32 AMG thrilled off the bat. In 2005, Mercedes-AMG became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Daimler AG and the flow of AMG Mercs has flowed thick and fast ever since. Unveiled in 2009, the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG was the first vehicle to be developed entirely in-house by the sportscar and performance brand. The sound, along with uncompromising driving dynamics and iconic gull-wing doors, found fans around the world.

And the flow of performance models has continued at a rapid pace since, with almost 100 000 units hitting the road to date, and Mercedes-AMG celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> on the back of a new sales record.



## GREEN TYRES

The Goodyear Tyre & Rubber Company is harvesting some unique 'seeds' of innovation as it introduces a new tyre technology with support from the United Soybean Board (USB). A team of scientists and engineers created a tread compound, or formulation, using soybean oil, which is naturally-derived, cost-effective, carbon-neutral and renewable. By employing soybean oil in tyres, it found a new way to help keep the rubber compound pliable in changing temperatures, a key performance achievement in maintaining and enhancing the vehicle's grip on the road surface.

Tests have shown rubber made with soybean oil mixes more easily in the silica-reinforced compounds used in manufacturing certain tyres. This also improves manufacturing efficiency and reduces energy consumption. The commercialisation of soybean oil in tyres is the latest technology breakthrough by Goodyear, building on the company's other recent innovations, such as

the use of silica derived from rice husk ash. It is also another component Goodyear is using in certain consumer tyres, along with current and past uses of components such as carbon fibre, DuPont Kevlar, volcanic sand and more.





# FORD LAUNCHES LE MANS TRIBUTE

Although the chances of seeing one in SA are slim, the news that Ford will release a limited Heritage edition 2018 Ford GT is exciting to us classic buffs as it once again shows that manufacturers care about the past. The latest offering honours the GT40 Mark IV race car driven to victory by the all-American team of Dan Gurney and A.J. Foyt at Le Mans in 1967.

The Ford GT '67 Heritage edition features a gloss-finish Race Red exterior with white stripes and exposed carbon package as well as Frozen White No.1 nose and door graphics, and 20-inch one-piece forged aluminium wheels in silver satin clear coat with black lug nuts. Red callipers and silver rear-view mirror caps complete the look.

The interior begins with new leather trim for the carbon fibre seats, with red accent stitching, which carries over to the steering wheel. The seatbelt webbing is now red and the paddle shifters are anodised grey. Satin dark stainless appliques are used on the instrument panel, door register bezels and x-brace. Rounding out modifications to the '67 Heritage edition car are a unique serialised identification plate, plus exposed matt carbon fibre door sills, air register pods and centre console.

The Ford GT '67 Heritage edition can be viewed at [www.FordGT.com](http://www.FordGT.com) using the configuration tool. Limited quantities will be available for the 2018 model year.



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restored to a high standard. R1,95m



1982 BMW 7 Series Manual. An original  
car in immaculate condition. 81,701km  
R280 000



# THE FUTURE IS SOCIAL

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Vintage and Veteran Club Heritage Car and Bike Show, held in conjunction with Craft Restaurant, was once again a magical time warp scene that not only gave owners the chance to fire up their machines, but also exposed the general public to the wonders of vintage, veteran and classic machinery. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Parkhurst was chock-a-block with older model machinery. The weather played along and patrons (of all ages) from the numerous sidewalk cafés spent hours walking up and down ogling the masterpieces on display, admiring some of the participants' period clothing and the Jeppe Pipe Band that delivered the acoustic backdrop.

One only has to look at the Twitter, Facebook and Instagram posts of the day to realise that it's not just the old-timers that appreciate these machines. And this appreciation is guaranteed to deliver some new vintage, veteran and classic car fans in the near future. It is social events like these, open to Joe Public, that will ensure the passion for older cars and bikes continues in the hands of future generations. We doff our top hats to the organiser Paul Koski, the VVC and Craft Restaurant for the vision and planning that go into this must-do motoring event every year. 📸





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COUNTRY WIDE





# FASHION DRIVEN

All jackets are proudly handmade in South Africa. There is no mass production and the leather used is naturally tanned, which gives each unit its own individuality and unique look and feel

As a kid **Stuart Grant** used to page through his old man's collection of UK classic car magazines. The process was simple: start at the back page and flip through the classified section to look at the cars for sale. Dream a little... and then come back to reality with a thud when calculating the costs of these in Rand. But there was one almost affordable item that appeared month after month, year after year – but it wasn't a car. The image was of a man standing alongside a bi-plane – sadly not for sale – and wearing an aviator jacket, the item that *was* for sale, complete with lamb's wool collar. The dreaming started again, with visions of blasting down a country road in a pre-war racer, protected from the elements by the classic jacket.

**S**adly the newspaper delivery round didn't bring in enough loot to buy this bit of practical fashion, and years of hunting for a local version came to nought. Until a month back that is, when by chance I stumbled across a biker sporting a jacket that looked like he'd mugged the pilot in the back of the old publications. Of course I had to ask, and his answer came as music to my ears.

"Yes, they are available locally – in fact they are made locally."

I took down the details immediately and made contact with the operation that manufactures them – Old School Industries. Born in 2016, with the aim of producing high quality classic leather jackets and apparel, the owners are seriously passionate and the business has grown quickly, expanding to deliver a varied range of leather jacket styles, gloves and more. With something to appeal to everyone, the focus is on bringing quality retro jackets to the local market at affordable prices. As a result, all jackets are proudly handmade in South Africa. There is no mass production and the leather used is naturally tanned, which gives each unit its own individuality and unique look and feel.

Going to the showroom to try on an aviator-style jacket was maybe not the best idea. Because now one of the retro driving versions has also made the






list of wants. A wise man would say go for the aviator as the 100% sheep skin collar is removable, but I'm not that wise and want both for different occasions. Try on any one of these two or the third product in the range (a lummie jacket) and the quality becomes even more apparent. There's lots of weight to the product – understandable when you learn that a full cow hide per jacket is used and there is no building up of the leather or splicing of the hide.

Of course with these manufacturing skills at hand, Old School Industries are also able to offer clients fully customised jackets either as one-offs or branded to suit their club or company. But be sure to get your orders in early as the process takes two to three weeks.

The showroom is fully stocked with the entire range of jackets and apparel and is open weekdays during office hours or by appointment on weekends. Pay them a visit, enjoy a cup of coffee overlooking the practice green and try on some jackets. If you are further afield, visit their website [www.oldschooljackets.com](http://www.oldschooljackets.com) or follow @oldschooljackets on Facebook.

They are also on the lookout for like-minded companies to act as distributors, where the quality retro feel of their brand will add to the current businesses or stock offerings. 



**Old School Industries are also able to offer clients fully customised jackets either as one-offs or branded to suit their club or company**

## GORDINI GREATS

Dear Stuart,

It is great to see the response to your articles and letters about Renault Gordinis and the people who raced them. I hope that you manage to interview Angelo Pera and other people who were involved at the time because, as matters stand, our generation doesn't have much information about that era. We were little kids at the time!

As great a car as the Gordini is, it didn't achieve the level of success in endurance racing around the world that it achieved in South Africa. For example, in 1966, Minis took the first nine places in the Bathurst 500 in Australia, yet that year a Gordini came 5<sup>th</sup> at the Kyalami 9 Hour (the first saloon car) with the nearest Mini placing only 9<sup>th</sup> and 12 laps behind. On the other hand, Bob Watson won the 1970 Australian Rally Championship in a Gordini.

What this says to me is that it is really the people (and of course the money) behind a particular car that will make it great in motorsport, and that is why it is so interesting to find out about those people. (When it comes to Gordinis, names such as Geoff Mortimer, Chris Swanepoel, Spencer Shultze, Louis Cloete, Arnold Chatz and of course the Porter brothers come to mind.) Returning to Angelo Pera, the Renault 8 (which is a '64 or '65 1130, originally equipped with a 956cc motor) that I am building into a recreation of the winner of Class A in the 1968 Kyalami 9 Hour (driven by Scamp Porter and Chris Swanepoel) has AMW wheels!

I realise that I am very privileged to have the opportunity to undertake this project.

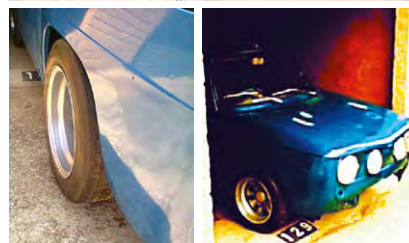
Unfortunately, progress has been delayed by various issues, but I attach some photos as I'm sure they will be of interest to you. I cut 10mm out of the top wishbones to get the right camber on the front wheels. (That was before I discovered that Scamp Porter simply heated up the uprights and bent them.) Also the droop stop pads have been beefed up with pieces of flat bar.

It might be a great idea to run a monthly feature on classic SA race cars with photo shoots and test drives at various tracks around the country.

Kind regards  
Philip Pritchard

*Awesome project Philip, thanks for letting us know. Interesting observation about the lower endurance racing success rate in other parts of the world. Maybe it all came down to our local gurus breathing on them? The author that penned the Gordini article spent years researching the South African Gordinis and has over time managed to get some from-the-horse's-mouth information. As mentioned by Ian Schwartz in last month's Letters section, Angelo Pera still lives in Gauteng and is in regular contact with John Myers of Protea fame. It would be great to talk to him about the Gordini rims as well as to John, who also raced the French machines locally. I have briefly chatted to John about the ingenious modifications he carried out on the R8 engine but plan to catch up some more with him, and hopefully Angelo too, in the near future.*

*Local track testing and photography is a top idea, and one that we are trying to follow up on. It isn't, however, always the easiest to coordinate with drivers, owners, tracks, cars and photographers*



*all needing to align at the same time. That said, a chance to blast on the road (with road-legal racers) never goes amiss as the story on the 1959 Hesketh 6 Hour podium finishers in this issue shows.*

*Thank you for the support, correspondence and encouragement and all the best for the Gordini race car build. Keep us in the loop.*  
Stuart

## PRETORIA MG INFO SOUGHT

Hello,

I am in the UK and own the 1947 MG that carried the old licence plate TP 188354. I am piecing together the history and have already found out some exciting facts about its time in South Africa. But there are some gaps in the history and I hope your readers might be able to help.

Attached is a photo of what this MG car would have looked like. At some point the car became the property of the late Neil Albertyn of Pretoria, who sold it on in 1967. Does anyone remember Neil Albertyn? I believe he may have passed away in the 1980s, but I cannot be certain. I would like to make contact with Neil's family members or friends who recall his time with the car and maybe have some pictures of it in a family photo album. I would also like

to make contact with anyone else who owned the car between 1947 and the 1960s.

Do we know who bought this red MG TC sports car new from McCarthy Rodway's dealership in Durban in 1947? Maybe your father, uncle or family friend? It's a long time ago now but I hope somebody may remember something. Any help with this quest would be greatly received. Please contact me at rogerbateman@rocketmail.com.

Thank you,  
Roger Bateman

*Hello Roger,  
I am sure we will be able to dig out some information on your MG TC. The MG Car Club is one of the largest clubs in SA and*

*has been around creating a register of cars and owners for decades. I will forward your request on to the club secretary and hopefully some memories will be triggered and you can complete the history of the machine.*  
Stuart





## FORD, AUTO RENAULT & TRAINS

Dear Stuart,

I read the letter from Mike Smith who would like to have spares for a 1963 Ford Corsair. I had a 1965 2-door 1500 which had a 120E engine to which I fitted a Meissner head and camshaft plus a 36 Weber DCD7 carburettor and branch exhaust manifold. It really was a great vehicle and the conversion was excellent. I still have a Ford workshop manual for it. If he is interested in reading through this manual he is welcome to contact me.

My first car was a Dauphine which had an automatic magnetic clutch that worked when the gears were changed with the gear lever.

1. The clutch plate was copper faced (non-magnetic).
2. The pressure plate was an electro magnet.

Unfortunately, the power came from the generator and because the bearings wore out and the commutator touched the field coils there was no more power. Therefore, one had to switch to the battery power which

gave the full 12 volts. The power came in so hard it broke the bellhousing and gearbox off the engine. It needed better control and an alternator. It was a very good idea at the time.

Spares were very expensive from Lawson Motors for Renault at that stage. Ford parts were half the price. As a result I purchased a Ford vehicle.

In conclusion, if you would like a real thrill get a ride on the footplate of a SAR 25 Class double headed at 120km/h.

Thanks for a great magazine.

Regards

Graham Armstrong

Hi Graham,

Thanks for the letter. I will start at the end. Yes please, a 120km/h dash in a locomotive would go down a treat. I will be in touch for sure.

The Corsair with Meissner work sounds like a delight. I started racing in a 1965 Mk1 Cortina GT 1500 and having a Meissner catalogue at my disposal would often page through it, wondering

what the various bits of tuning mastery would do to help reduce the lap time. I currently own a Renault R10 of the same era and can attest that the Cortina (or in your case Corsair) is a bit more viable as a classic. Ford spares are still easier to find and the larger engine and wider spread in the gear ratio department see to it that open road use is a bit more civilised. But call me a sucker for punishment... the Renault has grown on me and is staying, warts and all.

Interestingly, mine was also an automatic when new. I sat for hours wondering what the push button numbers on the dash were for before googling the 'complicated' ferromagnetic system. I'm still not sure I fully understand it though and the solenoid-operated butterfly that is used to regulate revs on gear change (which is still fitted in the inlet manifold) baffled even the most experienced mechanics when I complained the car felt choked.

I'd guess mine suffered a similar failure to yours and that is why a previous owner converted it to traditional manual operation.

Stuart

## UNIMOGGY

Hi,

Ek het die Unimog artikel gelees in die September *Classic Car Africa* en gedink ek stuur foto van my Unimog aan vir interessantheid.

Lekker aand.

Johan

*Dankie vir die fotos Johan. It amazes me to see how many of these large machines are in private hands. After all, a Unimog doesn't fit that easily in a regular home garage. The high percentage of them still around bears testament to the quality of the machines and the dedicated skills and passion that you and your fellow Unimoggers have. All the best and keep those big wheels rolling.*

Stuart



## REAL SAVING

Dear Editor,

Your September letters page has someone talking about the Meissner Escorts, including good old Y151, and states that they were eventually exported to the UK where they remain to this day. Is the writer really sure about that statement? I ask because I was rooting around in a private collector's sheds just the other day for fun, popping off some pictures, and took these ones.

At the time I was assured that all the cars in this guy's sheds were the genuine originals from their day that he has saved from destruction/export/abuse/dismantling.

The point is, these sheds with all these saved racing cars are most definitely right here in South Africa. Somebody has got some information wrong somewhere or else there is somebody producing some very convincing replicas of obscure South African race cars for no other reason than to just store them in dusty old sheds amongst piles and piles of other old motorsport junk collected from back in the day. Anybody else know anything different?

Cheers,

Gary Smith

*Good to hear from you, Gary, and glad you are still hunting out classics in barns throughout the land. The Y151 Escort you stumbled across*

*is indeed recognised as an original and this is shown in the article penned by Gerrie van Zyl in the August issue. The famous number used by Peter Gough was applied to two Mk2 Cortinas and a pair of Mk1 Escorts. The one Escort headed off to the UK but the other remains in the collection you saw. As far as I know the Sierra XR8 you see is also a genuine period racer known as 'The Animal' and was built and raced by Willie Hepburn back in the day. It sported a white with blue striping colour scheme originally.*

*The Lucky Strike car is the ex-Charlton March 76B, which has recently been restored and was given a shakedown at Dezzi Raceway in August.*

*A brilliant collection and hats off to the owner for preserving some of our proud local motorsport heritage.*

Stuart



## ALFA LEGENDS & A PRETENDER

Hi Stuart,

The September edition of *Classic Car Africa* was superb, to the point that I'm sending some copies to my friends overseas.

The article on the greatest driver ever, Tazio Nuvolari, and the 'interview' with Vittorio Jano really did it for me. Shame Jake Venter didn't ask him about the Bimotors of 1931 and 1935 that were technically years ahead, even by today's standards. Both were state-of-the-art, at a time when competition was a matter of technical geniuses! The engineers, technicians and drivers were not only talented, but passionate as well, at a time when computers and modern marketing didn't exist!

The piece by Eric Fletcher, 'Have the flowers all gone?' was very handy as currently I'm writing a piece on the TZ and TZ2. The TZ's (chassis 0017) original colour was actually a yellow green and it was repainted that colour when it left the country.

Recently there have been a number of articles on Renaults. Are you aware that the R8 was copied from the aborted Alfa Tipo 103 project of the mid-1950s? (See attached photograph). This four-door vehicle was roughly the size of a Mini, had a twin cam 900cc engine mounted transversally at the front and front-wheel drive. The radiator was at the front and the fan mounted on top of the gearbox.

Regards,  
Toy

Hi Toy,

Glad you enjoyed the issue. I've sent your note on to Jake Venter, let's see if he has anything up his sleeve regarding the 1931 and '35 Bimotors. The technical side is Jake's forte and I'm sure he'll jump right into the matter.

Yes, I agree on the TZ being of a yellow hue – in fact, I have colour video of the car showing this while at Kyalami in the hands of Robin Ellis. I hear the original engine block, which had been lost in SA, has recently gone to the current owner overseas.

As mentioned before, the Renault Gordini article's feedback and correspondence has been astonishing. The Tipo 103 Alfa project is a hot debate between my Alfisti friends. They are quick to point out that the

R8 Renault, launched in 1962, is based on the Tipo 103 of 1960. While I know this to be the case, I do as a fan of the French brigade have to offer a bit of resistance. My normal approach is to point out that like another performance great, they put the R8 engine in the back and drive went to the ground via the rear wheels. Oh, and for lightweight performance, Renault decided three wheel nuts per wheel was better than four.

But yes, amazing to see that even back then collaborations were happening between manufacturers. Wasn't the Giugiaro-designed Mk1 Volkswagen Golf originally intended for Alfa Romeo? I'm sure I've read this somewhere but for the life of me I can't find it.

Let me know if this rings a bell. Thanks for all the support, correspondence and sending the magazine overseas – we do post to various countries around the world, so get them to subscribe at [www.classiccarafrika.com](http://www.classiccarafrika.com) if that makes it easier for you.

Stuart



## HUNTING HONDAS

Dear Stuart,

I recently acquired this modified Honda S600 Coupé and am trying to piece together its history – maybe you or one of your readers could help? It has its original engine and gearbox but you'll notice that the front is quite different. Based on the chassis number, the car was built in 1966 and has probably also been white and then red during its lifetime. I'm also trying to research Honda S500/S600/S800s that came to South Africa, who originally brought them in and where they are now. I'd appreciate anyone with information getting in touch.

With thanks,  
Roy Dunster

A really interesting find there, Roy, well done. Let's put it out to the readers to see if they have any history on your particular car. Off the top of my head I know of two S600s and two S800s but have never seen a 500 locally. I have sent your mail to Roger McCleery, not only is he the voice of South



African motorsport but was also heavily involved in setting up dealerships here when the brand first arrived. His company car at the time was a GSM Dart though, so not sure if the cars were part of the local operation.

Stuart





**1970 Mercedes Benz 280SE**  
Ice white with Tan interior, 4 speed manual, exceptionally original and in perfect driving condition. **R250,000**



**1990 TVR S3 Cabriolet**  
Dark Metallic Blue with Tan interior, recent rebuild in 2015, excellent overall condition. **R295,000**



**1953 Jaguar XK120 DHC**  
British Racing Green with Green leather interior, matching numbers, concours restoration. **POA**



**1971 Volvo P1800E.**  
Beautifully restored using all new imported parts from Europe, extremely rare fuel injected model, immaculate. **POA.**



**2003 Porsche 911 996 Carrera 4S Coupe**  
Silver with black interior, 6 speed manual, FSH from Porsche, 75,000km. Immaculate. **R695,000**



**1974 Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV**  
Recent complete repaint in the original colour, original interior, engine rebuilt by local specialist, new wheels and tyres fitted. Lovely condition. **R295, 000**



**1988 Mercedes Benz 500SL**  
A/C, P/S, Electric windows, CD front loader, ABS. **R695,000**



**1958 MG A 1500 Roadster**  
Bare metal repaint. Matching numbers refurbished car with soft top, side screens, tonneau cover. **R395,000**



**1960 Chev El Camino**  
Absolutely stunning resto mod, too many extras to mention, RHD conversion. Call for more info. **POA**



**1962 Porsche 356B T6 LHD Coupe**  
Cream with brown interior, bare metal repaint and recently completed mechanical restoration. **R1,695,000**



**1971 Mercedes Benz 280SL 'Pagoda'**  
Silver with black interior, hard and soft top, FSH, owner's manuals, tools and jack. Exceptional condition. **POA - 2 others available**

### NEW STOCK COMING SOON:

1969 Jaguar E Type Series 2 FHC  
(in restoration, due September)

1969 VW Beetle Karmann  
Convertible (in restoration,  
due September)

1973 Jaguar E Type Series 3 FHC

2008 CAV GT40 Coupe

1969 Mercedes Benz 280SL Pagoda

JB Classic Cars have almost 60 years of combined experience in the sports, classic, collectible and muscle car market in South Africa. We specialise in sourcing and supplying the best classic we can find. If you have a classic, exotic, sports, or collectible car to sell, we

would love to hear from you. Based in Cape Town, South Africa, we operate locally, nationally and internationally and have a tried and tested network of service providers to assist with all your classic car requirements.



## HEADLIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION...

With fantastic scenery and plenty of blue skies – not to mention awesome driving roads and loads of classic cars to enjoy them with – Cape Town is home to a thriving and internationally-recognised film industry. One that churns out everything from still and filmed commercials, to movies and music videos, against all manner of backdrops. And plenty of those productions involve classic or supercars, either as the main feature or as props. And if they do, there's a good chance RockStarCars sourced them says **Graeme Hurst**.

**D**riving a Ford Model T through an Egyptian desert scene, tracking down the country's only white Lamborghini Aventador for a Pepsi Cola advert or arranging a black Pontiac GTO for a music video involving live rabbits being positioned on the car's bonnet at 4am for a mock shootout... just some typical days at the office for RockStarCars' proprietor Jason Furness.

"No two days are alike in this business as each shoot has its own requirements," explains Jason, who doesn't just source cars or bikes for a film set: his team will prepare them – even

to a specific colour with a vehicle wrap – and drive or transport them to the set location. And drive them on set too, if needed: "I'm often the only one that's insured to drive the car or the only one who knows how to drive it," adds Jason, who recently had to dress the part of a 1920s gentleman before he got behind the wheel of that Ford Model T – not the easiest of cars to operate – for last year's *Tutankhamun* adventure mini-series which was shot on the Namibian border.

More recently Jason found himself in the hot seat of a Ferrari F12 in a precision driving role that involved a dice through the Huguenot Tunnel with former SA Touring Car Champion Deon Joubert, behind the wheel of a Lamborghini Gallardo. That was for a European advert for a broadband provider

More recently Jason found himself in the hot seat of a Ferrari F12 in a precision driving role that involved a dice through the Huguenot Tunnel with former SA Touring Car Champion Deon Joubert





wanting to promote download speeds for online gaming.

And not all the shoots involve driving. "We do plenty of still shoots for overseas retailers like Marks & Spencer who maybe want a silver convertible for a model to pose next to or a period Airstream caravan as a backdrop for a swimwear advert or something." The Airstream is just one of around 800 privately-owned vehicles that RockStarCars has on its books for hire but the company does have several cars and bikes of its own that get used regularly, such as a mid-1990s Ford Crown Victoria 'cruiser', once a mainstay of US police departments.

"It's been painted yellow as a taxi cab and been given all sorts of police department badges," says Jason, who's had it kitted out

with flashing lights and a megaphone. The Crown Vic shares space in his Observatory, Cape Town workshop with a trio of Fiat 500s, a Renault 4 van and a pair of VW Splitties for which Jason – originally from England – has a particular affinity, thanks to his upbringing. "My Dad had a 23-window Combi which he used to drive down to Spain and my brother Scott's an expert on early VWs with his own parts specialist business," adds Jason, who grew up next door to the Brands Hatch circuit in the UK. "As a kid I used to jump over the circuit fence to see whatever was going on."

The exposure led to a life-long love of cars which was

The Airstream is just one of around 800 privately-owned vehicles that RockStarCars has on its books for hire but the company does have several cars and bikes of its own that get used regularly





fuelled when Jason, who was a professional kite surfer in his 20s, made it to Cape Town's shores for training: "I was blown away by the classic cars available here and the number of cool cars you didn't see in such good condition in Europe."

That was back in 2000, when he decided to call Cape Town home. Roll on a decade and a request to use a car he owned on a film set started the ball rolling for RockStarCars. "I had a guy hassling me for my 1957 Beetle Convertible to go on a shoot and I thought I'd go along and check it out. I watched how it all unfolded and how they looked after the car and I thought: 'this is an interesting industry but I can do the job better than these guys.'"

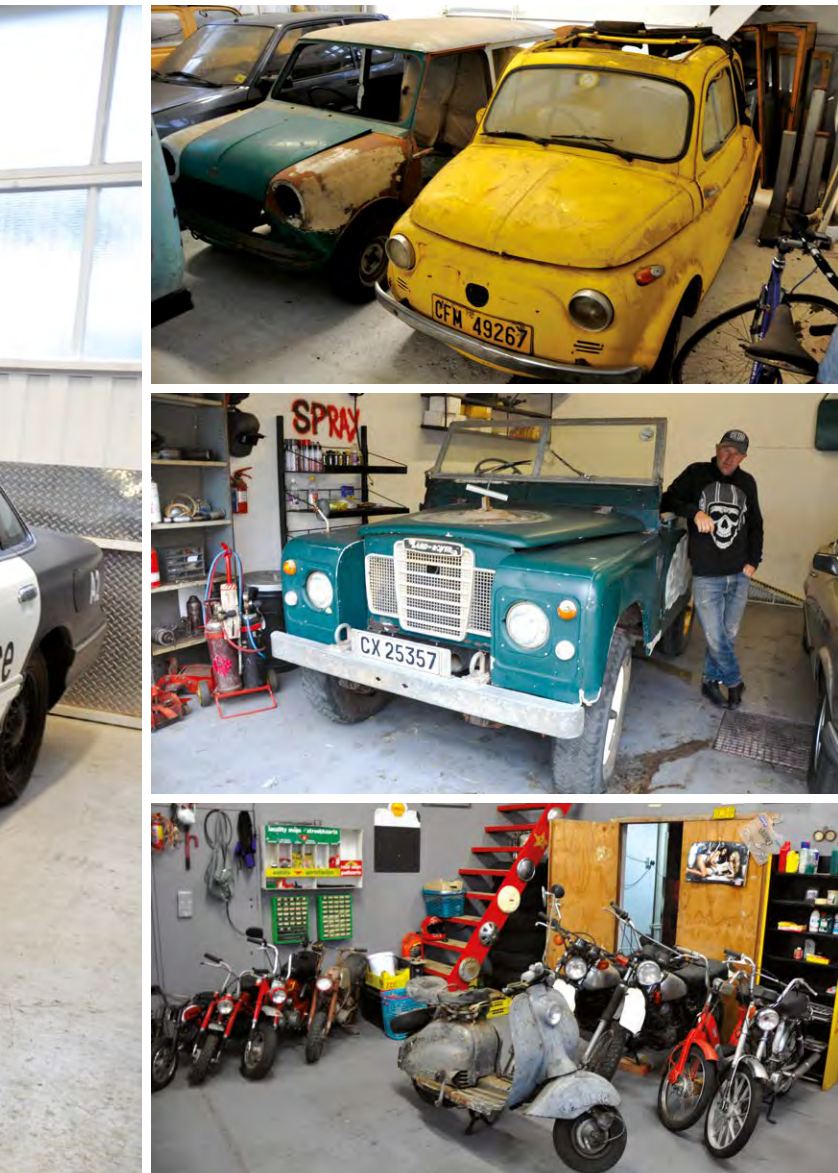
The last seven years have seen Jason get behind the

wheels of some amazing cars and travel to incredible locations. And he's met and trained some celebrity actors along the way, such as Sienna Miller who drove an early '50s Ford on the set of *The Girl*, a movie about Alfred Hitchcock's obsession with an actress while filming his seminal work, *The Birds*. "I ended up teaching her to drive as the car was left-hand drive and she's British." And being knowledgeable about classic cars is beneficial on set when it comes to knowing what can and can't be done: "I've had directors wanting to mount cameras on bodywork and so on but if it's aluminium or the owner won't allow it I've refused their request."

Getting the right cars to be in the right time and place with insurance is a serious logistics exercise, an aspect usually handled by his wife Charlotte. "We supplied cars for a traffic road safety video for the French

And he's met and trained some celebrity actors along the way, such as Sienna Miller who drove an early '50s Ford on the set of *The Girl*





government and it was shot on the road between Wellington and Paarl. We had 25 cars and trucks running one way and 25 running the other way and each one had to be sourced."

It's all part and parcel of running RockStarCars, which enjoys a good reputation amongst classic car owners and film agencies alike: "On a movie set 99% of the people involved are kissing up to the director and obviously you want the shoot to go well, but the person I need to look after is my client who's supplied the car because I'm only as good as my last job." It's a philosophy that's helped cement RockStarCars' success. "If we mess up an owner's car, word will get around very quickly." 📺

See [www.rockstarcars.co.za](http://www.rockstarcars.co.za) for more info or check out some videos on their YouTube channel by searching RockStarCars.











## AN EMPIRICAL AC

The company that provided the basis for the legendary Cobra was one of Britain's pioneering car makers and has an interesting history. **Mike Monk** takes a look at the Model 12, a vehicle that really helped establish the company's status.

**Pictures: Mike & Wendy Monk**



In motoring terms, the letters AC are generally twinned with Cobra, the renowned sportscar conceived when American Carroll Shelby approached the independent British company in 1961 to supply him with a car capable of accepting a V8 engine. AC obliged with a modified Ace 2-seater roadster and in 1962 the Cobra legend was born. By this time AC had been in existence for six decades and despite a turbulent early history, almost inevitable with small independent car makers in the industry's formative years, it produced some noteworthy vehicles. The Model 12 was one of them.

The origins of AC began in 1901 when John Weller set up a small workshop in West Norwood, London to support his passion for building cars. Weller was financed by a wealthy businessman, a butcher named John Portwine, and in 1903 the first car was produced. It was unveiled at Britain's first motor show, organised

by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), held at the Crystal Palace from 30 January to 7 February 1903, and was offered in 8, 10, 15 and 20 horsepower-rated engines. *Car* magazine dated 11 February stated, "A 20hp car built by Weller Brothers Ltd struck perhaps the only dominant note of all-round originality to be found in the exhibition. It contains many features of new and exceptional interest, and displays a number of leading characteristics which augur well for its future success."

However, Portwine apparently thought the car would be too expensive to produce and encouraged Weller to design and produce a little 3-wheeler delivery vehicle. Weller obliged and called it the Autocarrier, and a new company was established and named Autocars and Accessories Ltd. The Autocarrier was actually a tricycle with tiller steering and powered by a 5.6hp air-cooled single-cylinder engine. It was an immediate success,





particularly with big businesses in London – even Goodyear used one to deliver tyres to wealthy motorists. Because of its ‘reliability, performance and manoeuvrability’, the Autocarrier was adapted for military use by the 25<sup>th</sup> London Cyclist Regiment.

Then in 1907 a passenger version – it had a seat in place of the cargo box – was introduced and called the Sociable. Due to the increase in orders, the company relocated to the old riverbank Ferry Works in Thames Ditton, just outside London, where production continued up to the outbreak of WWI in 1914. A year earlier, the company launched the 10hp Elite Tourer. Dubbed ‘the Rolls-Royce of light cars’, it was powered by a French Fivet 1096cc side-valve engine mated with a 3-speed gearbox in unit with the rear axle, but due to the war only a few were built. It was during the conflict, 1915

in fact, that a new company was formed called Auto Carriers Limited and the name first abbreviated to AC. Auto Carriers purchased Autocars and Accessories Ltd and kept Weller and Portwine as directors.

Immediately post-war, a new 10hp 4-cylinder model

was introduced with a 1327cc Anzani engine, accompanied by a 12hp model with a bored-out 1496cc motor. These two powerplants were to be the last 4-cylinder engines used by AC as subsequent models were to benefit from Weller’s famous 6-cylinder overhead-cam engine that was in use from 1919 to 1963. But the 1.5-litre four was not to be ignored...

Designed by former Rolls-Royce employee Gustave Maclure, the Anzani was the product of everything he had learnt at Rolls-Royce, especially from Henry Royce. It was a superb design: strong, light, reliable and tuneable. Proving the point, a motor was tweaked to 48kW and installed in a special single-seater AC in which J. A. Joyce covered 104.85 miles (168.7km) in one hour at the Brooklands course in December 1922, the first light car to achieve such a feat. The cars were successful in motorsport, particularly hillclimbs and trials.

AC opened new offices in Regent Street, London and the board of directors was joined by a famous English racing driver Selwyn Francis ‘SF’ Edge, who in 1922 became chairman of a newly-formed company, AC Cars Ltd, after Weller and Portwine resigned through ‘irreconcilable differences’.

And it was in 1922 that the Franschhoek

The car was formerly part of the Greyvensteyn collection and was purchased by Waldie in 1954 when it arrived at the Greyvensteyn garage in Brandfort in need of some running repairs





Motor Museum's AC Model 12 featured here was manufactured. The car was formerly part of the Greyvensteyn collection and was purchased by Waldie in 1954 when it arrived at the Greyvensteyn garage in Brandfort in need of some running repairs. It was being driven by a young couple travelling from the Reef to Cape Town but the ever astute Waldie must have realised the car's potential and negotiated a deal to buy it. Later in the year, Waldie drove the car in the second National Veteran and Vintage Rally. Typically, the car was well maintained and won the concours d'elegance award in its class during the 1979 Castrol National Vintage Car Rally.

Waldie went to some lengths to establish the car's exact year of manufacture, which was not as straightforward as one might expect. Chassis numbers and rear axle codes appear to have been the determining factors and correspondence between Waldie and the AC Owners' Club in Britain established the car, chassis number 7475, as having being first registered on 19 August 1922. Apart from having only a single door, the axle code and its six wheel nuts identify this car as an Empire model, rather than the slightly more upmarket Royal, and in 1966 only 10 Empire models were known to exist.

Model 12s were built from 1918 to 1928, so this car is a rare example. With a surprisingly roomy dickey seat, this tourer qualifies as a 2+2.

Taking a chance on a break in some inclement Cape winter weather, with hood folded away, I decided to take a drive in this interesting car. Entering by the single, passenger-side door and sliding across the leather bench seat, the cockpit is spacious. The simple 3-spoke steering wheel is nicely angled, and the pedals are conventionally laid out. Controls and instruments are randomly laid out across the wooden dashboard. A handbrake stands vertically next to the side panel, and alongside is the gear lever nestling in a stout, back-to-front 'H' gate – first and reverse are to the right, second and third to the left. Depress the floor-mounted starter button and the Anzani four springs into life without much ado. Engage first and off we go, with an ease not always typical of cars of this period. Second gear soon gets the AC up to speed and is the key ratio because there is quite a big jump to top gear.

I am impressed. With a 2692mm wheelbase and

Apart from having only a single door, the axle code and its six wheel nuts identify this car as an Empire model, rather than the slightly more upmarket Royal





suspended on quarter-elliptics all round, the ride is really good. Rolling on disc wheels shod with 4.00-19-inch Dunlops, it feels quicker than it is actually going, and travelling *al fresco* merely adds to the sensation. Steering, clutch, gears and brakes are all light in operation so in relative terms the AC is not a tiring car to drive, although with only drum brakes on the rear wheels, retardation needs some forethought.

Just as I was getting into the spirit of the occasion, the clouds hanging over the Franschhoek Mountains opened up to put a damper on the frivolity and necessitating a run for cover, but not before I had experienced the joys of vintage motoring. A hand-operated windscreen wiper about the size of a finger proved more ornamental than useful, but for all that this car certainly fits the bill.

In 1927 SF Edge bought the

company outright and re-registered it as AC (Acédès) Ltd. But sales, which had been falling, continued to decline and in 1929 the company was caught by the Wall Street Crash and went into voluntary liquidation. Production ceased and the company was sold to the Hurlock haulage business. The Hurlocks allowed the service side of AC to continue and later agreed to limited production mainly using components left over from previous models. Agreement was reached with Standard to supply chassis and in 1932 a new range of cars was launched. Production remained on a small scale until the outbreak of WWII in 1939, and restarted in 1947. AC became a public company in 1951 and in 1953 the firm began production of the Ace, designed by John Tojeiro. The Ace was to form the basis for the Shelby Cobra, but AC, one of the oldest independent car brands in Britain, never rose to industry heights again. **C**

AC became a public company in 1951 and in 1953 the firm began production of the Ace, designed by John Tojeiro





Service | Restoration | Sales | Racing | Experiences

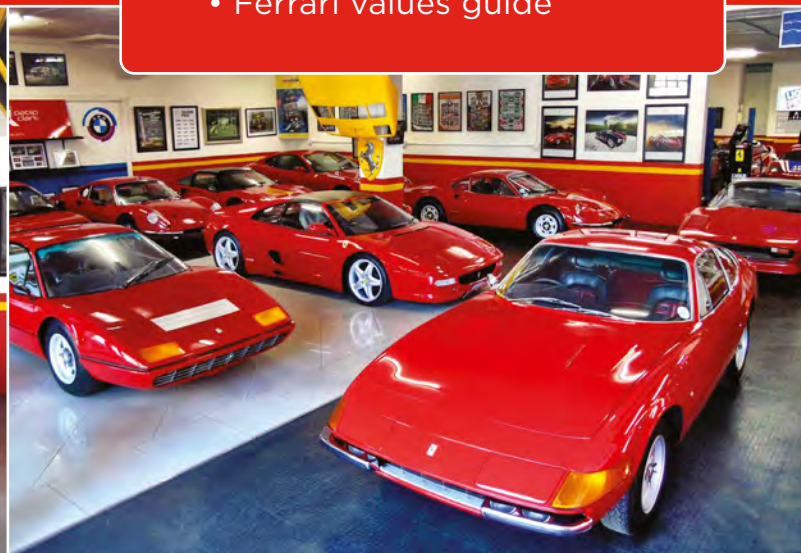


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# TRACK STARS ALIGN





“The hooter blasts, the flag drops and the hush explodes into a deafening crescendo of sound as thirty-odd cars embark on an endurance test of man and machine lasting three-quarters of the way around the clock. This is the electric atmosphere of the start of the Rand’s Nine Hour Race, one of the premier motor sporting events in the country.” This quote, found in Ken Stewart and Norman Reich’s iconic book *Sun on the Grid* perfectly sums up the romanticism of the famous endurance events that we generally associate with Kyalami. This type of gruelling event format was in its South African infancy when the 9 Hour kicked off but it soon grabbed the attention of spectators and competitors alike. **Stuart Grant** catches up with the Protea Triumph and Black Mamba, an MGA Twin Cam, that both enjoyed remarkable success in these early days. **Photography by Etienne Fouche**











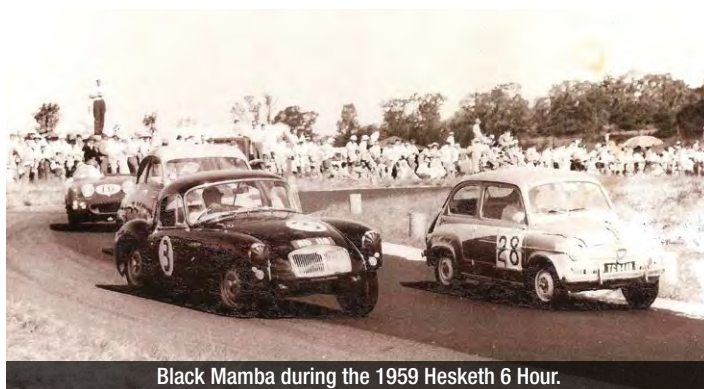
Local Twin Cam launch, February 1959.



Protea Triumph (1) and Black Mamba (3) line up for the 1959 Hesketh 6 Hour.



Black Mamba with the MG Competitions crew at McCarthy Rodway (1959).



Black Mamba during the 1959 Hesketh 6 Hour.

In 1956, the first South African 6 Hour Endurance Race was held at Pietermaritzburg's Roy Hesketh circuit, but for the masses 1958 was the year South African endurance racing started in earnest. The biggest challenge laid out was to the two-wheeled fraternity with Grand Central (in today's Midrand) hosting a 24 Hour. For the four-wheeling crews Hesketh still held the 6 Hour, Cape Town's Killarney put on a 3 Hour and the first ever 9 Hour took place in November at Grand Central. With cars sporting names most of the public knew, heated on-track action and the excitement of hurried pit stops, there was always something on the go for the spectators. And the introduction of an Index of Performance award meant that even the humblest of cars could take home some silverware, so the teams and drivers arrived in bulk.

One such entry to the 1958 Hesketh race was a Triumph TR2 with John Myers and John Mason-Gordon at the wheel. Thanks to its low-revving reliability, reasonable speed and decent handling, the pair finished the race second behind the Horse Boyden/Alec Millea Alfa Romeo Sprint Veloce. Inspired by this result, they set out to improve the car. To them this meant keeping the TR2 reliability but shedding a few kilograms and

moving the engine down and back a touch to make the car corner better. Myers had, of course, already designed South Africa's first production car, a tubular-framed sportscar with fibreglass body, so was adept at the design and construction of what was needed to reach the goal. In August '58 he sketched the plan of attack.

Into a tubular Myers frame went a TR2 rear axle with coil springs, trailing arm and a Panhard rod. Propshaft, gearbox and engine also came courtesy of the Triumph. So too did the likes of the gauges, pedal arrangement, master cylinders, front disc brakes and rear drums. Steering and front suspension came from Ford. The former being an upside down 100E Ford Prefect steering box because it offered less lock-to-lock (at 1.5 turns) than the Triumph, while the latter used a 1940s Ford CWT commercial van axle. Of course this wasn't left standard though and Myers cut down the centre and welded some eyes onto it to act as swingarms, located by compression struts that ran backwards to the chassis. True to the plan, the engine was mounted as low and as far back as possible relative to the wheelbase.

To clothe the new creation Myers favoured aluminium over fibreglass. Mason-Gordon called for a narrow streamlined rear. Myers had a Dinky Toy Jaguar D-Type. They put pen to paper with these two references calling the shots and gave the sketches to Geoff Collins, who hand-built the body. The car was finished in April 1959 and immediately driven by the two down to Maritzburg to compete in the 6 Hour. The race started at 14h30 and the Protea Triumph took up the lead, a position it held until the 20h30 finish, with the only real glitch being a mid-corner fuel surge that cut the engine mid-corner and sent the car on a slight off-track excursion into a verge. The car returned to the pits to top up the fuel and inspect damages before carrying on to win.

Second on the podium went to George Mennie/Dave Wright (No. 8) and Gordon Henderson/Clive Mitchell (No. 3) in a brace

Thanks to its low-revving reliability, reasonable speed and decent handling, the pair finished the race second behind the Horse Boyden/Alec Millea Alfa Romeo Sprint Veloce





of MGA Twin Cams. Number 8 was a locally-built roadster while No. 3 was an early imported coupé finished in black paint. Enter Black Mamba, mentioned earlier, and the restored car pictured today with the Protea.

Black Mamba, sporting the chassis number YM2 554, was one of the first batch of four Twin Cam coupés built at Abingdon, England between June and September 1958, and was shipped with a full range of factory optional extras to Noel Horsfield, the managing director of McCarthy Rodway, the main MG agents in Durban. It was registered

as ND118 on local plates and pressed into action as a dealer demonstrator, in the lead-up to the sale of the locally-built Twin Cam roadsters, which started at Motors Assemblies in February 1959.

Like the Protea Triumph, Black Mamba's racing career kicked off at the March 1959 Hesketh 6 Hour. It wasn't the only MGA Twin Cam though, with three SA-built MGA Twin Cam roadsters in the hands of privateer outfits joining the party. McCarthy competitions manager Mike Compton led the preparation of the car, which included the removal of trim panels, heater, luggage

rack, radio and bumpers. A close-ratio gearbox, competition oil cooler and competition shocks were added and various other modifications like a straight through side-exit exhaust, twin fuel fillers and a larger fuel tank found a home. The MG factory supplied a special Lucas D3AH4 distributor and a set of 2-inch

SU HD8 carburettors. Following a series of tests, a mixture of six parts aviation fuel, six parts premium petrol and one part union spirit was deemed to be the best for performance. Track time the week before the race revealed a misfire between 6000 and 6200rpm, which was then cured by the fitment of a Minor 1000 ¼ tonne truck distributor and setting the timing to 3° at top dead centre.

Following this test the name Black Mamba was applied – according to Bobby Olthoff, who prepared and raced number 7, due to the sound and speed of the YM2 554.

According to Compton's post-race notes, victory for Black Mamba looked likely for the first three hours as it tussled with the Protea and the number 8 roadster. But it wasn't to be as a ruptured brake line meant an unscheduled stop for a replacement, and a loss of 10 minutes relegated the car to third by the time the flag fell on the six hour mark.

After the event Black Mamba was returned to road specification by McCarthy but it did

**But it wasn't to be as a ruptured brake line meant an unscheduled stop for a replacement, and a loss of 10 minutes relegated the car to third by the time the flag fell on the 6 Hour mark**





Mason-Gordon Protea at speed (Hesketh 6 Hour, 1959).



YDH5 880 with Mennie at the wheel (Hesketh 6 Hour, 1959).



YM2 554 of Henderson/Mitchell in the 1959 Hesketh 6 Hour.



YDH5 880 (1959 Grand Central 9 Hour).



Black Mamba restoration.

enter the 1960 Hesketh event, finishing seventh. Sadly, on the way back from the event, it was involved in a fatal pedestrian accident. The damage to the right-hand side was repaired and the race engine was replaced with a standard Twin Cam engine. The car was then sold and subsequently disappeared and was not seen for many years thereafter.

As an out-and-out racer the Protea's career carried on longer. Shortly after the '59 6 Hour win, the Sports Car Club of South Africa nominated Mason-Gordon and the Protea, along with Ian Fraser-Jones (Porsche Spyder) and Bill Jennings (GSM Dart Porsche), to represent the country at that year's Angolan Grand Prix in Luanda. Up against the likes of a Ferrari Testarossa, Cooper Monaco, Jaguar D-Type, Porsche 550 and a few Maseratis, Mason-Gordon finished seventh and Jennings ninth.

Mason-Gordon recalled reaching 5700rpm at the end of the long sea front straight, which was scary because he never normally revved

it past 5000 (he and Myers believed in racing as slowly as possible) but also because the calculated speed was 137mph, which you somehow had to scrub off enough to take a 90° right. Chris Fergusson borrowed the car for the 1960 East London 2 Hour where he finished third. Red Whitehouse bought the car and achieved some class successes leading up to the 1961 9 Hour – now moved from Grand Central to the purpose-built Kyalami. Whitehouse never got to drive in the race as his co-driver Pierre du Plessis rolled the car at Jukskei during practice.

Following a rebuild Ivan Weitzman bought and campaigned it before selling it to Jan van der Merwe, who raced it in historic racing events in the early 1980s. The Zwartkops Raceway proprietor purchased it in 1982 and after years of badgering he moved it on to Triumph fan Alan Grant in 1995. Grant continued racing the car until a minor accident necessitated a rebuild. And as is life with a competition car, another prang in 2008 resulted in yet another restoration

exercise, which was completed just in time for the 2017 Knysna Hillclimb.

Various enthusiasts started searching for Black Mamba in the '90s but it only surfaced in 2003, lying around in poor shape in Krugersdorp. The identity was confirmed by the stamped chassis number 554, the body number 61754, the competition oil cooler, the original black colour, various body modifications, and the ignition and door key number FP731, which was recorded by Mike Compton in his practice notes. The new owner, Bo Giersing, carried out a full restoration with the cherry on top being the fitment of SU HD8 carbs and the original engine (16G202) – found in Durban last year.

In an amazing twist of fate and alignment of the stars, these two cars reside within just 2km of each other today. Even better is the fact that soon the recreation of the complete 1959 Hesketh 6 Hour podium will be possible as Giersing is nearing the completion of the George Mennie Twin Cam. 🏁









# RISING FROM THE ASHES

Ask any petrolhead raised on 1980s cars in SA which badge best symbolises performance and they'll likely quote the letters GTi, GTV6 or XR8 or – if their family had deep pockets – 911 or 928. But ask the same question over in England and you'd be more likely to hear the letters TVR. It's a badge that's as synonymous with glassfibre construction and its Blackpool roots as it is for fronting a proliferation of models with stonking performance that scared the hell out of makes costing twice the price says **Graeme Hurst**, who charts the success of one of the UK's great automotive underdogs following the news of a comeback.

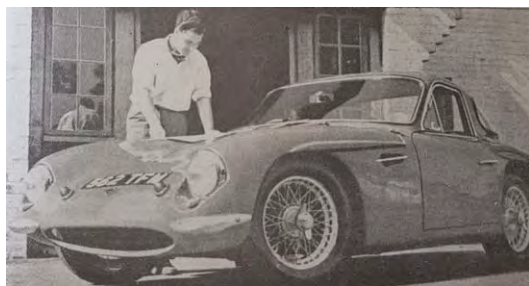


**T**his year's Goodwood Revival in England over the second weekend of September featured plenty of action, both on and off the track. And while much of it related to cars costing the price of a stately home being door-handled round the circuit, the real thrill for true British petrolheads came with the news that the once-defunct TVR brand was back. Back after an 11-year hiatus with an all-new model to celebrate 70 years since the marque was founded by Trevor Wilkinson, who famously

used three letters from his first name to create a name for his cars.

Not familiar with the badge? Well, in a nutshell, TVR made sportscars in England in some form for the best part of six decades. And what started out as simple parts-bin affairs, with Ford or Coventry Climax power built in three-digit production runs, ultimately evolved to become 400+bhp offerings with supercar abilities before the marque – which like so many small carmakers teetered on bankruptcy at various points in its history – ceased production in 2006.

Following several off-and-on rumours, TVR is now back with the all-new V8-engined Griffith. It's a stunning coupé design that, despite the marque's limited penetration on our shores to date, now gives TVR a South African connection thanks to its designer: one Gordon Murray. And if you're familiar with the marque's history you'll know that the Griffith name is synonymous in TVR lore with epic performance. But to understand that, and the background to this marque that commands so much affection over in Blighty, a little history lesson is in order.



Wilkinson Era 1947 - 1958



Grantura Era 1959 - 1964



Lilley Era 1962 - 1980



Seven decades ago, post-war England was ravaged with austerity measures that lent a 'make do and mend' mentality to the automotive industry. While big players such as Austin and Jaguar followed the 'export or die' mantra to secure access to materials, small-time entrepreneurs keen on building something to blow the doors off their mate's MG turned to their garages (or even kitchen tables) to cobble together their own cars based on proprietary mechanical parts but with their own bespoke chassis and bodywork.

It was an era of rich entrepreneurial spirit that saw some talented individuals develop fantastic, race-tested machinery. Individuals such as Colin Chapman, who spent the early 1950s creating

Lotus, and Jem Marsh and the Walklett Brothers with their respective Marcos and Ginetta models. And, of course, one Trevor Wilkinson, a 24-year-old engineer from Blackpool who started up Trevcar Engineering from an old wheelwright's workshop back in '46.

He soon applied his skills to cars, cutting down an Alvis to create a special to which he applied those three letters from his name. That was in '47. Two years on he got going with his own chassis design to create his first complete car for racing. It was based around a Ford side-valve engine. A few others followed until he discovered the production benefits of using glassfibre in the mid-'50s.

With moulds vastly cheaper than fabricating body panels in alloy or steel, this then-new technology allowed Wilkinson to start a proper production run with his 1958 TVR Grantura: a pretty coupé body over a tubular frame chassis using Ford or Coventry

Climax power. The build recipe would go on to define TVR for the next half a century as TVR models evolved and the company frequently shopped around for a different engine.

Like many low-volume 1950s and '60s British glassfibre cars, TVRs were available as a purchase tax-busting self-build kit. Which is how at least one Grantura made it to SA: the 1962 Kyalami 9 Hours featured a Grantura on the grid. Imported as a CKD kit by Norman Lamont, it was entered by Gene Bosman and Neville Austin and the pair drove it to an impressive fourth place in a rain-mired race won by David Piper's 250GTO.

That same year Wilkinson's time at TVR ended after he was ousted and, a year on, the company was liquidated but soon reborn as Grantura Engineering. Around that time the Grantura got a serious performance boost when – much like the story behind the Sunbeam Tiger – a US dealer named Jack Griffith shoehorned a small black V8 under the 'hood' to create the Griffith.

With 271bhp in place of around 95bhp, it had huge potential across the pond but

Like many low-volume 1950s and '60s British glassfibre cars, TVRs were available as a purchase tax-busting self-build kit. Which is how at least one Grantura made it to SA





Wheeler Era 1981 - 2004

Smolenki Era 2004 - 2013

Griffith Era 2013 - 2018

a mess-up with import paperwork froze a huge batch of export sales and TVR went under again. It was a blessing in disguise as the company's assets were bought out by a young enthusiast by the name of Martin Lilley. With financial backing from his father he changed the name back to TVR and would inspire a raft of popular models over the next 16 years.

The Griffith was replaced by the Tuscan by '67 and it quickly cemented TVR's performance reputation after *Motor* magazine declared it the fastest production UK car after a 0-100mph in 13.7 seconds test result. Buoyed by sales of the Tuscan, Lilley's team were able to evolve the model further with the launch of the M-series, featuring an all-new chassis design configured to take Ford crossflow, Triumph 2500 and Ford Essex V6 power – the latter badged as the 3000M. That range hit the showroom floors in '72, by which time TVR was ensconced in its famous Bristol Road factory in Blackpool – an address it would have until it ceased play.

The launch of the M-series was also the start of the marque's 'bad boy' image after

Lilley got creative with his marketing skills and hired a topless model to display her wares on one of the new cars at the 1971 London Motor Show. Naturally the press was all over her and their resultant column inches propelled TVR sales, and a convertible version – the first for TVR – soon followed.

By the late 1970s TVR's styling was looking dated and the lads at Bristol Road opted for a step change in design: cue the influence of one Oliver Winterbottom of Lotus Elite and Eclat fame. His efforts with the Tasmin series – a convertible, coupé and the first 4-seater TVR, the 2+2 – was the start of TVR's 'wedge' era. Performance to match the looks came thanks to Ford's 2.0-litre Pinto and 2.8-litre V6 units and there was an auto option – another first for TVR.

Although the Tasmin's styling was radical, the 'wedge' look would go on to define the marque in the 1980s after the company's new owner, a chain-smoking, politically-incorrect Yorkshireman by the name of Peter Wheeler, took the helm from late '81. Wheeler's

first task was to get the marque back into America to increase sales. And his second was to massively boost its reputation for thrilling on the tarmac by signing up a deal to shoehorn in Rover's Buick-based 3.5-litre V8 to create the 130mph 350i.

From '86 TVR's finances were healthy enough to develop a cut-price offering to complement the 350i, the S-series. Inspired by the popular looks of the earlier M-series, this was an early example of 'nostalgia' styling that would become prevalent in the automotive sector by the mid-'90s. The model featured the Cologne V6 and simpler specs (wind-up windows and drums at the rear) and offered predictable but impressive handling. It hit the mark big

**The Griffith was replaced by the Tuscan by '67 and it quickly cemented TVR's performance reputation after *Motor* magazine declared it the fastest production UK car**





time, with demand so strong that the factory developed the Rover-engined V8S for '91 (as pictured here in blue).

Although the early '90s were healthy years for TVR sales wise, the marque was yet to play with the big dogs when it came to performance. That would soon change with the 1990 Birmingham Motor Show, where Wheeler pulled the wraps off his latest model: the Griffith.

Featuring a stunningly curvaceous but simply styled body (still out of glassfibre) with a proper chassis featuring a double-wishbone rear end to allow the 240bhp from its 4-litre V8 to be safely explored, the 'Griff', as it's fondly referred to in TVR circles, was an instant hit. Its styling was also hugely clever from a production point of view: the undercut front edges to the bonnet and doors lessened the need for costly panel gap fixing, always a labour-intensive job when working with glassfibre.

As ever, the Blackpool factory upped the ante with various capacity increases up until the 340bhp, 161mph Griffith 500 launched in 1993. By then the Chimaera was rolling off the assembly line too; this was a stretched Griffith offering a more compliant ride and (some say) fussier styling to accommodate a bigger boot for the TVR enthusiast who had by now matured and was after space for his golf clubs.

The same TVR fan typically also had a

couple of kids to think about... which led TVR to massage the Chimaera's shape to create the Cerbera in 1996. This was a 4-seater coupé with pillarless styling that was as dramatic as the noise it made: open the bonnet of one and you'll see that the venerable push-rod Rover V8 made way for an overhead cam V8 that Wheeler developed for his racing activities – something that featured throughout the marque's history. Known as the AJP8 engine it was designed by engine guru Al Melling and featured a flat-plane crank and dry sump.

The new engine pushed performance up to a claimed 185mph with 0-60mph in 4 seconds... well into Porsche and Ferrari territory. Those were big numbers for a 4-seater but TVR had a similar offering for the purist with the Tuscan (as we have here) which came on stream in 2000 and offered 2-seater agility and the first taste of TVR's bold but slightly sinister looks.

With TVRs still being made to the glassfibre-over-tubular frame recipe, evolution continued to be relatively easy and a proliferation of models followed, including the Speed 12 (featuring a racing-derived V12) and models such as the Tamora and T350C. The run would culminate in the Sagaris. Launched in 2005, this was a 0-60mph in 3.9 second, 406bhp 'straight six' beast that put the marque firmly into supercar territory, even if its garish looks and radically styled interior was more Manchester United footballer than Maranello in taste.

The daring looks and impressive metrics may have etched TVR into the cerebra of the modern petrolhead, but all the engine technology and

styling changes pushed TVR into hot water financially. What's more, the marque was no longer in enthusiast hands as Wheeler had sold out to Russian investor Nikolai Smolenski a year earlier. And, when the numbers started getting scary, he pulled the plug in 2006.

At the time, Smolenski hinted at assembly restarting in Turin, Italy. That horrified TVR die-hards, who staged a TVR cavalcade through the streets of London to protest at the marque's demise and the recent loss of nearly 300 jobs at the Blackpool factory. But it had little effect and TVR was gone in all but name until 2013, when the brand was acquired by a UK company. Rumours that the new owners intended to restart production got fans excited, especially with the announcement of an official TVR parts business a year on, but nothing came to fruition.

Then in June 2015, the news TVR enthusiasts were holding out for: the promise of an all-new model that would see a return to TVR's roots, thanks to V8 Cosworth power in a simple rear-drive format. And that's what was delivered at this year's Goodwood Revival with the launch of the Griffith: a 400+bhp Cosworth-tweaked Ford 5.0-litre V8 mated to a 6-speed gearbox in a lightweight, carbon fibre-based coupé body designed around Murray's patented iStream® construction technique to minimise production costs.

With striking looks and the promise of 200+mph performance – not to mention an anticipated £90 000 price tag – the new Griffith is set to hit the streets late next year. And no doubt it will unnerve much more expensive Italian and German fare when it does. Which is exactly what has thrilled TVR fans for the last 70 years. **Q**

**With striking looks and the promise of 200+mph performance – not to mention an anticipated £90 000 price tag – the new Griffith is set to hit the streets late next year**





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# BACKYARD BRAWLERS



South Africa's affinity for home-building race cars goes way back. We had the pre-war specials and many a cobbled-up sportscar in the '50s, and the 1960s saw a number of local single-seaters showing good pace at the highest level. By the '70s the focus had moved on to saloons, which culminated in a number of factory-backed homologation specials. With the arrival of Group 1 racing and the manufacturers officially backing these re-worked production vehicles on track, the action was unlike anything seen before or after. But as **Stuart Grant** finds out through a look at a trio of cars that replicate the early '80s action, there is a move to start a series reliving this nail-biting era.

**Photography by Etienne Fouche**



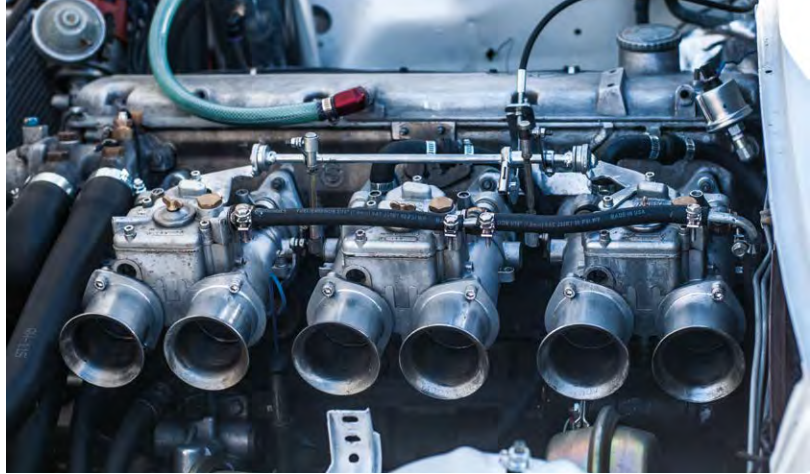


T6 Abel D'Oliveira Alfa Romeo GTV6 3-litre replica  
Owner: Stan Stacey  
Base car: Alfa Romeo GTV6 2.5-litre

T5 Sarel van der Merwe Ford XR6 Interceptor replica  
Owner: Gary Stacey  
Base car: Ford Cortina XR6 Interceptor (Nos. 122)

T1 Tony Viana BMW 535i replica  
Owner: Div Hoffman  
Base car: BMW 535i





**Y**es, that's right, these aren't the actual cars that you cheered on at the hands of Sarel van der Merwe, Abel d'Oliveira and Tony Viana. But they do look the part and building each one meant hours of research, talking to those in the know and uncovering many gems. We'll be following up these tales with a series of personality stories in the months to come so watch this space...

Group 1, which was already rolling in SA during the 1960s, referred to a set of regulations providing 'standard' production vehicles for competition, and was often referred to as the 'Showroom Class'. Initially 100 production units made a saloon eligible and the narrow range of modifications

allowed (basically a camshaft and some more compression) meant that in theory one could compete in a road car collected from a dealership or rental company the day before. One gentleman, who prefers not to have his name mentioned here, failed to get his car ready for a race in Welkom so called up the local rental office and booked a BMW 5 Series. It was only when he collected it that he realised he'd forgotten to request a manual and had to complete the event with an automatic!

Rules called for full interiors and no additional aerodynamic appendages, so a youngster trying his hand at the sport could race, use the car to go out on the town and then try to pass an exam at varsity. With classing done according to engine capacity (which often dove-tailed with showroom pricing), there was something in it for everyone. Sure, the big-timers fought with the heavy artillery at the front but a few rows back was where all the real action went down, with aspiring superstars door-handling each other in entry-level runabouts.

It was like Christmas came early for the dealers – a few decent Group 1 results in any class

directly improved sales of the road cars in the days and weeks that followed. Of course they needed a car that could win, which led to the numerous locally-brewed factory homologation specials.

In 1977, for the first time since 1971, saloon car racing resumed its National Championship status. It also saw imported slick or radial tyres allowed on standard rims. Apparently the reason for this move was that the poorer wear characteristics of the local content tyres meant high running costs and expense accounts, with some teams claiming... wait for it... R5 000 a season on rubber alone. With the imported rubber said to last four to five times longer, both competitors and sponsors felt this was the right move. Interestingly, the more powerful cars found the slicks to be faster while smaller capacity cars went slower – with the extra surface area creating extra drag. Coenraad Spamer, who at the time piloted an Alfesud TI, reckoned that the slicks were faster in the corners and the imported radials faster on the straight. The solution for the smaller cars was the best compromise, and where a circuit was fast, like Kyalami, the imported radials were just that.

During '77, the sharp end of the grid (Class V) looked like a Mazda rotary benefit

**The big-timers fought with the heavy artillery at the front but a few rows back was where all the real action went down, with aspiring superstars door-handling each other in entry-level runabouts**





with the likes of Dave Charlton, Tony Viana, Alan Batley, Rick Davis, John Rowe, Geoff Goddard, Charles Needham, Alan Quin, Ralph Langa and Willie Hepburn doing it for the Japanese brand against the odd Alfetta in the hands of Geoff Mortimer or Des Allie. Class W saw the 1600 Alfa Giulias battling Dodge Colts and 1600 Ford Escorts; Class X had Fiat 124s, Mini 1275GTSeS and Datsun 1200GXs, while Class Y had an epic front-wheel drive punch-up between the small bore Alfasuds and Citroën 1220 GSeS (with Sarel van der Merwe at the wheel).

It was a series on the move and more manufacturers took note. Fiat jumped in for '78 with its hotted 131 racing homologation special. In the hands of Pop Diedericks, Tony Viana and Brian von Hage, Fiat basically won every race entered that year and was swiftly banned for the following year – but only 16 of the planned 100 road-going units were built when a ship said to be carrying the fancy parts sank.

Ford was next to really throw its weight into fighting at the front of Group 1 when it took the 3-litre Mk5 Cortina onto the track in 1979 with Mortimer, Sarel and Serge Damseaux regular pilots. With the arrival of BMW's 535i in 1981 Ford needed to up its game, which it did with the limited run

(250) XR6 Interceptors. With three Weber carbs, trick inlet and exhaust manifold, high compression pistons, aggressive camshaft and flowed cylinder head, power increased from 101.5kW up to 118kW. BMW drivers like Tony Viana, Fanie Els and Paolo Cavalieri held a kilowatt advantage over the Fords with a standard 160kW on tap, but the racing levelled out relatively nicely in the power-to-weight department, with the BMW topping the scales at a hefty 285kg more than the 1205kg XR6.

For the Alfisti the GTV6 2.5-litre was the car of choice for the planned attack on the top tier of the Group 1 field. At 116kW and 1210kg it got right into the mix off the bat, with Nicola Bianco and Abel D'Oliveira at the wheel. Mazda tried its hand with rotary power when Willie Hepburn, Paddy Driver, Dave Le Roux, Ivor Raasch and Ben Morgenrood whirled some RX7s around. In a reactive game, the manufacturers pulled out all the stops to stay at the front of the race. As Ford came with more grunt from the Interceptor, so BMW retaliated with a close-ratio gearbox which increased the road-going 535i's top speed from 206 to 220km/h. Not to be outgunned, Alfa SA initiated the building of enough

3-litre GTV6 road cars to take to the track. With 128kW and a diet-induced 1138kg mass the Alfa dominated the latter part of 1983, winning on debut at the Lodge Group One International 2-Hour race at Kyalami, then coming first and second in the Group One class of the Castrol 3-Hour race at Killarney and topping it all off with an Index victory at the World Endurance Championship 1000km Race at Kyalami.

For '84 things got really crazy when, in an attempt to catch up with the 3-litre Alfa, BMW SA released the M1 sportscar-powered 745i (against Germany's wishes) and Ford shoehorned a 5-litre V8 into the new Sierra body. Arguably the best year in local production car racing was 1985, with this trio of manufacturers tripping over each other all year. It was also the last year of Group N as the local authorities moved in line with international naming standards, initially referring to the 'showroom' saloon class as 'Group A' and thereafter 'Group N'.

The manufacturer involvement was for the most part positive but it did cause a

In a reactive game, the manufacturers pulled out all the stops to stay at the front of the race





few rumbles along the way, with the top teams financially able/prepared to find loopholes that gave the edge. This resulted in a few rule benders...

Ride height was controlled with standard being the base. Officials measured this by dropping a tape from the wheel arch lip to the top of the tyre. To get the 14-inch-wheeled XR6 Interceptor 'legally' lower, the story goes that the wings from a Cortina bakkie were used as they had a bigger curve to clear the utility vehicle's larger profiled 15-inch wheels.

Rumour also has it that the Sierra XR8 race car front strut mounts were moved a fraction backwards and inwards to allow for some extra camber and caster. As this modification was not within the rules, it was done on the main Sierra production line so the welds and finish looked as per standard.


Following a race win the Alfa 3-litre bonnets were locked down so that officials could strip them the following day. Of course Alfa had planned a photoshoot with a local paper so it was agreed that the cars could be delivered the following morning for inspection. When the cars arrived for the check their engine bays were still sealed but the engines' internals were free of any pollutants or wear. Theories abound as to how this happened, with the most likely being that the entire subframe was removed and regulation internals put in overnight. The lack of carbon build-up was put down to a revolutionary additive the Alfa team were running.

Tyres were often a sticking point – if you'll

pardon the pun. In 1981, the move was made to a one-make tyre series to level the field and stop the flush teams importing the best rubber money could buy. A great idea in theory, but in the world of winning at all costs the minds start ticking and the grapevine tells us that grip solutions came from soaking tyres in various chemicals or even better, doing a deal with the tyre supplier for a 'special' batch that looked exactly like the regular items.

Bully tactics were also in evidence; threats of refusing to compete were often made when a rule didn't suit a factory outfit, and because the powers that be did not want a diluted show, they often buckled and

allowed some sort of exception.

Whether true or exaggerated over time, these tales are fascinating. And there must be more to be told from the golden era of South African production saloon racing. But what about the less known about, smaller capacity cars and privateers? If you raced a Renault 5, Datsun Pulsar, Toyota Corolla, Avenger, Ford XR3, Alfasud, Alfa Giulietta, Mazda 323, Daihatsu Charade or whatever else in Group 1 or N, you have a story we want to tell and a history that needs documenting. Pull out the scrap books and race results, jog the memory and get in touch... maybe even get your old banger back on track or build a replica of it. 

## THE GROUP 1 REVIVAL

The three pictured cars represent the first few steps in a new direction for historic racing, reliving this pinnacle of saloon car racing. Uncovering, prepping and racing genuine cars in period guise is the primary goal, but with the life of a race car being somewhat difficult many of these have moved on to greener pastures. Where this is the case, prospective competitors can approach the organising committee with a proposal to research and build an accurate replica of their chosen machine, and once approved can rest assured that no other car will race in the same scheme. Obviously, should the real racer appear at a later stage, the replica will have to make way for it and find a new dress to wear to the party – but this shouldn't be a problem as so many cars raced over the years. Initially, the series will race with Historic Racing South Africa's Classic Thoroughbred Saloons category but the vision is to have a standalone grid soon. For more information, contact the Thoroughbred Saloons chairman via [www.historicracing.co.za](http://www.historicracing.co.za) and if you need any inspiration browse the Group 1 Racing page on Facebook.





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# THE ROTOR ROUTE

Regular readers would remember our story about the first sportscar to use the German Wankel-designed rotary engine – the Japanese Mazda Cosmo. But there was another car, far closer to home for Herr Wankel, that was not only the first mass-production saloon to use this engine but also won Car of the Year soon after it was launched. Think that's incredible? Well it's not nearly as astonishing as the fact that the revolutionary NSU Ro80 was the cause of its manufacturer's eventual demise, as **Sivan Goren** discovered.

**Photography by Etienne Fouche**











NSU actually began in 1873 as – of all things – a manufacturer of sewing and knitting machines, NSU being an acronym for Neckarsulm Strickmaschinen Union (Neckarsulm Sewing Machine Co). Twenty years later the stitching machines had been replaced with bicycles and by 1901, the operation began building motorcycles. In 1905, NSU began to produce motor cars, followed shortly thereafter by trucks.

Sadly, though, NSU's timing was not ideal. Although the company produced some successful cars in the 1920s, the onset of The Great Depression forced NSU to sell the automotive side of its business to Fiat in 1932, and the start of WWII meant

it had to focus exclusively on motorbike production in order to survive. By 1955, NSU had become the biggest motorcycle producer in the world.

But the magic of four wheels could not be resisted for long: in the mid-1950s NSU once again tried its hand at motor cars, introducing the NSU Prinz in 1957. While NSU had offered 4- and 6-cylinder cars back in the 1920s, the Prinz was a rear-engined mini car powered by an air-cooled, 2-cylinder engine. Although well made (if somewhat noisy), the Prinz did not even put a dent in the VW Beetle's total market domination of the time.

Over the next few years, the post-war German economy continued to improve and buyers were gradually moving away from two wheels and mini cars to larger and more luxurious saloons. Although NSU introduced its first 4-cylinder post-war car, the Prinz 1000, at the 1964 Frankfurt Auto Show, NSU managing director Gerd Stieler von Heydekampf realised

that with NSU's market share being already only modest, it was time to evolve – or the future would be bleak.

In late 1962, NSU began developing a new model known internally as 'Typ 80' which was to be in the same class as the Ford Taunus P4. The Typ 80 had monocoque construction and front-wheel drive, developed by chief engineer Ewald Praxl, and in-house designer Claus Luthe began design work in early 1963. A full-size model was eventually presented to the NSU board in 1964. Apart from its clean and spacious design, it was extremely aerodynamic – low drag was a significant part of the brief, in order to maximise fuel economy – and with a drag coefficient of 0.355, only the Porsche 911 and Citroën DS21 even came close.

The eventual production model was very close to the original model in shape, but not in dimensions. When executives realised what it was going to cost to produce, they decided to up their target market in order to compete with cars in the executive market. And in order to do this, the Typ 80 was

Twenty years later the stitching machines had been replaced with bicycles and by 1901, the operation began building motorcycles





scaled up in size, weight, and price. But apart from all this, and maybe something I should have mentioned first, was the Typ 80's most significant feature: its rotary engine. Under the bonnet was a 2-rotor 115hp Wankel engine.

After considering a variety of possible names, NSU finally settled on the straightforward Ro80, 'Ro' for Rotary and '80' for the type number. The Ro80 was an all-new design that shared very little with NSU's other models and was considerably more sophisticated, featuring power-assisted ZF rack-and-pinion steering and fully independent suspension. Its chassis was superb and the combination of a wide track, low centre of gravity, and fine steering made for excellent handling. Its ATE Dunlop disc brakes all around (mounted inboard at the front) made for a smooth ride, due to its low unsprung weight. Despite the engine's inherent lightness, power steering was standard.

While the 2-rotor engine used in the Ro80 was considerably more powerful than the Typ 80's original specification, the

car's weight had also increased by more than 50%, which raised questions about what transmission should be used. NSU finally chose the 3-speed Saxomat, a semi-automatic transmission made by Fitchel & Sachs. There was no clutch pedal; touching the gear lever knob operated an internal electric switch that operated a vacuum system which disengaged the clutch, and the gear lever itself could then be moved through a standard 'H-pattern' gate. A two-pedal car which allowed you to choose when to shift gears... a case of the best of both worlds?

Production began in August 1967 but by then NSU's back was well and truly against the wall. Although its existing cars were selling reasonably well, the company was no longer in the motorbike business and had invested nearly all of its available resources in the Ro80 and the follow-on Typ 70 (a smaller piston-engined car intended as NSU's answer to the BMW 1600/1602). Von Heydekamp

openly admitted to the press that NSU had everything riding on the Ro80 and the company simply couldn't afford to wait any longer for launch. The Ro80 made its public debut at the Frankfurt show in September 1967 and it went on sale shortly afterward with a hefty price tag – substantially more than a Mercedes 230.

The price was high but there were far greater problems ahead for NSU. The rotary engine proved to be highly problematic. It was not only very thirsty but also had a voracious appetite for oil and spark plugs (specific plugs which were at least 10 times more expensive than standard ones), which made the car costly to maintain. Despite all this, and possibly because the world had

**While the 2-rotor engine used in the Ro80 was considerably more powerful than the Typ 80's original specification, the car's weight had also increased by more than 50%**





never seen such an original and novel car since the Citroën DS, the new model won the European Car of the Year. And despite its high price, initial 1967-68 sales totalled around 6 400 units.

But soon an inherent design flaw began to rear its ugly head. The designers of the car had misunderstood their target market in one fatal way: they had assumed that the car would be used on the open road and on autobahns. But instead, these cars were bought for wives who drove them only to the shop and back. Stop-and-go driving not only fouled the plugs, but also wreaked havoc with the engine's 3-piece, self-adjusting apex seals, particularly with frequent use of the manual choke. To add to NSU's monumental headache, drivers of this car also seemed to have a penchant for dangerously over-revving the engine because it was so smooth that it would exceed its redline without much complaint. (As an aside, cars produced after 1971 came with an 'acoustical signal' that warned the driver when the engine was rotating too fast.)

You can guess what happened next, right? Engine failures – and lots of them – many at less than 40 000km. In a misguided


attempt to do right by their buyers, NSU generally opted to replace the engines rather than repair or rebuild them – and sometimes more than once – even beyond the 32 000km factory warranty. This, understandably, wound up costing the company hugely not only financially but also because, despite being a noble attempt to placate irate customers, it actually did more damage to the company's reputation.

By early 1969 it was clear that NSU had to do something drastic. At the same time, Volkswagen's new MD, Kurt Lotz, was looking for the way forward to fill the gaping hole left by the stellar Beetle and wanted to expand Volkswagen's product range and production capacity. NSU badly needed a cash injection but von Heydekampf was extremely reluctant to sacrifice its independence. The two operations entered into talks and eventually a compromise was reached: NSU would merge with the manufacturer that Volkswagen had a controlling interest in – Auto Union. The merger, announced in March 1969, resulted in a new company called Audi-NSU-Auto Union – essentially the beginning of today's Audi.

Following the merger, NSU continued developing the Wankel engine and working to fix the Ro80's issues. The changes made the Ro80 much more reliable but already the car had developed an unfortunate reputation and had become a bit of a laughing stock in the German media, with editorial cartoons in magazines cruelly depicting NSU drivers greeting each other with hand signals to indicate how many engines their cars had gone

through. In addition, sales for 1970 were down and in 1971 sales fell a further 50%. Although things improved somewhat in 1972 and 1973, the fuel crisis hit the Ro80 hard. Production dropped sharply in '74 and '75, helped along by the car's constant price escalation.

At this point it seemed the only way the Ro80 would survive is if it could evolve. There had been rumours of a second-generation Ro80 in the press for several years, with plans for a larger, more powerful 1500cc engine aimed at 6-cylinder piston-engined rivals. But the truth was that while there was some support within the company, technical director Ferdinand Piëch was increasingly sceptical about the rotary engine's viability in the European market. He believed that diesel was a better way forward than the rotary, which still suffered from relatively poor thermal efficiency and heavy fuel consumption. Piëch eventually succeeded in ending Wankel development and the Ro80 successor project was canned.

And so the NSU Ro80 finally spluttered to a stop in April 1977. It was the last NSU production car, although NSU remained part of the corporate name until the mid-1980s and the marque is still owned by Volkswagen AG. Exact production figures differ depending on who you ask, but most sources agree it was around 37 400 units. Although the Ro80 could be considered a huge failure for NSU, it made quite an impression in its short life. In the end it was a huge risk that just did not pay off – maybe if timing had been different or the planets had been aligned the story might have turned out differently? Either way, it sure did make for one hell of an interesting car – not to mention the start of a certain four-ringed powerhouse manufacturer... 

**This, understandably, wound up costing the company hugely not only financially but also because, despite being a noble attempt to placate irate customers, it actually did more damage to the company's reputation**





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## THE RISE AND FALL OF ROTARY ENGINES

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The rotary engine is ideal on paper: the rotors spin in one direction so are smoother and more energy-efficient, unlike reciprocating pistons which change direction. A rotary engine also uses fewer components and is thus less noisy and can be made smaller, lighter and simpler than a piston engine.

Felix Wankel conceived the idea of a rotary engine in the 1920s but full development did not start until the 1950s, when he persuaded NSU to fund the project. In 1960, NSU and the US firm Curtiss-Wright signed a joint venture agreement. NSU were to concentrate on low- and medium-powered Wankel engine development and Curtiss-Wright developing high-powered engines, including aircraft engines. The Wankel engine had received loads of worldwide attention and many manufacturers signed licence agreements for development, including Alfa Romeo, American Motors, Citroën, Ford, General Motors, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Porsche, Rolls-Royce, Suzuki, and Toyota.

### GENERAL MOTORS

General Motors obtained a worldwide licence from NSU in 1970, then displayed two prototypes in 1973: the Chevrolet Corvette 2-Rotor and Corvette 4-Rotor. GM estimated 80% of its production in 1980 would be powered by rotary engines and pumped a whole lot of money into rotary projects. GM had planned to introduce the GM Wankel rotary engine in the 1975 Chevrolet Monza but cancelled the project when already poor fuel economy was compounded by high fuel prices following the oil crisis of 1973. The car was eventually launched with a conventional piston engine instead.

### AMERICAN MOTORS

American Motors (AMC), the smallest US manufacturer, was so convinced that the rotary engine would play an important role in vehicles of the future that it signed an agreement in 1973 to build Wankels for both passenger cars and Jeeps, and even designed the unique AMC Pacer around the engine. By 1974,

AMC had decided to purchase the General Motors Wankel instead of building an engine in-house, but GM's engines had not reached production when the Pacer was launched. The 1973 oil crisis, rising fuel prices and proposed US emission standards legislation were also major concerns. By 1974, General Motors R&D had not succeeded in producing a Wankel engine with both the emission requirements and good fuel economy, and the company cancelled the project. In the end, AMC was forced to use its straight-six engine in the Pacer.

### CITROËN

The Company Comotor SA was a joint venture between NSU and Citroën, created in 1967 to produce Wankel engines. It followed another joint venture in 1964, the Comobil subsidiary, focusing on the development of the engines. Comotor engines were used by the Citroën M35 and by the GS Birotor. The venture was plagued by technical, reliability, and fuel consumption issues, and rising fuel prices in 1973 meant demand for the petrol-guzzling engine diminished. These projects were major contributors to the bankruptcy of both NSU and Citroën.

### MAZDA

When Mazda negotiated the licence deal with NSU in 1961, Mazda obtained a prototype of an NSU-built single-rotor engine and it was at this time that the big problem reared its ugly head – that of the 'chatter mark'. These marks presented as wavy traces of abnormal wear on the rotor housing, causing the seals and the housing itself to substantially deteriorate. While other manufacturers could not seem to find a way around this major snag, the engineers at Mazda created a special RE (Rotary Engine) research department and eventually worked out a solution. As a result, Mazda is the only manufacturer who managed to mass-produce rotary-engined vehicles and did so for 45 years, beginning with its lovely Cosmo in 1967 right up until production of the RX-8 ended in 2012.





Mario Massacurati (second from right), winner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> South African Grand Prix, receives congratulations from Minister of Defence and Minister of Railways and Harbours Oswald Pirow (right), while Massacurati's mechanic, Arrigo Govoni, holds the trophy.



Massacurati takes the chequered flag in his Bugatti T35B. He won at an average speed of 140.5km/h.



# THE FLYING DOCTOR

## — PART 2 —

In the second of a two-part feature, **Wendy and Mike Monk** trace the South African exploits of the charismatic Italian Mario Massacurati, who five years after winning a South African GP narrowly avoided death in an attempted escape across our border.



Maserati 6C-34 at the Lord Howe circuit in 1937.

**T**o briefly recap on Massacurati's early career, he was born in 1903 to a wealthy Italian family involved in the construction business and began racing in 1925. Believed to be a cousin of the legendary Tazio Nuvolari, he raced in Europe driving Chiribiris, Fiats and Bugattis with only a modicum of success. When not racing he was working for the family business as well as taking a degree course in geology at the University of Bologna, becoming Dr Mario Mazzacurati. In the early-1930s he was lured to South Africa for the construction contract opportunities that existed, but the family also had tin-mining interests in Swaziland.

As for racing, international motorsport events were for the most part unheard of outside Europe, so when the first SA GP took place on 27 December 1934, Dr Mario's racing spirit was rekindled, especially now that he was settled in the Cape. He began competing again although precisely when he started is unknown. Because locals appeared to have had a problem pronouncing his name, Mazzacurati had changed the spelling of his name to a 'softer' Massacurati, which still caused problems, so going forward he usually

adopted the pseudonym 'Mario'. The *Cape Argus* of 8 October 1935 reported on the second Kimberley 100 race for which Mario entered a newly-landed 1-litre Bugatti, but he did not start.

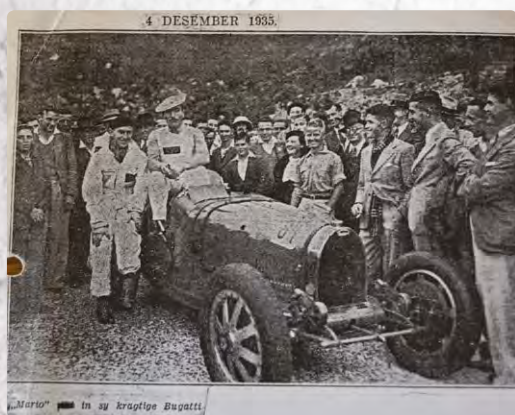
A week later when previewing the upcoming second SA GP, based on his overseas experience the paper stated that Mario was a man to be watched. He had imported the ex-Lindsay Eccles supercharged 2261cc Bugatti T35B (a converted T37) to contest the GP held on 1 January 1936 on East London's Prince George Circuit. Mario started 19<sup>th</sup> on handicap in the 24-car field and steadily worked his way through the slower cars. He took over first place on lap 16 of the 17.75km circuit and went on to win ahead of overseas drivers Jean-Pierre Wimille (Bugatti T59) and Pat Fairfield (ERA) and locals Lionel Meyer (MG NA Magnette), Austin Dobson (Maserati 8C) and Billy Mills (Plymouth). Mario was headlined as 'The Fastest Man in the Union' and became an instant national hero.

Spurred on by this success, Mario set up the country's first racing team, the Eagle Racing Stable, in a garage on the corner of Main Road and Military Road in Steenberg (today a BP station occupies the site). The



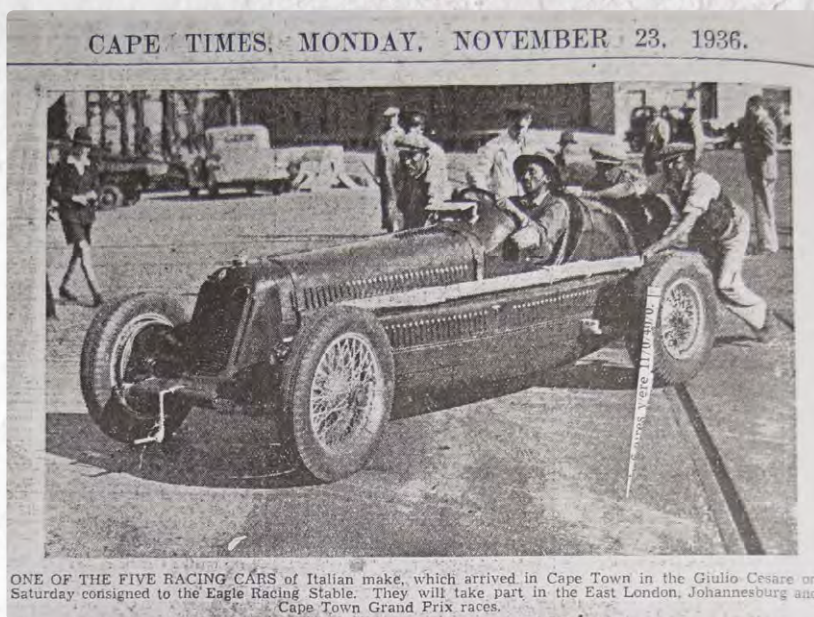


Bugatti T35B after winning the '36 Camps Bay Hillclimb.



Mario and his 'powerful Bugatti'.

A family scrapbook suggests that this was the time a rich vein of gold was found on the Mazzacurati mining site, and apparently the Swaziland government made a purchasing offer that could not be refused



The Maserati 6C-34 being unloaded off the SS Giulio Cesare in Cape Town in October 1936.

outfit advertised itself as 'importers and suppliers of racing cars, racing tyres, racing plugs and racing fuels' and offered racing tuition given by 'experts'. The location was close to Pollsmoor farm in Tokai, which had been bought in 1934 to be transformed into a race circuit. Apart from the SA GP-winning Bugatti and the Ford special, he had a 1.5-litre Bugatti T37.

On 5 October 1936, Mario crashed out of the third Kimberley 100 after setting the fastest lap in the T35B. Then on 21 November, the liner SS *Giulio Cesare* arrived in Cape Town with six second-hand race cars – all supercharged – imported by Mario. Three were ex-Nuvolari; a 3.7 Maserati 6C-34, a 2.6 Alfa Romeo Monza and the infamous T35C-based 2.0 Bugatti 'TN' monoposto. The rest comprised a Bugatti T35C, a 1.5 Alfa Romeo 6C Gran Sport and an ex-GP 1.5 Talbot-Darracq fitted with a 2-seater body. A week later, Mario set fastest time of the day at the Camps Bay Hillclimb in the T35B.

Into 1937 and Mario finished 10<sup>th</sup> in the third SA GP driving the difficult Maserati 6CM-34, followed by two DNFs in the inaugural Grosvenor (at Pollsmoor) and Rand (at the Lord Howe Circuit) Grands Prix and the Grosvenor Farewell handicap. In March he raced the Bugatti T35C and set fastest lap in Round 1 of the Silver Springbok

Trophy series (Lord Howe) and in April in the Grosvenor meeting. During the lunch break, Mario raced Joe Sarkis riding his Norton over two laps – and came second. In May it was back into the T35B for a DNF in Round 2 of the Silver Springbok Series and 4<sup>th</sup> in the first Coronation 100 at Alexandra Park.

A cracked chassis on the 6CM-34 spotted by a spectator just before the start ruled Mario out from the fourth SA GP on 1 January 1938 but two weeks later he finished 8<sup>th</sup> and set fastest lap in the Grosvenor GP, his last race of the year. A family scrapbook suggests that this was the time a rich vein of gold was found on the Mazzacurati mining site, and apparently the Swaziland government made a purchasing offer that could not be refused... In addition, in October the *Cape Argus* published an article suggesting motor racing was doomed in Cape Town and reported that Mario had already sold his business and had moved to Johannesburg.

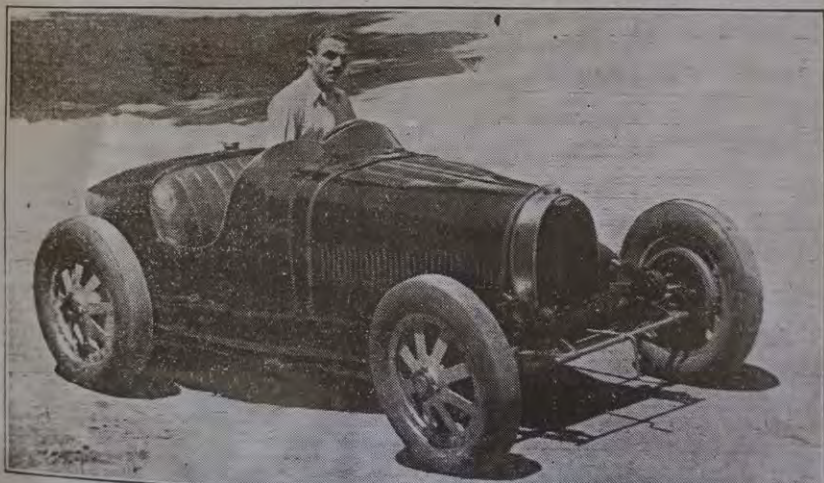
The fifth SA GP on 2 January 1939 was run to the new voiturette rules (1500cc capacity limit) and Mario entered a supercharged 1.5 6CM with which he finished third and set the fastest lap, although he was not impressed with the loss of performance created by the new rules. A broken valve spring put him out of the Grosvenor GP. Mario did not race again until the Golden City Handicap held on 1 January 1940, where he finished second in the Maserati voiturette.

Then came a kiss with death. When Italy entered WWII in 1940, SA was obliged to



THE FRIEND, BLOEMFONTEIN, FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 1936

## Winner of Second South African Grand Prix



"Mario", the pseudonym of Dr Mossacurati, an Italian doctor of engineering, who lives in Cape Town, and who won the second South African Grand Prix at East London on Wednesday. "Mario", here seen in his three-litre super-charged Bugatti, averaged 87.33 miles an hour for the course.

### Mario became a national hero after winning the SA GP.

intern Italians living in the country. Mario was incarcerated in Koffiefontein POW camp but it was not long before he made a plan to escape. Mario was acting as an interpreter for five fellow interns who had applied to go to Kimberley Military Hospital for dental treatment. Permission was granted for them to be driven by a guard. But Mario had an escape plan. He told the five that the trip was delayed for a day, and got four of his friends to take their place. The authorities did not notice the substitution and they were allowed to leave the camp. But not long into the journey the five overpowered, bound and gagged the driver and left him at the side of the road. Mario took the wheel and the group headed for Swaziland and the Mozambique border. But while charging through the barricade set up at the Lubuli police outpost, they were shot at. Mario continued at unabated speed, but later they came to a halt in the bushveld. Only when they abandoned the car did they discover that one of them, Giovanni Rossi, had been shot dead. The rest set off on foot but were eventually captured on the northern side of the Usutu River, "hungry, despondent, exhausted and footsore... having not slept for three days", according to a *Sunday Times* report. The four were arrested, taken to Bremersdorp and charged with robbery and assault.

Mario was upset that he was interned because, as he said, "How can I – I who won the Grand Prix – now sit in jail?", but afterwards held no grudge against SA

and returned on a number of occasions. In July 1950, *SA Motor & Cycle News* reported on a visit Mario had made earlier in the year during which he stated that he was permanently domiciled in Italy and was "endeavouring to arrange for a team of Italian GP cars and drivers to visit the country", but this never materialised. He also visited in 1953, the year before he took part but failed to finish the Mille Miglia sharing a Fiat 500C with Arturo Giacomelli. In 1965, he appears to have had a permanent suite at Cape Town's Mount Nelson Hotel while acting as a representative for Maserati. He had arranged for a rare '160mph' Maserati Mistral GT – claimed to be one of only five built – to be shipped from the Paris Motor Show to be displayed at the Goodwood Motor Show, and subsequently made headlines when handing it over to former rugby Springbok Jan Pickard, who had arranged with the factory to purchase the car. Crankhandle Club member Malcolm Stuart-Findlay recalls Mario taking part in the Boyes Drive Hillclimb in a Maserati in 1969, his last known outing.

Behind the scenes, Mario helped a lot of local drivers and brought a number of charismatic racing machinery into the country. Reports of the Eagle Racing Stable cars reveal that the SA GP-winning Bugatti T35B was also driven by Govoni, Bothner and, later, Pierre Kelfkens. A T37 was raced by Bothner and J. van



Winner of the chief event at the Hill-Climbing Contest at Camps Bay on Saturday, Mario (Dr. Massacurati), holder of the South African Grand Prix, in his super-charged Bugatti.

### Mario's Bugatti at the Camps Bay Hillclimb.



Grand Prix heroes: Count Giovanni 'Johnny' Lurani, Raymond Mays, Lord Howe and Mario at the 4<sup>th</sup> SA GP in 1938.

Mario was incarcerated in Koffiefontein POW camp but it was not long before he made a plan to escape





Mario with Luigi Villoresi (in car), Franco Cortese and Paul Pietsch at the SA GP in 1939.



In the pits at the 3<sup>rd</sup> SA GP in 1937.



Bugatti T35B at East London's Prince George Circuit in 1936.



Cortese, Villoresi and Mario at the 5<sup>th</sup> SA GP in 1939.



Mario in 1965 at the Goodwood Showgrounds with the Maserati Mistral sold to Springbok rugby player Jan Pickard.

His racing career is not graced with an abundance of podium finishes but his driving style and general charisma helped him become the idol of many local motorsport enthusiasts

den Dool before R. Reed fitted it with a Ford V8 in 1939. The T35C was also raced by Lionel Meyer, Ralph Rohr and Denis Woodhead, who fitted a supercharged Graham engine but crashed the car in a race on 1 January 1940 and died three days later from injuries sustained. The TN monoposto was used as a spares donor to the other Bugattis.

The Maserati 6C-34 was also raced by Bothner and McNichol before being acquired by George Cannell, then on to Tex Kingon, who sadly died after crashing the car in a handicap race on the notorious East London Esplanade in 1955. Both the Monza and Gran Sport Alfa Romeos were sold to and raced by Bill Roderick. The Ford V8 Special was driven by Bothner and Gaston Billiet. The Talbot-

Darracq was raced by Govoni, Dennis Woodhead and Jack McNichol. In 1939 it was fitted with a supercharged 3.4 Graham-Paige engine. The car passed through many more hands before reaching Boetie van Zyl, who recently had it completely restored by Dickon Daggitt.

His racing career is not graced with an abundance of podium finishes but his driving style and general charisma helped him become the idol of many local motorsport enthusiasts. Mention Mario's name to any old-timer and they will have a story to tell. Dr Mario Massacurati left an indelible mark on South African motorsport, and died in Rome on 17 April 1985, aged 81. 🇮🇹

*Apart from the credits listed, the authors wish to acknowledge a Massacurati memoir published in Auto d'Epoca, parallel research by Derek Stuart-Findlay, images from Ken Stewart and the Fränk Hoal collection.*





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An early Seven starred in the movie *The Prisoner*.



Colin Chapman's own Ford side-valve-powered car was unbeaten in its racing class.





An S3 version of the Seven outside the factory.

## FLOWER POWER

It has been 60 years since the birth of the Lotus Seven, a car that is inexorably linked in most people's minds to its designer. A luminary in his own right, Colin Chapman had a simple philosophy when it came to successful racing cars: "Simplify, then add lightness". **Sivan Goren** looks back at the story of both of these Lotus legends.

**A**nthony Colin Bruce Chapman was born on 19 May 1928 in Surrey to Stanley and Mary who owned and ran The Orange Tree Public House. Later the family moved to The Railway Hotel in North London, which his father managed. The young Chapman attended the Stationers' Company School but when German bombs began blitzing London during WWII, he was evacuated to Norfolk for most of the remainder of the war.

In 1945 Chapman met Hazel Williams

(who ten years later would become his wife) at a dance held at the Railway Hotel. He didn't know it at the time, but she was to become instrumental in helping him make a name for himself in racing and car building. Later that same year, at the age of just 17, Chapman began studying engineering at University College, London.

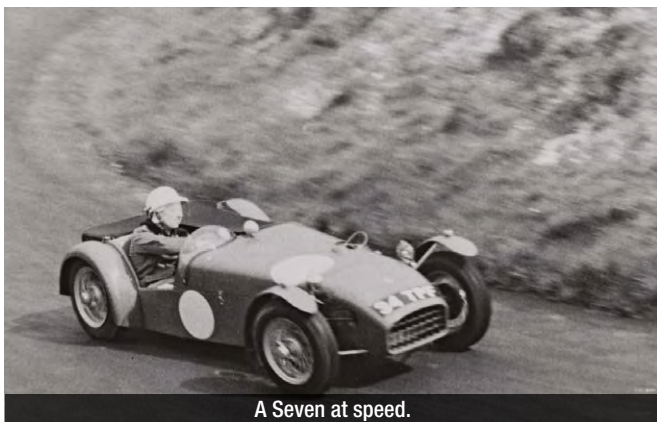
Chapman was an enthusiastic member of the University Air Squadron and learned to fly while still a student. After university, he decided to take a short service commission in the RAF and was stationed at RAF Tern

Hill in Shropshire. After leaving the RAF, Chapman began buying and selling second-hand cars with university friend Colin Dare. With the war recently over, new cars were in short supply as British manufacturers were exporting all they could make. As there was not much difference between the new cars and those built before the war, the two Colins realised they only needed a little bit of clever 'zhoozshing' to make a tidy profit out of selling used cars. But the honeymoon came to an abrupt end when the basic petrol ration was withdrawn and suddenly

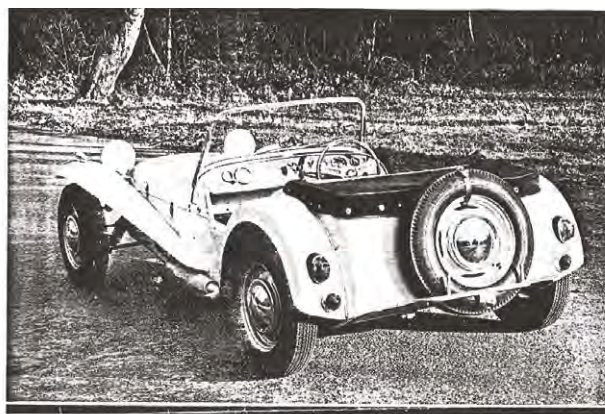




Lotus MkIII.



A Seven at speed.



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(Inclusive of Manufacturer's Warranty.)

SERIES 2 SEVEN SALES BROCHURE, THE AUTHOR HAS AN ORIGINAL FROM THE 1960'S WHEN HE COLLECTED SALES MATERIAL ON AN A-Z BASIS.

cars stopped selling, meaning that the pair lost all their previous profits.

But there was one car left over that could not be sold: a rather sad looking fabric-bodied 1930 Austin Seven. So what to do? Why, modify it of course! Chapman used some improvements that he had formulated when planning to build his own 'special', one of which was chassis stiffness, and for that he used alloy-bonded ply panels for the sides, along with very shallow 'door' openings. It was completed in early 1948 and re-registered 'OX9292' as the Lotus Mk1. There are a couple of theories as to why the car was named Lotus and there has been much speculation over the years, but the truth is that nobody, apart from a small number of people who are not telling, actually knows.

In the meantime Chapman had also

discovered the 750 Motor Club. It was founded in 1939 by Bill Boddy and Holland Birkett for Austin Seven enthusiasts who wanted to compete in low-cost owner/driver-designed cars under their 750 Formula, with the '750' referring to the capacity of Austin Seven engines. Interestingly, the 750 MC was also a breeding ground for future big names in motor racing.

With Hazel in the passenger seat, they tried their hand at trialling which they both enjoyed and were rather good at. As the car had not been specifically modified for racing, Chapman decided to build an improved second car. In order to do this he researched all kinds of technical papers both in the motoring press and mechanical engineering papers. The subsequent Ford-powered MkII had independent front suspension using a Ford 8/10 front axle cut in half. The rear axle had to be Austin Seven in order to be eligible for the 750 Formula.

In September 1949 Chapman qualified for his 'wings' and was offered a permanent commission in the RAF. This did not suit him, though, and he

joined The British Aluminium Company in a technical sales role instead. He relied on long hours, volunteer help and barter arrangements to keep his car building operation afloat. In 1952 Chapman, with the help of Hazel who apparently lent him £25, founded Lotus Engineering Ltd, followed by Team Lotus two years later. (Team Lotus began competing in Formula One in 1958 and went on to become one of the most innovative and successful teams in history.) By the end of 1954 Chapman was able to resign from his job and focus solely on Lotus, producing racing cars and road-going machines in workshops which had been set up in old stables behind the Railway Hotel. He was also able to take on paid employees such as Mike Costin, Keith Duckworth and Graham Hill.

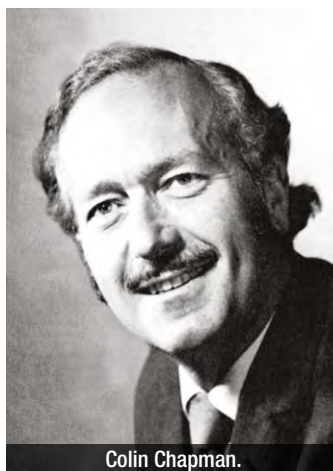
Lotuses were intentionally built sparingly because Chapman was unwavering in his focus on minimalist design philosophy. Each part had to be as multi-functional as was possible. Sometimes this did not work but oh, when it did! He once said: "Adding power makes you faster on the straights; subtracting weight makes you faster everywhere". And this was the Lotus philosophy.

But there was one car left over that could not be sold: a rather sad looking fabric-bodied 1930 Austin Seven. So what to do? Why, modify it of course!

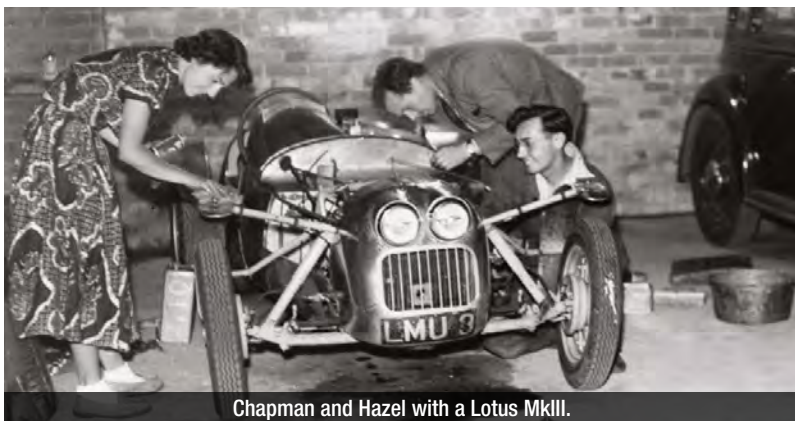




Colin Chapman, friends and a Seven before a 6 hour at Silverstone.



Colin Chapman.



Chapman and Hazel with a Lotus MkIII.



But let me go back to the second hero of our story: the Lotus Seven.

By the end of 1955 there had been enough Lotuses sold and enough success on the racetrack for a club to be formed for those supporting the marque, and the inaugural meeting was held at on 15 November. The MkVI, Lotus's first production car, had been very successful – both in sales and racing. By the end of 1955, over one hundred had been made and demand for cheap, light and competitive sportscars was higher than ever.

It was, however, apparently Hazel who decided that a more basic, cost-effective successor to the MkVI was needed, and so the Seven was born. The Lotus Seven actually had its first customer lined up before it was even designed – one Edward Lewis, who owned a racing footwear manufacturing business. Lewis was already a well-known Lotus racer but reckoned he was getting a bit old for serious racing and was looking at creating a car of his own specification for hillclimbing.

The Edward Lewis Special was based on a MkVI chassis with a Williams and Pritchard body designed by Lewis himself. It first competed in the West Sussex Speed

## 1962 SPRINGBOK SERIES

The Lotus Seven appeared in the Springbok Series of 1962 at a time when Formula 1 motor racing was very strong in South Africa. There were two races prior to the South African Grand Prix of 1962: the Rand Grand Prix at Kyalami on 15 December and the Natal Grand Prix at Westmead on 22 December.

The entrants for the Rand Grand Prix included several teams from England like Lotus and BRM and there were also Coopers and other older Lotuses, a Lola and South African specials like the LDS, the Assegai and the Netvar. However, by far the most unusual entrant was Capetonian Brausch Niemann's much-modified 1958 Lotus Seven Series One. Brausch worked as a mechanic for Willie Meissner and was a pretty capable driver in his own right.

Niemann's car had a Ford 109E all-steel engine bored out to 1475cc with four Amal carburettors, special camshaft and head. The chassis was halved lengthwise and reduced by two inches to comply with Formula 1 regulations. The front brakes were 1958 Mercedes 180 with finned drums. The rear axle was changed to Austin due to the wide choice of ratios and free-floating hubs were incorporated as a safety feature. There was no limited-slip differential so a fiddle handbrake was used on the driver's side. The car was painted red, had steel wheels and the cycle wings were removed. To everyone's astonishment the Seven easily qualified for a place on the start line.

The Seven eventually finished in a respectable 10<sup>th</sup> place, having incredibly beaten three of the Climax-powered Lotuses. Through the speed trap Niemann was timed at an astonishing 127mph. The car was so fast that when Chapman saw it screaming down the Kyalami straight, 'stuck' to the rear of Jim Clark's Lotus 25, he was heard to remark that it must be the quickest Lotus Seven in the world.





## LOTUS SEVEN REPLICAS IN SA

If you are talking Lotus Seven in South Africa, the name Birkin automatically springs to mind. John Watson, a descendant of pioneering race car driver Tim Birkin, founded Birkin Cars in 1982. The company's produces one vehicle, and that is the S3 Roadster, a kit-car replica of the Lotus Super 7.

When the Lotus Seven ceased production and could no longer be purchased as new, Watson developed and built his own version of the Seven. The cars were unveiled to the public at the 1983 South African Grand Prix. Enthusiastic home builders could buy DIY kits and spares or a complete car. Birkin was soon able to establish a decent export programme, with the local supply ticking along. To cope with demand the facility was split, with part of the manufacture taking place in KZN and the rest in the North-West near Haartebeespoort.

Recently new backers came on board in the form of Birkin Performance Cars and complete manufacture has again moved under one roof – this time in Prospecton just outside Durban. While export is very strong in the Birkin strategy, there is a healthy focus being put on the local market for both complete cars as well as kits and spares supply.

Trials in September 1956 and went on to achieve several successes. Seeing the popularity of this racing and the success that Lewis was enjoying, Chapman decided that there was a potential market for a new production racing car that would also be road-legal. A deal was struck with Lewis: his Lotus-based Special in exchange for the prototype Lotus Seven.

The prototype that was supplied to Lewis had a Coventry Climax FWA 1100cc engine, close-ratio Austin A30 gearbox, de Dion rear suspension with a 4.5:1 final drive ratio, wishbone front suspension, four-branch exhaust manifold, knock-on wire wheels, Dunlop racing tyres and spare wheel. The car first competed in the Brighton Speed Trials on 7 September 1957. Confusingly, the race programme shows that Lewis was entered in both the





Sports Cars up to 1100cc and also Sports Cars 1101 to 1500cc categories – clearly he entered the event not knowing what exactly he would be driving and therefore entered the two most likely classes. Race results, however, show an E. Lewis won the Sports Cars 1501 to 2500cc class at the event in a time of 29.72 secs, so it's likely he was penalised and bumped up a class. The write-up in *Autosport* said: "E. Lewis in a new version of the Lotus described as a Mark VII and fitted with disc brakes and a de Dion rear end, yet closely resembling the dear old Mark VI, really did motor sideways, and came very close to travelling over the pavement and into a very rough sea."


The first production Seven was considerably less sophisticated than the prototype Lewis car, with wide-valve Ford 100E, rigid 'live' rear axle from the

BMC/Nash Metropolitan and drum brakes to all four wheels. The engine produced between 28 and 40bhp and the 3-speed gearbox had a Buckler 'C' type close-ratio gear set.

As with previous Lotus models, the chassis frames were made by Progress Chassis Company and the all-aluminium bodies were crafted by Williams and Pritchard. According to factory records the first production Sevens started leaving the factory in December 1957.

The Seven was designed for a very specific purpose: as daily transport to work during the week and for entry-level competition at weekends. The race series that many entered was in the Seven Fifty Motor Club's 1172 Formula based around

The Seven was designed for a very specific purpose: as daily transport to work during the week and for entry-level competition at weekends

Ford's E93A and 100E side-valve engines. And true to their purpose, of the first 100 cars made, well over half competed on the race track. Lotus Seven, available in kit form and factory finished, ceased production in 1972, but the rights to produce it were secured by Caterham in the following years. Today, Caterham Cars and Birkin are amongst the registered manufacturers of Lotus Seven replicas. Something tells me that Colin Chapman would have been very satisfied to see his Lotus legacy still going strong. 



# LIFE ON





# THE GRID



She was head-hunted by Penthouse for topless photos, and could have made a very good a living as a pin-up model if she'd chosen. She's broken countless bones on the racetrack, was once Kenny Roberts Jnr's brolly girl, and she's the only woman ever to have won points in 250cc Grand Prix motorcycle racing. **Gavin Foster** caught up with Katja Poensgen.

It's not surprising that Katja Poensgen was keen on motorcycles. Her father, Bert, was a racer and top executive at Suzuki in Europe, and the little girl who preferred hanging around with boys to playing house with girls spent lots of time at racetracks. "When I was 15 I read in a German motorcycle magazine that there was a new class for youngsters between the ages of 16 and 23 and I showed my dad, telling him I wanted to race. He said no – it was for boys and I should rather ride horses or dance – but I carried on nagging for two months. Eventually he agreed and by the beginning of '93 I was on a racetrack for the first time on a standard 34 horsepower 125cc Suzuki. From then on I lived to race. I was very slow in the beginning and in that first year usually finished second-last. I was really proud to have even one guy behind me, but I knew from the beginning that if I gave myself time I would become faster."

Go faster she did. "In the last race of my second year I got onto the podium for the first time, at Hockenheim, and I told myself that that there were now just two guys in front of me and 45 behind, so it would be possible to win." The following year Katja won the German junior 125cc championship, and in 1998 she took the European Supermono Championship on a very trick 90-horsepower Suzuki 750 single. Of the seven races in the series she won four, earned one second place and failed to finish in two. Not bad for a 21-year-old girl racing against some highly talented men.

From there Katja moved to the European Superstock Championship – curtain raiser to World Superbike – and finished the '98 season in sixth place, with her best race result being a second at Misano. "What I was really proud of was that I set three 750cc lap records, at Monza, Misano and Hockenheim, and that was very cool because the following year the class changed to 1000cc so my records will stand forever."

I ask Katja whether her femininity was a help or a hindrance when it came to the men she had to beat throughout her career. She laughs and says that a number of her opponents told her that the day she went faster than them they'd retire. "Only one of them did though, when I won my German title in '93. All year he led the championship with me second, but I beat him in the last race and he quit racing. Generally the men were good, though, because I'm not the sort





of girl who walks around the paddock in high heels. I did everything with the guys – karting, partying, and we were fine. I always say that when I wear my helmet I'm not a boy or a girl – I'm a racer and I want to go fast. Sometimes for the press and the sponsors it was good that I'm a blonde girl and not really ugly, but I hope that for the other competitors the main thing was that I was fast." Hmm... not really ugly?

So on we go to Katja's three-year Grand Prix career. Her first official outing on the grid of a GP was, curiously enough, as a brolly girl for Kenny Roberts Jnr in 2000. Suzuki asked her if she could find a suitable girl for the post, and when she heard what the fee would be she put her own name

forward. The following year she was back on the grid, this time as a racer. "I got an offer to ride in 250cc GPs with an English team alongside Jeremy McWilliams. There was a big press conference in London, and then I went to Jerez for testing, but there

was no team there. I felt really stupid sitting there in the paddock with my helmet and no bike. I tried calling the team manager and he wouldn't answer his phone. Anyway, the team never worked out but the Dorna boss got involved and I went to the German Aprilia team."

Katja's GP career was not a huge success: she finished, after three years, with a best placing of 14, and a brace of 17<sup>th</sup>s. The disappointing results were mostly, she says, due to inadequate budgets and poor machinery. "In my first season I changed teams three times and when the year was up I realised that I was always signed up by teams that were already out of money. They hoped that when I came to them I would bring big sponsors and lots of money with, but it wasn't like that. In 2003 at Suzuka my Honda was 35km/h down on top speed, and I told the team that I would not race in GPs on uncompetitive machinery." Katja walked away from GP racing before the final world championship race.

In the off season a German television company offered her a lucrative contract to commentate in 2004, so she decided

In the off season a German television company offered her a lucrative contract to commentate in 2004, so she decided to take a year off and bank some money while she looked for a decent ride in '05





to take a year off and bank some money while she looked for a decent ride in '05. "During that year I fell pregnant, so I quit racing and my daughter, Hollie, was born in May 2005."

I ask Katja why women don't usually shape against men in bike racing. "I think it's easier for men to stop thinking," she says matter-of-factly. "Women tend to think about their families and having babies later so it's harder for them to do. I raced for 11 years and all I could think about was how to go faster. I was more like a man in that I didn't care about hurting myself – I just wanted to go faster. GPs are tough and sometimes I crashed three times in a weekend. You have to be tough and put up with a lot of pain."

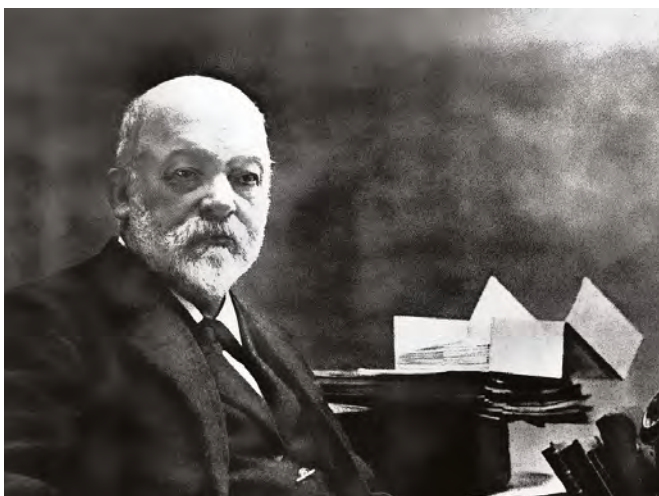
Katja knows all about pain. "I didn't count how many bones I broke, but it was my foot three times, and the same for my hand. I broke my shoulder and some ribs, and tore the ligaments in my knees. The biggest crash I had was in January '97, during the winter tests in Spain. I can't remember what happened but I was in a coma for three days and when I woke up I couldn't move one side of my body. I was really injured in my head

and it was five months before I could get back on a bike. My folks wanted me to quit but I told them I wanted to do GPs. When I started racing again I had another crash in Supersport 600s and broke my hand and foot again, which put me out for another two months. I told myself that I'd have to be more careful. Until then I always thought that other people got hurt, not me. After those two big ones I decided to show a bit more respect, and it took me a while to become fast again, but I won the European Supermono Championship the following year, in 1998."

So what does a beautiful 41-year-old mother do with her life after she retires from racing motorcycles? Her father owns a hotel in the mountains so she has worked there, while also doing TV commentary. And with her daughter now a bit older she's got back into riding, for the most part touring, but in 2012 she finished second in the E-Bike World Championship with a Münch TTE and has more recently shown a clean set of heels by winning various European sprint events on an Indian. **C**

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# THE FORWARD THINKER

Mercedes-Benz cars are amongst the products manufactured by a company that is, at present, called Daimler AG. It used to be called Daimler-Benz AG, and was formed as a result of a merger in 1926 between Daimler Motoren Gesellschaft, founded by Gottlieb Daimler, and Benz & Co, founded by Karl Benz (25 November 1844 - 4 April 1929). **Jake Venter** conducts a fictitious interview with Mr Daimler.

**B**oth founders built petrol-engined cars that first ran in 1886, but their first cars, subsequent products, and personalities were poles apart. Benz was conservative and rooted to the present. Once a design was completed he hated to make any changes, but his first car was a brilliant (for the time) little 3-wheeler. Daimler was the forward-looking visionary, always

experimenting and looking for new ideas and new markets, but his first car was just a conservative horseless carriage fitted with one of his single-cylinder engines. However, by 1890 he had also designed V-twin and 4-cylinder internal-combustion engines, and had them fitted into various vehicles to create the first petrol-engined motorcycle, truck, bus, locomotive, boat and airship. He also explored many markets outside Germany.

I conducted the interview early in 1898 at the research workshop that Daimler had established in the grounds of his house in Cannstatt, a suburb of Stuttgart. (It still exists, is part of the Mercedes-Benz heritage, and I have seen the historical exhibits inside.) He was suffering from a weak heart, but was happy to answer my questions. After the greetings, his secretary brought some coffee, and the interview started.

**JAKE:** People say you never sleep. Is that true?

**DAIMLER:** (Laughs) Of course I sleep, but not for more than about four hours per night. Even as a child I was only happy when I was doing something worthwhile. Sleep is just a waste of time.

**JAKE:** I suppose that explains why your company has achieved so much in the last 15 years. You've gone from a very basic single-cylinder engine to a range of seven or eight different vehicles powered by three or four different engines. How did you manage it?

**DAIMLER:** Well, it was not just hard work. I was very lucky on three counts. I had world-class teachers; I was exposed to the very

latest manufacturing technology; best of all, I met the ideal partner, Wilhelm Maybach, without whom I would not have achieved much success.

**JAKE:** Tell me a little about your technical training.

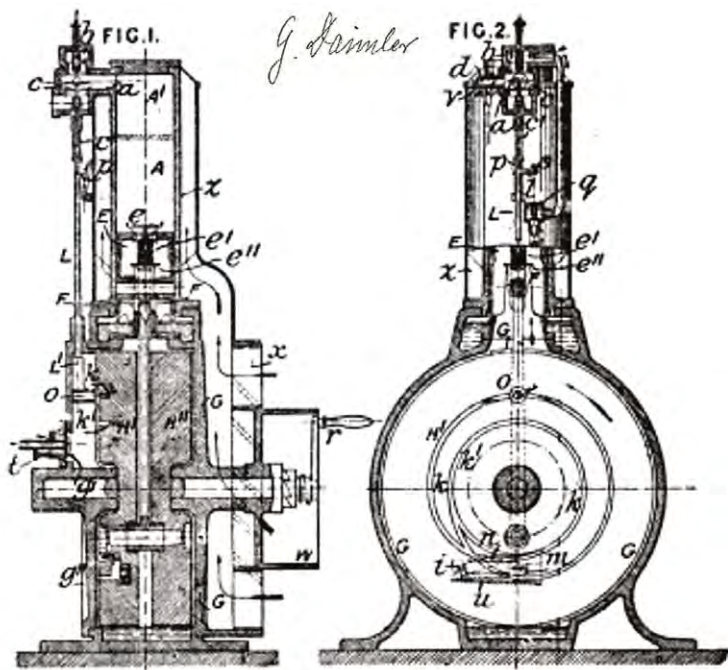
**DAIMLER:** I was born in Schorndorf, Swabia (the area around Stuttgart) and went to school there. I loved mathematics and wanted to study engineering at a higher institution, but there were revolutions all over Europe, so my father enrolled me as an apprentice to a gunsmith. This was my first exposure to painstaking precision, and I loved it. In 1852, at the conclusion of my four-year apprenticeship, I produced a pair

of double-barrelled pistols with walnut butts and finely-chased barrels. (They're in the Mercedes-Benz museum.)

**JAKE:** You didn't work as a gunsmith for long, did you?

**DAIMLER:** No, I decided to study engineering at a Technical College in Alsace (at that time a part of France) and was persuaded to compete for a scholarship. I won, and this entailed working at the Werkzeug Maschinenfabrik near Strasbourg and attending classes at the college. It was hard going, and most of us were either working or studying from 5am to 11pm. In 1856 the factory started to build locomotives, and





I started to feel I was in the wrong place. Steam machinery was everywhere, but I wanted to develop power units that could be portable. I asked to be released from my contract, and enrolled for a two-year course in engineering at the Stuttgart Polytechnic. After graduation, I went back to the factory for a while because I owed them a debt of gratitude, but eventually the urge to get away from steam was too strong.

**JAKE:** How did you get involved with internal-combustion engines?

**DAIMLER:** I went to Paris, to take a look at the Lenoir gas engines being produced there, but came away disappointed. They were

crude and heavy, and I had something much smaller in mind.

**JAKE:** Did you visit any other countries at that time?

**DAIMLER:** From Paris I went to England, which was the centre of heavy industry, but Germany was catching up fast. I worked in a number of factories and have very happy memories of my time at Armstrong Whitworth where I learned the latest precision machining techniques. (Older readers may recall that Whitworth threads and Whitworth spanners are part of British engineering culture.) I learned to converse in English, and picked up some knowledge of British patent law. Later, when I started to

promote my patents worldwide, this stood me in good stead.

**JAKE:** How long did you stay there?

**DAIMLER:** Almost two years, but in 1862 I went back to Germany. I then worked for ten years at three companies either as chief engineer or manager, but always on heavy machinery or steam engines. At one of these, Bruderhaus Engineering Works at Reutlingen, I befriended Wilhelm Maybach, who has collaborated with me ever since. Eventually, in 1872 I was offered the technical directorship of the Deutz engine works of Otto and Langen, situated near Cologne.





These ran on a liquid fuel that we called petrol after the word was coined by Herr Langen, who was Otto's partner



**JAKE:** Is that the company that developed the first 4-stroke engine?

**DAIMLER:** Yes, and I initially thought this would be the ideal opportunity to build the kind of engine I had in mind, but I was wrong. Both Otto and Langen were only interested in making profits by selling as many of their slow-speed gas engines as possible. I modernised the factory and brought Wilhelm Maybach in, initially as chief draughtsman and later as chief designer. My changes resulted in production going from one engine a day to three engines a day. The partners appreciated this and gave me a block of shares in the company, but they still would not let me experiment with higher engine speeds or liquid fuels.

**JAKE:** You did some research anyway?

**DAIMLER:** Yes, Maybach and I spent a lot of time trying new ideas, but the conflict came to a head one day when an experimental engine exploded while Otto and Langen were nearby. Otto seized this opportunity to ask the directors to dismiss me, but they decided to send me on a fact-finding trip to Russia, so that tempers could subside. This did not help, so I eventually resigned but managed to keep my shares in the company. In July 1882 I moved to Cannstatt, and bought my present house. I turned the garden shed into the workshop that we're now sitting in.

**JAKE:** At last you could be your own man?

**DAIMLER:** Yes, I was free to play with

engines. I had saved some money, and my first task was to get Maybach to join me. He was reluctant to leave such a lucrative position, but my research brief to him included developing a liquid fuel engine for road vehicles as well as boats, and this was enough to tempt him.

**JAKE:** I can imagine the two of you, plus some machinists, working here quite undisturbed.

**DAIMLER:** You would think so, but the fact is that machining operations can be very noisy. A few months after we moved in the neighbours complained to the police that there were strange goings-on here. People came and went at odd hours, even in the middle of the night. The police suspected we were printing money, and wanted to catch us red-handed. They asked our gardener to make a copy of the key, and tie my dog up. They went inside one night, but could not find anything suspicious. The gardener only told us about it much later.

**JAKE:** What was the biggest obstacle you had to overcome before building a successful petrol engine?

**DAIMLER:** The ignition. Other engines (running on gas) had used an open flame, covered by a slide, or a weak spark, but we wanted a relatively foolproof system that did not need timing. In 1883 I invented and patented a hot-tube ignition system that worked well enough for us to at last succeed in building three small high-speed

engines. These ran on a liquid fuel that we called petrol after the word was coined by Herr Langen, who was Otto's partner.

**JAKE:** Did you sell this engine in any quantity?

**DAIMLER:** No, not at first. We offered it to Otto and Langen, who were at that time the largest engine manufacturers in the world, but they thought it was of little value. So we kept on improving and enlarging the engine and fitting various versions into vehicles.

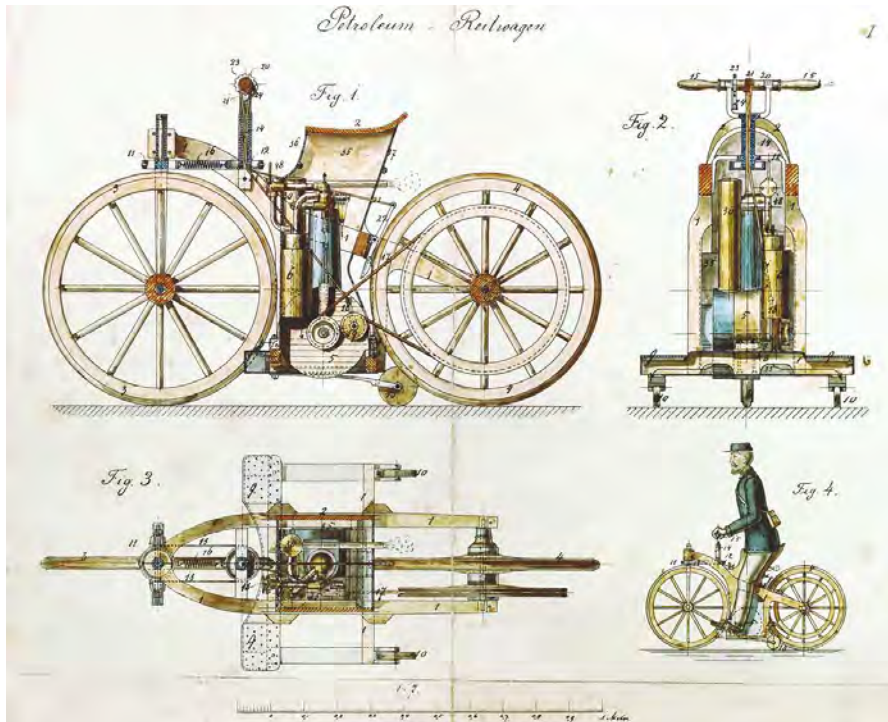
**JAKE:** I believe you also built a 2-wheeler powered by one of your engines.

**DAIMLER:** Yes, in 1883 we designed the first engine suitable for installation into a vehicle and installed it into what is in effect a motorised cycle. Some newspaper called it a motorcycle, and my son Paul rode it for some kilometres in November of that year. We never developed it further because there were so many other projects keeping me awake at night.

**JAKE:** What vehicle did you choose for your next installation?

**DAIMLER:** That same year we started to experiment with a boat on the Neckar river, but most people were scared of it. They thought it would explode, so we fitted some large porcelain knobs onto the hull and told people it was an electric boat. Two years later Maybach went to demonstrate our boat at a regatta, but the police refused to give him permission. He cruised down the





We built a vehicle to carry loads, carry people, a small locomotive and even fitted an engine to an airship

river anyway and was arrested, but very quickly released when it was discovered that Prince Bismarck was on board! A year later we launched the first tugboat in Hamburg only to find that the shipbuilding firms were not impressed. We asked around to find somebody that was prepared to build lighters (flat-bottomed boats used to offload ships away from a quay) but nobody was interested, so we bought some shares in a boatbuilding company and built them ourselves. They are a huge success and we're selling them all over the world.

**JAKE:** So, the car was not your first motorised vehicle.

**DAIMLER:** No, that came in 1886. I ordered a horse-drawn coach from a coachbuilder, modified it to take one of our engines, and made some successful journeys with it just a few months after Karl Benz first drove his 3-wheeler.

**JAKE:** You've never met Herr Benz, have you?

**DAIMLER:** No, but I know of his exploits, and hope to meet him some day.

**JAKE:** Did you build many cars based on your first one?

**DAIMLER:** No, we built one other but our third car, dating from 1889, was no longer a carriage. It was a 2-seater, designed from the start as a car, and was fitted with a new narrow angle V-twin engine that we had designed. That same year this car was

demonstrated at the World's Fair in Paris, and attracted a lot of favourable comment.

**JAKE:** Into what other vehicles did you fit your engines?

**DAIMLER:** We tried every possible vehicle we could get our hands on. We built a vehicle to carry loads, to carry people, a small locomotive and even fitted an engine to an airship.

**JAKE:** You also started to produce engines with more cylinders.

**DAIMLER:** Yes, the V-twin was followed by a

parallel-twin that vibrated too much, so we designed a 4-cylinder engine. It first ran in 1890, but we had to delve into some theory to get the crankshaft balance right.

*A nurse appears at the door.*

**DAIMLER:** I'm sorry, but it is time for my rest. Could you please come back another day if you have any more questions?

**JAKE:** By all means. Thank you for answering my questions so comprehensively. Goodbye.

**DAIMLER:** Goodbye. 

Daimler's health deteriorated and by the autumn of 1899 he was very weak. He died early in 1900.

In 1890 Daimler found some backers to form a company to produce cars, but the partnership did not last long. Daimler faced many tribulations before he managed to form a successful company called Daimler Motoren Gesellschaft. The combination of Daimler and Maybach invented or developed many of the components that are still part of any modern car. This is best illustrated by the 1901 Mercedes, which is the first car with what we now regard as a conventional layout. It represents the combined effort of Gottlieb, Maybach and even Paul Daimler, Gottlieb's eldest son, who later also achieved some fame as a design engineer.

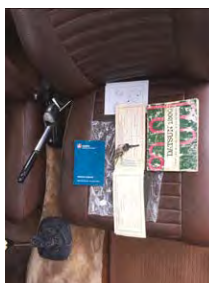
Daimler not only patented most of their inventions, but also exploited them to such an extent that he had a major influence in starting the motor industry in France, where Panhard and Peugeot used his engines, and the UK, where his patent office eventually became the British Daimler Company. Daimler also opened a branch in Austria; this company soon started to build Austro-Daimler cars that differed from the cars built in Stuttgart. In fact, it is fair to say that no other pioneer had such a major influence on car design.



# — ORIGINALITY RULES —

Last issue we featured Scott Lederle's magnificent 1958 Cadillac Sedan De Ville and my stint behind the wheel will go down as one of my top drives this year; after all it's not every day you get to pilot something simply so outrageous that it stops pedestrian traffic along Louis Botha Avenue! But there was another four-wheeled aspect to the day that made the experience particularly memorable... driving something that shared the same stretch of well-known Joburg tarmac with the Caddy back in the day. Only it's basically the antithesis of a 5.8m-long, 2.2-tonne slice of Detroit iron: a humble 1957 Volkswagen Beetle.

By Graeme Hurst



**B**oasting just 1200cc, the little People's Car shares a garage with the Caddy and was sold new by Scott's grandfather (see CCA June/July 2015). Its lady owner drove it for 21 years before agreeing to swap it for a new Beetle in '78 which she only kept for a few weeks before asking for her old car back! The Beetle was later bequeathed to Scott's father Neville (who by then ran the dealership) in her estate. A few decades later it's now in Scott's care. The little Vee Dub is utterly original with an unmarked interior and a mere 36 000 miles on the odometer. And it drives like no other Beetle I've driven, with a fantastically precise feel to the controls and compliant, rattle-free ride. A few miles behind the wheel was enough to get me mulling over how there's nothing to beat an original, unmolested classic... as Oily Rag Run organiser Dickon Daggitt always says: "A car's only original once!"

The Lederle Volksie is understandably a family heirloom and won't be changing hands anytime soon but, following a look through my back catalogue of posts from Vintage Cars for Sale in South Africa, I've realised that SA still has a good assortment of similarly original, low-mileage '70s and '80s classics. And some of them aren't badly priced, I'm happy to report. Such as the R38 000 asked for a one-owner 1973 Datsun 1200 Deluxe complete with spare keys, sales and service literature and a

mere (but fully warranted) 66 000kms on the clock.

That was back in May when another entry-level '70s gem was doing the rounds online: a one family-owned 1975 Austin Apache in desirable TC spec and complete with its original Clows Vereeniging sales receipt for the princely sum of R2 625. It was on offer for around 18 times that at R48 000.

A week later some R8k less would've bought a pristine (complete with period Perana louvre – remember those?) 1978 Ford Cortina 2.0 GL, while another 9 grand would've secured a 108 000kms-from-new, two-owner, 1977 Chrysler Colt, described as being "as it drove off the production line."

A month on, an even more familiar family saloon appeared in the form of a 1973 Chevrolet 4100. Claimed to be one of just 26 built, with a beige exterior and blue interior, it was on offer for R75 000. A few weeks later the same website featured another Sunny-Skies-and-Chevrolet-era icon: a '76 Chevrolet Caprice Classic. Complete with immaculate blue vinyl roof and metallic paint, this 5-litre executive saloon could've been mine for R195 000. Strong money but, back in '76, the Caprice was a serious range-topper with a whopping R11 970 price tag – double the sticker price of a 4100 and R3 400 more than the Constantia.

And the spate of original classic fare wasn't limited to the '70s either, thanks to a pair of immaculate 1980s Toyotas. First up was a 1983 Corolla 1.3 with a mere

86 196kms on the odometer and a factory-fresh engine bay. It was being sold by the elderly owner's son, who had possibly had a hand in the car's wide mag wheels – the only non-standard aspect to this trusty little saloon. The 'elderly owner' sales line also applied to two other '80s time-warps in recent months, starting with a one-lady-owner 1985 Opel Rekord GL 2.0 with just 83 540km on the clock and a R50 000 sticker price at its Benoni dealer, who would've had it up for R13 615, had they been an Opel franchise three decades back.

The other contender was a 1986 Toyota Corolla Avante with just 55 000km on the clock. Advertised as "stored in a basement and driven once a month" this beige-coloured 5-door hatchback was on offer in Strand down in the Cape with its original spare keys and service books.

But my personal favourite was another 1980s icon: an immaculate example of the home-grown 1985 Ford Sierra XR8. One of 250 famously built for homologation purposes, this 65 000km-from-new, two-owner example looked immaculate and was complete with the factory-spec Ronal alloys and photos of its build plate to prove authenticity. The R229 000 the owner was after may have been ten times the figure on Ford SA's original price list but it seemed fair value considering the XR8's rarity – and the 0-100km/h in 6.95 seconds and 231km/h metrics CAR magazine enjoyed when they tested one in January that year. **C**





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# THE GAME CHANGER



The late 1930s era of exuberant French coachwork led to a new wave in automotive design as the highly functional forms of the 1920s were swapped out for fantastic curves and sensuous lines. Almost overnight cars became objects of art and while there were others that did a fantastic job, the Parisian firm of Figoni et Falaschi was, and still is, regarded as the leading innovator in the groundbreaking new look.

The firm's Joseph Figoni teamed up with Talbot-Lago in 1937, signing an agreement to work together exclusively for a period. The finest product of this collaboration was the landmark 'goutte d'eau coupé' (drop of water or teardrop coupé), of which just 16 were produced in two different series. This didn't mean mass-production though with each Teardrop handbuilt, and consequently there are some variations from one car to another. For example, two were built with skirted front and rear wheels, some featured bullet headlamps between the radiator grille and fenders, while others featured headlamps recessed behind chrome grilles.

The first series, named 'Jeancart' after the first client, was an aerodynamic coupé with a slight notchback design. Five were built along

these lines, with three on the T150-C SS chassis, one on the 3-litre T23 chassis and one on the T150-C Lago Speciale long-wheelbase chassis.

A second series debuted at the New York Auto Show, and the Big Apple gave its name to the fresh 'Model New York' in honour of the occasion. It was similar in concept but featured an uninterrupted fastback profile. While not all second series cars were officially designated 'Model New York' by Figoni, the similar appearance and characteristics across the board usually see them listed as such by experts.

With over twenty years of model making under its belt and some fine-tuned skills, CMC felt the time was right to reproduce this automotive design icon with the high-end detailing it deserves. And the result is exquisite. Everything opens and closes (including the slip back sunroof) and the panel fit is incredibly good. Inside the cabin the detail abounds, from the leather upholstery with scale graining to an accurate dash filled with gauges, metallic toggle switches and buttons. Even the carpet pile is scaled correctly and the piping on the edge of these miniature rugs is just spot on.

This carpet continues in the boot, where you also find a spare wheel secured by removable leather strap. A closer inspection of this wheel shows some real steel laced spoke wheels, complete with spoke nipples. Under the long bonnet (which has actual



Almost overnight cars became objects of art and while there were others that did a fantastic job, the Parisian firm of Figoni et Falaschi was, and still is, regarded as the leading innovator in the groundbreaking new look





open louvres) there's another bit of art (both in model and full size form) with a beautiful 6-cylinder and triple carbs. CMC outdid themselves in this department with fabric plug leads, accurate terminals and wiring harness fittings, and the battery bracket even has butterfly nuts. What was chromed on the Talbot is chromed on the CMC. Likewise painted surfaces are painted and what was left as raw casting is emulated down to the finest detail. The same attention to detail continues underneath with every nut and bolt on the suspension there. So too are brake lines, multi-bladed leaf springs and where the original has wooden boards CMC did exactly that – only a lot smaller.

One of the benefits of copying exacting details is that the CMC Talbot bolts and screws together. There's no glue and clumsiness. It is truly a work of art that, although 18 times smaller, replicates one

of the most iconic automotive artworks in fitting style.

#### TALBOT LAGO COUPÉ T150 C-SS DATA

Engine:	6-cylinder in-line
Displacement:	3996cc
Power:	140 - 160bhp
Top speed:	185km/h
Production:	1937 - 1939
Units made:	16

Thanks to Bunny Wentzel of Sportique Collectable Models for letting us get up close and personal with this beauty. 📷

With over twenty years of model making under its belt and some fine-tuned skills, CMC felt the time was right to reproduce this automotive design icon with the high-end detailing it deserves

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# BLAST FROM THE PAST

While the 2017 Nash MVW3 doesn't fall into the classic period, the thought process behind it echoes so many great racing cars of the past. **Stuart Grant** was fortunate enough to get a race in the fifth car built by the Gauteng-based outfit.



**F**act: Motorsport is, and has always been, expensive. But over the years a number of cars have allowed us mortals the chance to compete at a decently competitive level on a relatively small budget. In the single seater racing world we saw Formula Ford and Formula Vee lead the way. And who can forget local legends Peter de Klerk and Doug Serrurier who engineered successful Formula 1 machines, taking the likes of Alfa road engines and making them really go? On the sportscar front manufacturers like Lotus, Lola and Elva offered cars with readily available mechanicals while closer to home the likes of the 'mass'-produced GSM Dart battled it out with one-off specials like the Thompson Special, Eric Brockhoven's Lolette and Terry Townsend's Renault-powered Mpiti.

Once again, the common denominator

Once again, the common denominator in the success of the above appears to be the use of off-the-shelf production car mechanicals – and here is where the Nash comes out fighting

in the success of the above appears to be the use of off-the-shelf production car mechanicals – and here is where the Nash comes out fighting. At the heart of the MVW3 is a 2-litre Volkswagen motor, as found in a Golf. Slotted transversely into the rear of a specially designed tubular chassis, this garden variety engine powers a standard Golf 5-speed gearbox, which drives the rear wheels via Golf driveshafts. And of course, to ensure you can pop down to the local spares shop in a last-minute rush the hubs, wheel bearing, brake callipers and discs on all corners are stock-standard VW. Wishbones, fuel tank, radiator and moulded seat are all made by Nash Motorsport and the crew carries a full complement of spares in stock and to the track. The same goes for the slippery looking fibreglass body and the locally-developed dashboard and data logger.

To date six units have left the small production line and a handful should be ready soon to meet the orders already placed – the goal being to have a number of cars ready and in stock so prospective buyers can come and pick the car/colour combo they want and leave proud owners the same day.

Where can you race? The Nash meets the requirements of various regional sportscar championships as well as the South African Endurance Series. And endurance racing is where this idea of simplicity (read: reliability) comes to the fore and is once again reminiscent of the giant-killing privateer cars of the past. Other than a re-profiled camshaft, lightened flywheel and some quality conrod bolts the engine is standard, which means that it should soldier on hassle-free for mile after mile. Tyres come in the form of 14-inch semi-slicks, which are not only at the cheaper end of the race tyre scale, but also suffer little in the wear department thanks to the car's light mass and good suspension setup. In the recent 6 Hour event, a Nash went the full race on a set of rubber and brake pads and was still good for a sprint race a fortnight later.

Endurance racing allows for multiple drivers and therefore budget-beating multiple ownership, and thanks to the reliability and local spares shops stocking parts, the Nash eliminates the need for a whacking great service vehicle and plethora of mechanics. Like the old days, you can take your daily car, hook on a trailer, load your mates and go racing.

The Nash might not be the fastest in the field of big money sportscars (although a 1





min 10 at Zwartkops isn't exactly slow) but it's capable of a giant-killing performance thanks to the consistency and reliability it offers.

The real race car feeling kicks off the moment I step over the high side bodywork and onto the seat – which has already been fitted with my own custom-moulded seat insert. The small diameter suede steering wheel clips off to allow a slide down into the snug cockpit. Pedal placement and the steering column are adjustable for height and reach but as this takes valuable pit stop time, a compromise between the drivers is best for endurance racing.

With full safety harness tightened and helmet on I rotate the master power switch, then flick on the ECU switch which gets the fuel pump ticking and the digital display springs to life – proudly announcing 'NASH Motorsport'. Flip the starter switch and the Golf motor bursts into life and settles into a lumpy idle without even the slightest tickle on the accelerator. Clutch action is no different from a regular road car, and neither is the gear linkage or layout. With first selected you can pull off just like you do on your way to work.

Sitting on the dummy grid I scan the dash display. Oil pressure and water temperature are there, so too is a tachometer which is ticking

away at just over 1000rpm. Blip the throttle and it jumps up the scale quickly. Warning lights across the top act as a shift light and various other functions, and for the first time ever for me there's an on-board lap timer too.

Qualifying goes well and I put the Nash into second place in class but the amount of turn in understeer is a concern. Under the guidance of the Nash crew I lower the front ride height and tyre pressure. Their experience shows, as the handling in race one is significantly improved. Being able to push a bit harder means the front aero splitter comes into play, which also helps the front end. All this said I do get jumped at the start by another Nash, and then fall into the clutches of another two. The result is a furious dice between equals, where one minor error more often than not means being demoted in the running order.

Race 2 is much the same, with a trio of Nashes doing battle while the one that got clear starts pulling out a lead. It's a treat to race in a class where proper driving and

setup is rewarded over money-sucking modifications.

As the chequered flag falls I drive the Nash straight onto the trailer – a true sign of a good race day. With it strapped down I have a laugh with my competitors as tales of the action are told with plenty of hand signals and smiles. It's only as I tow the car home that I realise I had never found out the overall result – and I don't actually care. This is the real racing I've heard the 'forefathers' going on about. Now I just need it to snow so I can walk across a school field barefoot. **G**

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- Emphasis on driving skills, not tuning skills
- Racing in a variety of styles and series
- A growing community of enthusiasts



# THE DUST BUSTERS



Roelof Coertse/Barry White.

Round 5 of the National Rally Championship moved to a cold and very dusty Bronkhorstspuit in August, for the Electrothread HMC Rally 2017. With the prospect of an Escort/Corolla RWD battle on the cards, fans of the Classic Class were not going to be disappointed. Lee Rose opted to sit this one out, intending to continue his campaign at the Western Cape round towards the end of September. However, with nine cars entered in the class, growth is evident and very satisfying.

By Terry Illman | Images by Johan Niemand and Sue Vacy-Lyle.

Newcomers to the championship, Pierre de Clerq and Gerhard Aucamp, both entered Toyota Corollas, as did regular Nico Nienaber. Nienaber however secured a drive in an R2 Polo for the event and sadly withdrew his very spectacular Corolla. The Escort brigade, represented by Roelof Coertse and Natie Booysen, were there to keep the hearts of the fans of the blue oval beating.

Coertse started the event as he would finish it, with a win on SS1 over the Toyotas of de Clerq and Aucamp. Ultimately winning eight of the 11 special stages, Coertse had some spirited competition from the pair of Corollas until Aucamp broke a gearbox in SS7, causing him to retire. One stage win by

Aucamp and two by de Clerq left the Golfs of Verlaque/Verlaque, Verlaque/Verlaque and Von Moltke/Illman eating the dust of the RWD machines. Only Natie Booysen, also without a stage win, hung on for 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in the Escort MkI.

## OVERALL CLASSIC RESULTS

- 1 Roelof Coertse/Barry White  
Ford Escort MkII
- 2 Pierre de Clerq/Mauritz Britz  
Toyota Corolla
- 3 Natie Booysen/Les Mackenzie  
Ford Escort MkI

As we have become accustomed to with Bronkhorstspuit, the rally was very compact. This formula works well for crews and spectators alike. Spectators are able to get a feel for the continuity of the rally as they are able to follow more stages than is usual. Spectator support on this year's HMC is the best we have seen in Bronkhorstspuit in some years. The fact that entry numbers were up all round for the two national classes, the open class and the Regional Championship played

a huge part in this, as did the fact that seasoned S2000 driver and former national champion Hergen Fekken was entered in the Electrothread Etios.

Some of the stages were very fast in sections, with long uninterrupted straights the order of the day. With only a narrow gate or a left or right kink to 'maybe' slow one down a little, most cars reached the rev limiter in top gear. Owing to the very dry and sandy conditions there were no long, fast sweeping corners and the fast sectors were often linked by technically tight parts, with the note-reading tempo keeping co-drivers paying attention.

Night stages in recent years have been engine-revving, tyre-squealing 0.6km to 1.5km-long affairs on tar, but SS3 of the HMC offered up an 11.7km gravel stage with adequate notice of dust, rocks, trees and fences. Big ones needed here. When the stage was repeated in full daylight on Saturday as SS7, the rocks, fences and trees were a lot more obvious, causing us to question just how brave we had been on Friday night.

The new HQ, parc ferme and prize-giving venue, the Willem Prinsloo Museum,

When the stage was repeated in full daylight on Saturday as SS7, the rocks, fences and trees were a lot more obvious, causing us to question just how brave we had been on Friday night





Natie Booysen/Les Mackenzie.



Roelof Coertse/Barry White.



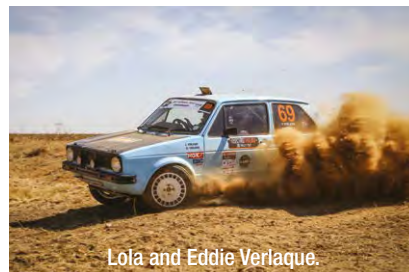
Megan and Oliver Verlaque.



Gerhard Aucamp/Mauritz Malherbe.



Hubi von Moltke/Terry Illman.




Loia and Eddie Verlaque.



Pierre de Clerq/Mauritz Brits.

put in a considerable effort to construct a challenging 5.7km mixed surface stage within the museum grounds, which provided a lot of fun for crews and spectators alike. It went from busy to very busy, when, after 5.07km, the surface changed to tar immediately after a long 'Acute Hairpin Right' through the gate. The short 0.66km of tar had 12 turns, eight of them square left or right turns (L9 or R9 in pace note parlance) around islands, trees and a stone parapet wall. It was nice to do a stage like this with some substance to it and not a kerb in sight.

To watch the differing styles on tar was interesting to say the least. Unfortunately, the big and powerful Skyline stopped 20m short of the tar – sadly, as their brute power and size have always been spectacular on stages like these and hark back to legendary Nissan/driver combos like Hannes Grobler, Kassie Coetzee and Jan Habig.

Well done to the Highveld Motor Club, NRC, Chris Coertse of Electrothread and the sitting Northern Regions chairman, ably supported as usual by all who keep our sport possible: marshals, scorers, officials and all support functions. Well done! 

## DRIVER PROFILE – JAN 'NATIE' BOOYSEN



Consistently quick in his Ford Escort Mk1 over many years, Natie Booysen tells us where his passion for rallying began. Natie grew up in Brendan, a small mining village 10km from Evander, in what was then the Eastern Transvaal. Natie's boyhood was spent in an area that was in later years to become the Trisec cluster of towns, with Sasol and all things 'oil from coal' being the engine that brought industrialisation to the region.

Little did Natie imagine that a Sasol would arise from the veld, let alone that he would wind up working there – and has been for 32 years, as Electrical Maintenance Foreman. Jan started his schooling at Laerskool Hoëveld in Evander and as he had always wanted to be an electrician, his high school years were spent at HTS Hoër Tegniese Skool – Springs, where he matriculated. Being of the generation that did national service, Natie duly went off to do his military training straight after school.

Natie has always had an interest in motorsport in all its forms: rally, F1, off-road and Moto GP. Natie's late uncle was involved in servicing for Ben van der Westhuizen and when he passed on, Natie started servicing for Ben. This led to him to buy an Escort Mk1 shell, which, with Ben's assistance he built into a rally car in two weeks... and so the bug bit.

Natie's other interest, like so many other petrolheads, revolves around cars, cars and more cars. He is presently restoring a 1973 Beetle, a Toyota Celica Supra with 2JZ engine and a Ford Escort 1600 GT. A bit of a rally sprint star as well, we trust that Natie will grace the scene with his enthusiastic presence for some years to come.



# MOVING HOUSE

BY RACEY LACEY



**W**hen my family first moved to South Africa, we rented a house in Highlands North in Johannesburg – 9<sup>th</sup>

Avenue, to be exact. We lived there for two years and over the years since then, the area changed completely – as things do with time. Years later, I would sometimes drive through the neighbourhood of my youth and feel sadness at the way things had changed. But there was something that always brought me solace: a little roadhouse on the eternally bustling Louis Botha Avenue – an unwavering fixture in an ever-changing landscape.

Back when we lived in the area, my Dad used to take us to the Doll House every Friday afternoon to get a soft serve (with a flake, please!) as an after-school treat. Across the road, we would go and choose our Friday night entertainment – a once-a-week movie – from the local Video Town. It, like the roadhouse, were jam-packed hives of activity, with every local clamoring to get their hands on the latest release on VHS before all the

good ones were taken.

Right next to the Doll House were sports grounds where my mother was a member at the local hockey club. Weekends were spent watching matches, hanging out with the other kids and spending our pocket money on Fanta Peach and cheese-and-onion Simba crisps at the clubhouse. Sometimes, if we were really lucky, we were allowed to go for a double thick milkshake and slap chips at the Doll House afterwards. Nothing beat that feeling of sitting in your Dad's car and eating greasy junk food balanced precariously on your lap. It felt like a gate pass to an ordinarily forbidden activity – and what kid wouldn't love that?

But my favourite part was the sign that read: 'No hooting, please flick lights'. I thought of it as this cool secret code and would get a real kick out of the whole roadhouse process – it all seemed slightly magical. I would gaze up at the windows of the doll house and wonder who lived there, ever hopeful of catching a glimpse of a princess, or at the very least another little girl, going about her girly

business while I watched from below. I was a bit young to be jolling at the time but I have heard stories of cross-eyed drunken youths chortling uproariously as they (probably deliberately) misread the word 'flick'... And when I think about it, even the use of the word 'flick', as opposed to today's more common 'flash', seems somewhat innocent and ever-so-slightly naive, more befitting of an era when people used expressions like 'Heavens to Betsy!' It was a different time.

Years went by and we moved away. The world changed, South Africa changed and things moved forward. But year after year, the Doll House remained – in a sort of silent protest – defiantly present. Video shops closed, drive thrus opened, people left, other people arrived, the world evolved and still the stubborn little roadhouse seemed to stand still in time. A year or so back, in a moment of nostalgia, The Driver and I decided to take a drive across town to check it out, not really believing it would still be going. But it was, still looking pretty much as I remembered it – if a bit shrunken and tired, as though it







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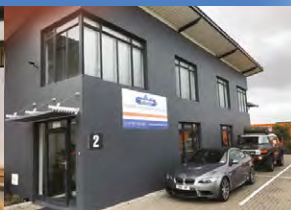
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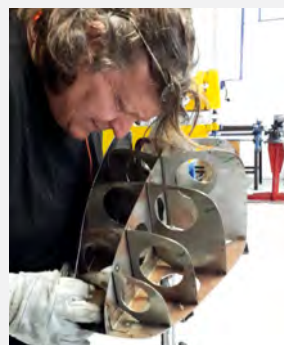
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