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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018

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CLASSIC
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ISO 12647 compliant

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WHEN WORK IS PLAY



Following a relaxing festive season, we are back in action and getting back into the swing of things. The calendar is already filling up and we are looking forward to a classic year ahead. As you'll see, there are some exciting events heading our way so start pencilling these into your diaries now.

Compiling the February issue started mid-December, while the masses were enjoying the holidays, so we thought it best to compromise with our cover shoot and found a vehicle as suited to work as it is to play – a Volvo 445 Duett that handles both tasks admirably, while retaining plenty of style. Keeping with the holidaying theme, Graeme Hurst recounts his vacations in a small block-powered Ford Transit camper and we also take a look at a South African favourite – the Jurgens Auto-Villa, based on various forms of Volkswagen's Kombi platforms. For a bit of something different, Russell Sheldon gives us a breakdown of the history of slot car racing... how many of us had a Scalextric set on the gift list last year?

We took advantage of a lack of Johannesburg traffic with a surreal drive in a brutal low-mileage Chevrolet Firenza V8 Can Am that spent its youth on track and is now back in good-as-then condition. A story

from Australia keeps up the horsepower game by tracing the tale of one of the wildest production 4-door sedans of the time (a 1971 Ford Falcon XY GT-HO Phase Three) that has returned Down Under after years in SA. Roger Houghton catches up with Andrew Cave, who had a hand in the mentioned Ford Falcon as well as in developing the dealer special Ford Cortina XR6 X-Occet, among other hot cars. On the 2-wheeled front Gavin Foster asks 'How much is too much?'

Mike Monk gets a drive in a rare DeSoto Roadster and heads into the second instalment on the unseen evocative 1960s racing images photographed by Dudley Schonegevel. This issue Jake Venter's fictitious interview segment sees him 'talking' to Ferry Porsche and we welcome on board new columnist Robert Peché, our resident 'youngtimer', to give us a view on classic motoring from a youthful perspective.

Your contributions like Letters, Gearbox Classifieds, News and Events and Reader's Ride fill the pages as usual. We love these so please keep them rolling in. Here is to a top-drawer 2018 to all our readers and thank you all for the continued support.

Stuart

A RACY START

As usual, Cape Town got off to a racy start to the New Year with the 157th running of The L'Ormarins Queen's Plate Racing Festival at Kenilworth race course on 5-6 January. Dating back to 1861, the QP is the continent's oldest horse race day and from last year became the first multi-day racing festival in the mould of such famous international racing festivals as Royal Ascot, Qatar Glorious Goodwood and the Kentucky Derby. This year's event was attended by over 5 000 local and international celebrities, socialites and racing fans, practically all dressed in the event's traditional blue-and-white theme.

The Queen's Plate certainly lived up to expectations. Twelve thoroughbreds left the starting gate and tension mounted as the field turned into the final straight of the 1 600-metre course. With 300 metres to go, SA Horse of the Year, defending champion and favourite Legal Eagle, ridden by Anton Marcus, was lying third a few lengths off powerful front-runner Captain America. Then Legal Eagle started to move forward and the support from the crowd grew louder and louder before bursting into a crescendo as it crossed the line a neck ahead of Copper Force and Captain America. Legal Eagle thus became only the second horse in SA history to earn more than R10 million.

FMM once again joined forces with BMW as co-sponsors of the festival. Apart from providing a fleet of courtesy vehicles, some of the German manufacturer's models were mixed with those from the FMM collection to showcase some motorised horsepower, old and new. All visitors to the course passed through an entrance gate manned by FMM's 1953 BMW 502. Inside the Style Village, the first BMW i8 convertible in the country was on view alongside the FMM 1938 BMW 328 while the museum's BMW Isetta was displayed in suitable attire. In full view of the grandstand was FMM's Nelson Mandela 46664 2004 BMW 760Li Security Edition charity car alongside a 1928 Phantom 1 and 1935 20/25 representing one of BMW's Rolls-Royce division.

Bathed in sunshine throughout, the festival offered many side attractions including numerous gourmet stands and three best-dressed competitions, all to a background of live jazz from what seemed like every prominent band in the city. Not to forget the performance of the Cape Minstrels, who heralded the LQP. A thoroughbred weekend.



TOUGH SEASON

Tough economic conditions and Cape Town's drought crisis had an inevitable negative impact on visitors to the Mother City over the December period, but FMM still achieved an impressive throughput during the season. While the total was naturally down a little on last year's record attendance, the museum was still very busy, hosting a number of functions as well. "The season was hectic for us all and figures were slightly better than expected in the circumstances," said curator Wayne Harley.

MARATHON TRABANT

Another end-of-year arrival at FMM is a marathon Trabant. Trabants were made in the then East Germany from 1957 to 1990 and in the early-'90s this particular car was driven west from Teltow, a town in the Potsdam-Mittelmark district in Brandenburg (near Berlin) to Ahlen, a town in North Rhine-Westphalia in the district of Warendorf, and then on to Cape Town. Little is known of the history behind the journey so a lot of research is going to be necessary, but the car is in remarkably good 'as-arrived' condition. Watch this space.



COOL CORVETTE

Before General Motors pulled out of South Africa at the end of 2017, one of its prized possessions was put into the care of FMM. In late 2010, GMSA imported two Chevrolet Corvette Z06s for promotional purposes, one gold and one black. One of the gold car's earliest tasks was to be part of *CAR* magazine's annual performance car shootout and, as then part of the editorial team, FMM's Mike Monk was allocated the car. As part of the shootout, Mike rode shotgun with Sabine Schmitz, the 'Nürburgring taxi driver', and still well remembers the whole occasion. Seven years later the Corvette has now been presented to FMM, and in January Mike was reacquainted with the car. Look out for an upcoming feature...



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 March 31 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 and Good Friday. 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. (NB: Motorcycles and buses larger than 23-seaters should park at Anthonij Rupert Wyne from where visitors will be transported to and from the museum by charabanc.)



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MAKE A — DATE —

We will continually update the 2018 events calendar. To submit your club event for publication in the magazine as well as on our website (www.classiccarafrica.com) please submit details along with an image or two to stuart@classiccarafrica.com.

JANUARY

27	Zwartkops Passion for Speed Festival	Zwartkops Raceway
28	Zwartkops Day of Champions Festival	Zwartkops Raceway

FEBRUARY

3	Killarney Passion for Speed Festival	Killarney Raceway
10-11	George Old Car Show	George
11	Pre-DJ Regularity Rally	Johannesburg
17	Annual Kombi Camp-out	Lindequesdrift
24	Summer Regularity Rally	Zwartkops

MARCH

3-4	Vintage Tractor Fair	Clocolan
9-10	National Rally Classic Championship	Ballito
9-10	DJ Classic Motorcycle Rally	Hillcrest (start)
10	Historic Tour Racing	Red Star Raceway
11	Maluti Show	Bethlehem
11	Any Dam Wheels Show	Krugerdsdorp
18	Piston Ring Auto Jumble	Modderfontein
21-25	Dundee Tour Regularity Rally	Dundee

APRIL

1	Angela's Picnic	Delta Park
7	Historic Tour Racing	Zwartkops Raceway
20-21	National Rally Classic Championship	Sabie
22	Vintage & Veteran Club Red Car Day	Parkhurst
22	Italian Classic Regularity Rally	Walkerville
29	Knysna Motor Show	Knysna
27-30	LM Radio Classic Rally	Emalahleni (start)

MAY

3-6	Knysna Simola Hillclimb	Knysna
19	Historic Tour Racing	Phakisa Freeway
20	Pietermaritzburg Cars in the Park	Ashburton
25-26	National Rally Classic Championship	Delmas
26	Kyalami Bike Festival	Kyalami
27	POMC Cars on the Roof	Kolonnade Retail Park

JUNE

2	POMC Mampoor Rally	Cullinan
3	Nelspruit Motor Show	Nelspruit
9	Vryheid Cars in the Park	Vryheid
24	Blairgowrie Toy Fair	Blairgowrie
24	Jaguar Regularity Rally	Bedfordview
30	Historic Tour Racing	Red Star Raceway

JULY

1	1000 Bikes Show	Germiston
6-7	National Rally Classic Championship	Port Elizabeth
15	Scottburgh Classic Car Show	Scottburgh
22	Austin Healey 100 Regularity Rally	Benoni

AUGUST

5	POMC Cars in the Park	Zwartkops Raceway
8-12	Magnum Rally	Hazyview
9	Bloemfontein Cars in the Park	Bloemfontein
11	Historic Tour Racing	Dezzy Raceway
17-18	National Rally Classic Championship	Bronkhorstspuit
26	Ferdi's Swap Meet	Midrand

SEPTEMBER

1-2	Kyalami Festival of Motoring	Kyalami
2	Wheels at the Vaal	Vanderbijlpark
9	VVC Parkhurst Vintage & Veteran Day	Parkhurst
16	Piston Ring Auto Jumble	Modderfontein
22-23	Platinum Regularity Rally	Rustenburg
23	Distinguished Gentleman's Ride	TBC
28-29	National Rally Classic Championship	Secunda
29	Historic Tour Racing	Zwartkops Raceway
30	Blairgowrie Toy Fair	Blairgowrie

OCTOBER

5-7	Rendezvous Tour Regularity Rally	Free State
6	Welkom Cars in the Park	Welkom
13	Alberton Old Car Show	Alberton
14	Peter Arnot Memorial Regularity Rally	Zwartkops Raceway
20	Worcester Wheels Show	Worcester
26-27	National Rally Classic Championship	Tzaneen
28	Studebaker Show	Irene

NOVEMBER

3	Historic Tour Racing	Red Star Raceway
11	Cape Classic Car Show	Cape Town
11	Portuguese Trial Regularity Rally	Johannesburg
25	Blairgowrie Toy Fair	Blairgowrie

DECEMBER

2	NASREC Classic Car Show	NASREC
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MONTHLY MUST DO EVENTS

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





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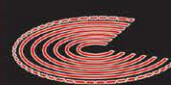


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CHEQUES Made payable to Zig Zag Publishing

BANKING DETAILS FOR EFT:

ZigZag Publishing; Nedbank, Hout Bay Branch
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PEDAL TO THE METAL

We are already a month into 2018... as they say, time flies when you're having fun. And yes, fun is what we are having, with the *Dino's* workshop packed with exciting classic projects. As with last year, the variety of vehicles is brilliant and it never ceases to amaze just how much depth and varied appreciation is on the South African classic car scene. With old car repair and restoration hidden problems arise but there is a huge amount of satisfaction to be had

when sitting back, analysing, forming a plan of action and then implementing a solution. As you'll see below, some of the projects on the go have already seen us having to find solutions and apply some old school bodyworking techniques. But we love it and are heading into 2018 flat out, with the pedal firmly on the metal, and loving every moment of bringing the cars we all love so much back to life.



This Beetle is another returning client job. The client stripped the car and removed it from the pan before delivery and although it's a relatively sound body, we had the usual spots of rust and old age to repair with fresh metal. With this done, the body was prepped and then painted in a brilliant period-correct colour that really pops. The client will now collect and assemble.



Although not technically in the shop yet, this desirable VW split window Kombi full body restoration has got the go-ahead and will start in the first week of February. It will be a big job, with plenty of metal panel work needed. We'll need to make up the likes of the floor by hand before panel fitment, primer and paint. The owner will do final assembly in the coming months.



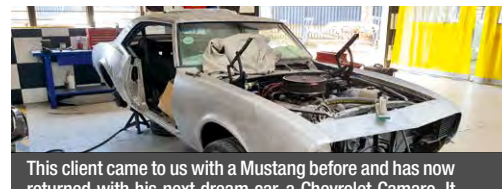
This Mustang, built to Eleanor spec, was not bad at all but the client wanted it even better. So we are busy sorting out each and every gap to line up perfectly and taking out any imperfections in the base metal. Following this it will be ready for paint, finished in the iconic *Gone with the Wind* colour scheme and have trim refitted.



It's getting hard to find solid early Beetle projects but the enthusiasts will go to great lengths to save them all. This split window vehicle is an example of this. We've cut out rust, hand-made a new rear valance and are now busy with the front section repairs. We've saved a section of the original paint in a corner not damaged by the sun to match it up when we paint. The owner will collect when this is done and complete.



An imposing Impala full body restoration project is underway, which means we must do all the metal repairs and replacement before painting and then putting all the trim back. Where parts are beyond repair the owner will source them from the USA but as we've learnt, these always take some fine-tuning to get the fit and finish just right.



This client came to us with a Mustang before and has now returned with his next dream car, a Chevrolet Camaro. It arrived under its own steam but looks can be deceiving as there was a lot more rot than initially met the eye. Plenty of work has gone into cutting out and repairing the sill and lower fender sections but we are on the home stretch to priming and painting. Once done we will put the puzzle back together, reusing the good brightwork and parts where possible. The owner will however order new parts, should they be required.



Another longer-term project, this Jaguar E-Type is almost ready for collection by the owner. The delay in replacement panels from the UK slowed down the progress and then the fitment and fettling had to be done before we could prep for paint. The engine bay and interior are now finished in the final colour and the exterior will be done in the coming days.



This beautiful Corvette C1 came in for a nose job. The car was in good condition but time and the fact that it is fibreglass meant that the front end paint had some crazing and cracking. This has been remedied and the Glasurit paint matched perfectly for a seamless appearance.



Regular readers will recognise this C20 truck project. The underpinnings were beefed up by a fabrication shop, who also fitted a hulking great Chevrolet Lumina V8 into the rails. It then came here for us to test fit and tweak the cab and load bin. That done we shot a tasteful cream colour. When complete it promises to be a real sleeper. It is ready for collection and fitment to the chassis by the owner.



The big one. This Dodge Charger might well take the title as the biggest job for 2018, and we are only three weeks into the year. Almost every bit of metal will be replaced, with perhaps the roof the only salvageable part. New panels are on order but we'll have to fabricate a large portion too, with even the chassis rails in a bad way. On a project like this it is key to do sections at a time and brace the body so as not to distort.



This extremely rare Morris Minor Cabriolet is almost set and lined up to go into the paint booth. To get it to this stage there was some cutting and new metal replacement as well as the removal of old age dents, and the guys are just finishing off flattening of the surfaces and making sure there are no impurities that could hamper the paint process.



Although in top shape already, the Mustang client wanted us to fit a rear spoiler that integrates into the bodywork. The fitment has been done but it needs to be painted as per the body. To do this, we will have to repaint the bootlid and rear wings and blend the paint in.

SA GRAND PRIX PARTY

If there is an event not to be missed in 2018 it is the South African Historic Grand Prix Festival, taking place from 25 November to 2 December – a celebration of the cars that participated in the South African Grands Prix of the 1930s.

The festival, which sees a number of events over the period, will be an exclusive and unparalleled opportunity for a limited number of the public to see these amazing cars in action.

THE EXHIBITION RACE

The Exhibition Race will consist of two display races and a track demonstration at the East London Grand Prix Circuit on 25 November. A significant portion of the original circuit from the 1930s still exists and the participating cars will once again come alive and drive corners such as the legendary Potters Pass. These corners, usually part of a public road, are not much changed from what they were 80 years ago!

The demonstration will be held in conjunction with a historic car race meeting, giving the public lots of activity and classic machinery in which to immerse themselves.

THE HISTORIC GRAND PRIX TOUR

Slotting in between the East London GP Exhibition Race and a Grand Festival in Cape Town, a leisurely road tour will take place for owners and the road-going cars from the Grands Prix, as well as other age-related vehicles. This will be an opportunity for many of these cars to relive the roads they once travelled from East London to the Grosvenor Grand Prix (held a week after the SAGP) between the races and for owners to enjoy the splendours of South Africa's famous landscapes, hospitality, cuisine, weather and luxury accommodation.

THE GRAND PRIX GARDEN PARTY

The culmination of the event will take place in the beautiful Western Cape. The high-end two-day event will see an evocative display of the original cars that took part in the original South African Grand Prix. There will also be a live demonstration of the cars, at controlled speeds, to allow the public to get up close to these magnificent cars.

A limited number of tickets to the Drivers Club VIP Hospitality facility are available for public or corporate sale. This five-star facility allows prestigious access to the event, with fine food on offer throughout the day and the opportunity to rub shoulders with the GP car owners, as well as other like-minded individuals.

The nine-day event will be topped off with a private gala dinner for the car owners and participants to crown off a never-to-be-forgotten celebration of these iconic cars.

Attendees are encouraged to relive the era by wearing 1930s/'40s period-correct clothing. For more information, visit www.sahistoricgp.com.

To date the likes of the Talbot 105 that entered the 1934, '37 and '38 SA Grands Prix, the famous ERA R3A from the 1939 event and the winning supercharged Maserati 8CM from 1934 have entered. It is going to be an insane stroll back in time and a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see such machinery.



KNYSNA NEEDS MORE.....

In June 2017, fires spread across the Garden Route affecting areas from Sedgefield, Knysna and the surrounding areas as far as Plettenberg Bay, leaving over 8 000 people homeless. The devastation resulted in families from formal and informal suburbs seeking urgent relief, supplies and support. Although many private and government institutions have already come to their aid, there is still a great need as the devastated areas are being rebuilt and communities are being supported. With the 2017 Knysna Motor Show achieving record levels, an amount of R150 000 was donated to charities and car and motorcycle enthusiasts who lost everything. The aim of the 2018 Knysna Motor Show is to exceed last year's amount and to donate more to the needy charities as Knysna gets rebuilt. To achieve this, we need the support of participants in the form of displaying their beautiful cars and motorcycles, and for the public to attend in great numbers.

Recognised as a premium motor show in SA with sponsorship again from Sanlam Private Wealth, it kicks off on Sunday, 29 April at the Knysna High School sports grounds. With a few public holidays around this weekend, it is the perfect time to take a holiday on the Garden Route. In addition, you could extend your stay to watch the very popular Jaguar Simola Hillclimb taking place the following weekend. It is guaranteed to be a motoring extravaganza week.

In 2017, the Knysna Motor Show attracted more than 400 high-quality and rare cars and motorcycles, with more than 6 000 visitors coming to look. Now in its seventh year, the aim is again to continue the growth and exceed the 450 mark. Categories on display will be all classics, with emphasis on sports classics, modern classics, veteran and vintage machines built prior to 1945 and, of course, collectable motorcycles of road, racing and off-road orientation. It's an invitation

event for the display vehicles but if you have a car or bike that meets the criteria please make contact. With plenty of top-quality food and drink stalls on hand, it is a great day out for the whole family.

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LAND ROVER 70TH RESTORATION

Land Rover will mark its 70th anniversary with a series of events and celebrations in 2018, beginning with the restoration of the vehicle that started it all – one of the three pre-production Land Rovers shown at the 1948 Amsterdam Motor Show launch. This gave the world its first glimpse of the shape that would become instantly recognisable as a Land Rover.

For years the whereabouts of this launch Land Rover was a mystery. The demonstration vehicle from the Amsterdam Show was last on the road in the 1960s, after which it spent 20 years in a Welsh field before being bought as a restoration project; it then lay languishing unfinished in a garden. Following its surprise discovery just a few miles outside of Solihull, UK – where the car was first built – the experts at Jaguar Land Rover Classic spent months researching in company archives to unravel its ownership history and confirm its provenance.



The team behind the successful Land Rover Series I Reborn programme, which allows customers to own a slice of Land Rover history with meticulously restored Series Is, will now embark on their most challenging project yet: a year-long mission to preserve this historically significant prototype and enable it to be driven again.

● CAPE TOWN MOTOR SHOW ●

The Cape Town Motor Show, in partnership with the City of Cape Town, is set to wow the crowds again at Sun GrandWest, from 2-4 March 2018. It promises to be a weekend of incredible fun with a broad appeal to all car and bike buffs, petrolheads and the entire family, with loads of entertainment for everyone.

The Mother City will again boast a motor show that rivals any of the international equivalents. CTMS will span the length and breadth of the Sun GrandWest Entertainment World, including the Market Hall, Grand Arena, the Sun Exhibits Hall, and an outdoor area, and will include a Drifting Zone, Nostalgia Zone, Chill Zone, and camping and 4x4 area.

Explore the automotive industry's latest creations, featuring classic, luxury and exotic cars, with all the major vehicle manufacturers represented. Visitors can get up close and personal with all the newest vehicle models that will soon be at dealerships around the country.

Motorbike enthusiasts will be glad to know that if it has two wheels (sometimes three) and an engine, it will be at the Cape Town Motor Show. The best products, bikes and services available from leading companies across the

globe will be represented – and to top it off, one lucky visitor will leave the CTMS with their own Harley-Davidson!

Drift car displays will run all weekend and spectators are welcome to either watch from the side lines or, for those brave enough, join our experts as a passenger as they take you for the spin of your life.

Additionally, visitors will have the opportunity to see numerous accessories and auto-related exhibits, competition vehicles, muscle cars, monster trucks, antique and collector cars, engine modifications (pimped-up rides), Sound-Off Beats competitions, virtual simulations, custom trucks, hot rods, car wrapping, and much more.

This year also boasts a number of mouth-watering new additions that include a major new outdoor area with the Wildebeest 4x4 Challenge Club. Tracks will be built for all classes of vehicles to challenge technical skills as well as the different cars' capabilities – all 4x4s from your standard off-the-show-room 4x4 to your extreme 4x4s. The CTMS is also excited to

announce that another new spectacle is The Dusty Rebels and the Bombshells area. Here visitors can expect axe throwing, selected pre-'63 cars, café racers, skate boarding & BMX demos, food trucks and much more.

To top things off, Jaguar Land Rover South Africa will be showcasing their world-first Two Icons Tour experience, which has just been in JHB at the top of Sandton City and now comes to the CTMS. This exhilarating experience will give guests an opportunity to experience Jaguar's Art of Performance Tour and Land Rover's Above and Beyond Tour, like never before, in one location.



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50^{UP} FOR THE PLUS 8

To celebrate fifty years of the Morgan Plus 8, the firm has announced plans to build a 50th anniversary limited edition in time to launch at the March Geneva Motor Show. Morgan will make just 50 of these, and they will pay tribute to the Plus 8's 50 years of history, from its design to the noise it makes – it will be the last to use the 4.8-litre BMW V8 engine.

Each design detail of the Plus 8 50th has been considered to celebrate the Plus 8 and what it has meant to Morgan and its customers over the last 50 years. It's not the first time Morgan has released a special edition of the Plus 8: in 2002 it rolled out the Le Mans '62 model with a 40-car run, the Anniversary Edition was released to mark its 35th birthday in 2003, and 60 units of the Plus 8 Speedster model arrived in 2014. These are all sure-fire collectables so it goes without saying that this latest offering will top the pile with enthusiasts. There is no word on pricing yet and no images have been released but you can bet it will have the classic lines of its forefathers.



GEORGE IS READY



Fans of veteran, vintage and classic cars can look forward to an exciting and interesting George Old Car Show in 2018. While there will be a classic wherever you look, must-see highlights will include 40 British-manufactured vehicles in the main arena and the Volkswagen AutoPavillion's, 'Meet the Beetles' exhibition.

The 22nd George Old Car Show, driven by Oakhurst Insurance Company Ltd, will take place on 10-11 February 2018. It is expected that 900 vehicles will be on display, with more than 12 000 visitors attending the show at the school grounds of PW Botha College.

Vehicles manufactured before 1975 to be displayed must be registered on the website of the Southern Cape Old Car Club at www.scocc.co.za. Contact Klaus Oellrich at 076 764 0897 for more information.



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WHEN WE ALL LIVED IN A YELLOW SUPERVAN

Editor Stuart's CCA Facebook post late last year about the famous Ford Transit Supervan (in which he commented that we'd always thought a Supervan was a Van der Merwe!) brought on a bout of nostalgia for a V8-engined Ford Transit we had in the family in the late 1970s and early '80s.

By Graeme Hurst

Rifling through family albums brought back a raft of memories of the van my late father Peter built up and referred to as his 'poor man's Range Rover'. But, unlike the real Supervan, my recollections of the trusty Ford weren't centred around crowd-pleasing stunts on a racetrack. Rather they were of some of the most drama-filled events the Hurst family's ever had on four wheels. Events that involved many a trip through the Karoo (with bouts of overheating), some spectacular fireworks that would do a pyromaniac proud and careening off sideways into a donga after a trailer the van was towing jack-knifed on the N3. Oh, and my mother Heather needing to have her finger on the trigger of the family 9mm while my dad put the engine back in late one night in the Magaliesberg...

Not heard of the original Supervan? Back in 1971 in the UK, it was a publicity stunt

involving the marriage of a Ford Transit with the heart and lungs of a racing car to boost both Ford's racing heritage and its reputation for load-carrying products. And quite some combination it was: the racing car it was based on was none other than a Ford GT40 and its 400bhp Gurney Weslake V8 translated to 0-60mph in under 7 seconds and 150mph performance – a serious crowd thriller that was a far cry from the rather pedestrian pace of the production variant.

Fast forward a few years – and several thousand miles south – and my dad was inspired to create his own version as a family camper-cum-tow vehicle. With a family of five and his gliding hobby to think of (not to mention a limited budget), an all-out Supervan clone wasn't exactly practical (mid-engined layout aside) but his efforts bore some allegiance to the uprated van by boasting a small-block Ford V8 at its heart. The project came about after meeting a colleague at work who built up hot rods in his spare time and had figured out a recipe for easily uprating a Transit.

My earliest memories stem from the day he bought it: a decidedly battered ex-post

office van (it was in a dark pink colour and still had the post office livery on the sides) that rumbled up the driveway. My recollection is that he'd spotted it at a dealer on Eloff Street for R265, as the white-washed price on the windscreen attested. I don't recall its year of manufacture but it was a panel van with the original asthmatic V4 engine. That only remained in situ long enough for the trusty Ford to be driven each weekend up to the local veld at the edge of Northcliff, where he set about panel beating the hell out of it without annoying the neighbours. The body rectification gobbled up several weekends, with evenings in between spent applying filler to the straightened panels.

It was hard work but I recall my father frequently taking solace (and thrilling me!) with a nightly firing (while on blocks on the garage floor) of the lump of Detroit iron he'd sourced to go in 'the fireplace', as he called a car's engine bay. This piece of iron was a 302ci V8 that had seen service in a Ford Mustang which evidently ended up on its roof one night... the engine's desirable Offenhauser manifold and four-barrel carburettor – I recall my dad's eyes lighting upon spotting those bits when we went to collect the engine on a small holding on the

But, unlike the real Supervan, my recollections of the trusty Ford weren't centred around crowd-pleasing stunts on a racetrack



Vaal River – no doubt having had a hand in the Stang's demise...

Back home he got busy making space for the V8's length by cutting out the Transit's firewall and fabricating a box cover to enclose the extra four cylinders which now lay between the front footwells.

Of course, the added grunt of the small block necessitated various other upgrades, most notably the brakes, with the Transit's drum-braked front end ditched for Volvo uprights, complete with discs. The rear end got upgraded too, with a diff out of a Ford Fairmont. Like the rest of the bits, it was sourced in a proper old-fashioned scrapyards where you pulled the 'scrap' off yourself – I recall a couple of scrapyards 'handlagers' turning the car on its side to aid removal – before it was weighed on a colossal scale and green notes changed hands at a set rate per kilo.

The Ford back end must have been pricey as a result but it was probably offset by lighter items such as a Ranchero brake servo and an extra Transit fuel tank, which was much needed once that four-barrel carburettor got wind of the glider trailer he used to haul around.

There was also some bartering of parts.

During a visit to a mag wheel manufacturer in Fordsburg, we spotted the proprietor's Ford Transit that had been sprayed up as a parts delivery vehicle but was off the road because of a blown engine... cue an immediate swap of the old V4 for four mag wheels!

To finish off the upgrade my dad sprayed the van in yellow before he and my mom got busy fitting it as a camper, complete with bench seats that could be repositioned to create a double bed, a kitchen sink and stove that could be accessed through the rear doors and a foldout side table with a cupboard for glassware. They also created a removable side awning and a set of curtains.

The camping fixtures came in handy for the annual gliding club trip to Harrismith over Easter, although the first one ended in disaster after the aged trailer's 'disselboom' let go while we were passing a truck. The resultant sway from the truck's slipstream pulled the van off the tarmac and sent it – complete with my two brothers and I who were sleeping on the rear seats – backwards across the opposite lane into a ditch where it rolled onto its side momentarily before the momentum of the trailer pulled

it upright again.

I recall the veld flattening against the side windows before seeing sky again as the van came to rest. Thankfully none of us was hurt, although my mother had bruised ribs after my dad yanked her seatbelt tight at the last second. The damage (apart from the shattered glider's wings) was limited to some dented lower bodywork and a leaf spring which had a top leaf resembling an upside-down 'U' between the shackles before the left back tyre came off; that Fairmont rear end clearly didn't like leaving the tarmac!

The van was soon fixed and, attached to a new trailer, made several uneventful annual Easter pilgrimages thereafter, along with umpteen December trips to the Cape. Although the V8 was incredibly reliable over the years there were a few hiccups from time to time; I recall the distributor getting drenched when a drain pipe off the firewall came loose in a torrential Joburg

I recall the veld flattening against the side windows before seeing sky again as the van came to rest



Ford's Supervan 3.



Supervan 1.



Supervan 2.

thunderstorm. We were at a New Year's bash in Sandton and ended up having to borrow the host's (a gynaecologist and fellow glider pilot) Peugeot 504 Super 7 to get home.

The next day my dad and I were back with fresh set of plugs to get the V8 running but evidently there'd been so much cranking after the champagne had been popped the night before that there were still puddles of raw fuel in the intake manifold, which resulted in a spectacular sheet of flame as the engine finally roared into life! The pyrotechnics probably would've died away naturally if it weren't for the actions of the doctor's helpful gardener who, witnessing the drama while washing down the stoep, took it on himself to empty a bucket of soapy water over the V8!

With a couple of gallons of Handy Andy-rich H_2O now deep in the guts of the motor the Holley carb had to come off (I recall it going in the wife's oven to dry out between courses for her luncheon party) and all the plugs taken out so that the motor could be spun over to pump out the water. Hardly desirable activity on a posh Sandton driveway at the best of times, let alone on

New Year's Day.

More pyrotechnics followed a few months later at one of the weekend trips to the old Baragwanath Aerodrome when a gas leak set the stove on fire while my mother was attempting to make tea. My dad was getting ready for take-off in his glider when word of the fire reached him and he arrived on the scene seconds later, still strapped to his parachute, although bystanders had by then extinguished the fire with a picnic blanket. Apart from singeing my mother's hair and my brother Kevin's eyebrows (he was a toddler in her arms) the damage was thankfully limited to blistered paint on one of the rear doors.


It was another example of the seemingly never-ending drama with Buttercup – as my dad's colleagues at NCR nicknamed it – which I recall also once briefly running out of control up the hill in Honeydew when my mom floored the accelerator pedal to overtake and the Holley's butterflies got stuck open. The Transit took off for a few seconds before she reached for the ignition key. A few minutes later a friendly 'speed kop' pulled over to assist and helped release the throttle after emitting a low whistle when he spotted what was under the bonnet.

But the most memorable for me was a trip back from Mountain Sanctuary Park in the Magaliesberg late one Sunday evening. Having spent the day with friends staying in the caravan park, my folks decided to take a gravel pass as a short cut rather than a lengthy tar route.

Only the road was much rougher than they anticipated

and the resultant constant lurching over rocks sheared the bolts in one of the engine mounts. I recall the cooling fan emitting a racket as it subsequently fouled something after we turned onto the tar and accelerated, with the engine unknowingly now at an angle. My dad pulled over to inspect and came back to the window to announce that: "you won't believe it but the bloody engine's fallen out!" By now it was pitch dark and our parents were stranded with three kids on the side of the old Sun City road. To add to their concerns a Toyota HiAce taxi had already pulled over in the distance but nobody had got out to assist. "Waiting for us to abandon the van," my dad surmised.

Conscious of safety (this was a decade or more before cell phones) their solution was to lock us in the van while they got underneath; my dad with a bottle jack and a rock to lift the engine so he could remove one of the snapped bolts (no idea how he did that with the basic tools he carried) and replace it with one taken out of the remaining 'good' engine mount on the other side, while my mom lay next to him with the square Eveready torch in one hand and the 9mm in the other – and no I'm not referring to a spanner size... Their efforts did the trick and we were safely home in Northcliff at 2am after a very gentle drive back.

I've long admired my late father's skills on many fronts: apart from designing and building furniture and parts of our home, he also restored various gliders and classic cars... but his efforts that dark and rather scary Sunday night under our own Supervan still leave me in awe of his abilities. 

A few minutes later a friendly 'speed kop' pulled over to assist and helped release the throttle after emitting a low whistle when he spotted what was under the bonnet



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By Robert Peché

OLDER WOMEN

We may not have witnessed the glory years of Alfa GTVs battling it out against BMW 2002s and Escorts at famed roadhouses, but perhaps that's why many youngsters love these cars



There are many classic car drivers who have an incredibly impressive knowledge of how it all works: the bits where air and fuel mix, the spark, the compression and how it gets rid of the gases. Personally, I know where the accelerator pedal is and how to turn the lights on. Extreme elation ensues when I successfully locate the bonnet catch. I can only imagine the pleasure of knowing where the fuse box is.

It's a generational thing. Our dads (and even some moms) know how to use a spanner, but most guys my age think a torque wrench is a new feature on Facebook Messenger. It's a problem when things go wrong mechanically.

The reality, however, is that the classic car baton needs to be passed at some point from the older to the younger generation. The great love of classic cars is as relevant to young people today as it is to older drivers, even if for different reasons. We may not have witnessed the glory years of Alfa GTVs battling it out

against BMW 2002s and Escorts at famed roadhouses, but perhaps that's why many youngsters love these cars – the stories have been passed down to us.

I bought my '69 Alfa 1300 GT Junior (the beautiful Stepnose) at the age of 26, a few weeks before I got married (my wife knew *precisely* what she was signing up for). She's old enough to be my mother (the car, that is). Indeed, my mother didn't appreciate my comment at the time that we would see who leaks more at the age of 70 – her, or one of Italy's finest.

Full disclosure: my mother's side of the family is Italian. In fact, my grandparents are from the region of Italy that includes Torino, an important place for Alfa Romeo. A 156 2.5 V6 was my steed of choice at university, with every single cent of student-rate slavery going into petrol and insurance (no regrets). I was lucky enough to also rebuild an Alfa Berlina 2000 with my father at the time... many lessons learnt on that one.

After a few other cars along the way, today the somewhat restored Stepnose is kept company by a '76 GT Junior 1600 and an Alfa MiTo QV. Once an Alfa driver... always poor, as the saying goes.

Since January 2016, I've been lucky



enough to call Cape Town my home. What do you get when you combine Cape Town with classic cars? Rust, quite frankly. But while rusting, you also get to enjoy some of the finest scenery that the world has to offer.

That's Classic Ownership for Millennials (or, appropriately, .COM for short) piece of advice Number 1: if you don't have a garage, don't bother. Seriously, just don't do it. Spending money on a beautiful classic and watching the brown cancer take over the sills is not going to endear the world of carburettors to you – or to your significant other, to whom you promised this would be a great investment.

While I'm at it, here comes .COM piece of advice Number 2: if you love a clean garage floor, free of oil stains, she's too old for you, bro. The problem is compounded if you have Italian taste (or, let's be honest, if you own a Land Rover). I've been told before that a proper restoration means no oil leaks. That's great and all, but a proper restoration also means I wouldn't be able to afford the garage to start with, so there needs to be a compromise. In my world, a compromise is some strategically positioned cardboard on the garage floor.


My final piece of advice for today relates

to spousal appreciation. I had a dream that my young bride would love every minute of sharing this car with me. It turns out that I was more ambitious than Martin Luther King Jr.

"It hurts my bum. Why does it smell funny? It's noisy! And it's SO hot in here..."

It's tough to disagree with any of the accusations made by the Wife to the Mistress, in this case. The Mistress has a front passenger seat with an adjustment lever waiting to rip a hole in your pants and side cushioning designed to test your enthusiasm for cars in the first corner. Also the seat is skew, pointing more towards the side window than is advisable. It does make it harder to hear the complaints, at least.

My wife is actually supportive, if saying stuff like "well, he could be into hard drugs instead" can be called support.

Anyway... what is that smell? It reminds me of the lawnmower I spent hours behind as a high school kid, making money that would eventually dissipate inside the fuel tank of a V6. But who cares? The older women thing is fun! 

I had a dream that my young bride would love every minute of sharing this car with me. It turns out that I was more ambitious than Martin Luther King Jr.

Rob is an investment banker by day and a car nut at all times. With a strong preference for classic cars and all things racing, he spends most Saturdays in his Zanardi 125cc 2-stroke kart at Killarney and most Sundays in his classic Alfa on the Cape's finest roads. He is married without children at this stage, which he fears is why he can afford to do this stuff. He also has a blog on Facebook that you can follow – Carbs and Coffee South Africa.

MGA MISSING LINKS

Hi Stuart,

Thanks for a very interesting magazine. I read with interest Bo Giersing's letter on the MGA Twin Cam cars. I have been liaising with Bo as I recently acquired a twin cam project car – in fact, the one green roadster (YDH51830) mentioned in Bo's notes. Bo saw the car when I took delivery and identified it as the one that raced in the 1960 Grand Central 9 Hour, driven by Cruikshank and Kelsey.

The SA MGA register shows it was sold in March 1960 but the buyer is not named. This car has been in the same family since January 1965 but nothing is known for the period 1960 to 1965.

I am assuming that if it was sold in March 1960 and raced in October of that year that either Cruikshank or Kelsey was the owner. An Internet search confirms Bo's report that it was driven by T. Cruikshank and Bob Kelsey but

it appears that this was the only event that was recorded.

I have restored the car and it definitely has a racing engine and a few other mods. Records show that Cruikshank/Kelsey raced under the banner of the 'Scuderia Los Amigos'.

I would be very interested if any of your readers can shed any light on this car for the missing years between 1960 and 1965.

Unfortunately, the seller knows nothing of the history and said he was given the car in 1985 as a project by his uncle, a Mr Arthur Kinsley of Pretoria, who bought it in 1965. I can be contacted on email at reversion@mweb.co.za.

**Best regards,
Randall Everson**



Hello Randall, it is brilliant to see another historic car preserved and the history of it chronicled. I would have pointed you towards Bo Giersing for information but you beat me to it there. So let's see if any readers can shed some light on the car's missing history. The mention of Scuderia Los Amigos has triggered a story angle I have been wanting to pursue – local race teams like the Los Amigos and Ecurie Aquila – so I too am asking readers to send in their memories on that. Thanks for all the support; I will send any correspondence I get.

Stuart

PROTEA RINGS THE BELLS

Dear Stuart,

Further to the mention of the book on the Protea, can you let me have a contact for the author. I should like to contact him and give him the address of Jan van der Merwe, and arrange to possibly get a couple of the books – one for myself and one for Anthony Burt, who raced with us in HRCR in the early days.

There are many names mentioned in the book which ring a bell with me. For example, Ralph Langer – he raced an E-Type with the HRCR in the late '70s. He also widened the steel wheels I had on my MG TF (recently sold after 43 years' ownership) in his workshop in Robertsham, where parts

of the Protea were manufactured. I remember watching him weld the spacer ring into the rim, as the wheels were rolled across a steel-topped table by his assistant. The four wheels were still on the car when it went to its new owner a couple of years ago.

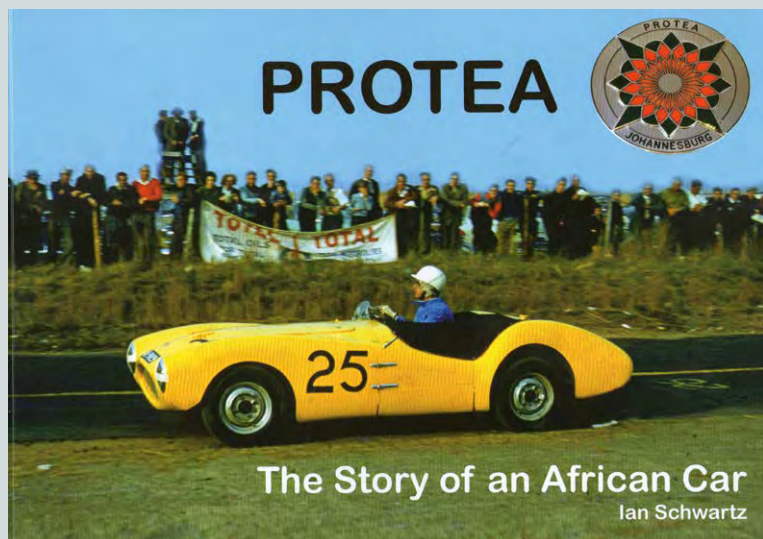
Then there is mention of Lambooy's in the book, the upholsterers. They made the vinyl top and tonneau cover, covered the seats and made the door panels on the TF after we put it together in 1972. That work lasted till the early '90s, when the TF motor was done for the third time and I decided to have the body taken off and repainted, with a new proper top, seat leather etc. This was brought in from the UK by Rolo Motors – the rebuild done by Greg van Reenen, who left Rolo in the middle of the job and finished the car at his home in Quellerina.

Not to mention the very many names of other great guys who are mentioned in the book who I have met – some I still see today on occasion.

**Take care,
Gavin Ritchie**

Hi Gavin, I remember the TF well and always thought it looked very sporty on the widened steel rims. I will pass on your mail to author Ian Schwartz and he will get in touch with you. The stories triggered by his book keep flowing in at a rapid rate, possibly enough to make a few more chapters in a second edition...

Stuart



FRENCH CONNECTION

Hi Stuart,

Some comments on the December 2017 issue. It's great to see my Instamatic picture of Sarel van der Merwe in front of his Citroën GS1220 in a magazine (Page 102 of the December 2017 issue). And the pictures in the 'Swinging Sixties' article on pages 68 through 72 are great – more articles like these please. Attached find a blurry colour image of Libero Pardini's Valiant (mentioned in the SEFAC feature) during the 1964 Republic Day Trophy. Thanks for the magazine.

Regards,
Emil Sluiter

Hi Emil, thanks for the use of your Instamatic picture. With the resurgence of Group 1 replicas on the go at the moment, there is a huge need for colour period images to help builders accurately represent the cars of the era. Having seen the vast array of South African race cars you built in scale format, I can only imagine your library of colour images is impressive. All those interested should have a look at the 'Home Made Models' group on Facebook to see some of Emil and other passionate model makers' machines.

The 'Swinging Sixties' article was fantastic, with some outstanding photography. Mike Monk did well to find this hidden collection and put the story together. The good news is you will see part 2 of the article in this edition. Thanks for all the support and all the best for 2018.

Stuart



KOBUS MOTORS

Hi Stuart,

Firstly, I thank you and your team for a great publication which I look forward to each month, keep up the good work. As an owner of some great old cars over the years and as a member of Piston Ring for over thirty years and now over eighty years old, I am still keen on all matters relating to old cars and currently own a 1983 Datsun 280 ZX, which is in great condition.

The reason for my contacting you is your recent reference to one Errol Kobus, who I have known for many years and who is now retired and living in KZN near Pietermaritzburg. Errol started out working for the Fiat agents in East London and was soon modifying Fiat 500s and 1100s, to the envy of us young guys who owned Fiats. This was in the 1950s.

After some years he owned his own garage and became a keen owner of Mercedes, although not the local agent. As you know, he raced them in club and local national events, with great results. I remember he had an almost new 190 SL in his collection.

He then started racing sportscars, starting with a Dart and moving on to the Lotus X1, followed by an Elfin. He did well in all

the events he entered with them. I also remember that together with his workshop manager, one Ivan Web, Errol himself did a lot of graft to improve his performance times on the East London and Port Elizabeth tracks.

I will forward Errol's contact details, as when talking to him recently he agreed that if you wish to contact him he could possibly give you a great story on his racing experiences, how he acquired his cars, what happened to them and where they may possibly be today.

Regards,
Nigel Haselau

Thank you so much for the kind words and contact details, Nigel. A chat and story with Errol would be fascinating. I will make contact with him and head down to KZN soon. These personal stories are what really make us and the magazine tick. Glad to hear you are still playing cars and the Datsun 280 ZX is a sure-fire future classic – the single cam straight-6 is one of the smoothest and best-sounding motors around and soaks up the miles effortlessly – like any true Gran Tourer should.

Stuart

A SAD DAY

Dear Stuart,

I was at the track when Zed Smith's accident happened and witnessed from Clubhouse. My recollection is that it took place on the straight just before the exit gate before the tower.

As Zed used to spectate with our little group at Clubhouse, three of us rushed up to the accident in time to see Zed loaded onto the ambulance. Such a sad day for us! I am sending via PostNet a rather poor photo I took of Zed on his haunches next to Liz Maggs at one of the races. Such a great guy! I would love to know whether the Lotus 11 survived.

Regards,
Ken Stewart

Hi Ken, thank you for the correspondence and sharing the sad moment. While I have seen the name in various event programmes over the years I was unaware, until the Protea article was published, just how deep his involvement in our sport ran. I will gather what details I can and be in touch



with you to help put together a story on the man. As for the Lotus 11, I am sure a reader will be able to clarify if it survived and its whereabouts now.
Stuart

2002 TOPS THE PILE

Dear Editor,

I am an English, former Royal Air Force engineer and teacher who spends much of the year travelling. During my current wander in South Africa, I found a May 2017 edition of *Classic Car Africa* and enjoyed the article on the BMW 2002 rebuild.

I owned four of these lovely cars. The first was my only new car, a maroon 1971 model which I collected from the Munich factory whilst stationed in Germany in the R.A.F. It was cheaper than a Ford Cortina! I had intended to tour the factory but, whilst waiting for the tour to start, I drove my new car and enjoyed it so much that I continued on the 400-mile journey back to my R.A.F. station. I never did get a tour of the factory. After just over a year, when the guarantee had run out, the differential started complaining so I drove down to Munich where the factory replaced the offending item and charged me for half a litre of oil! Whilst waiting for my car, I recognised a man who had bought a CS model on the same day as me. He had the same transmission problem and it turned out that BMW had received a faulty batch of differentials.

Two second-hand models in different shades of green were followed by a second-hand blue automatic transmission car. It had been rebuilt, but not to a good standard. I loved driving these vehicles and they carted numerous members of my Cub Scout packs to assorted events,

as well as towing a trailer loaded with 10 kayaks.

When I could no longer afford to keep the last car, I managed to get it road-tested in a classic car paper in England and almost immediately found a buyer. I must confess that when I upgraded to a Skoda Fabia Classic with power steering, I found it much less tiring to drive.

Despite this, the BMW 2002 remains my favourite car and my four-year-old grandson now possesses a Hot Wheels model of one.

Best wishes,
Archie Bowman

Hi Archie, I am on the same page as you, with BMW's 2002 up towards the sharp end of my desirable classics list. I was lucky enough to have a 1969 model as my first car – bought as a bit of a fixer-upper when I was 16 and finished in time to drive when 18. I then sold it to buy a Citi Golf. A year or so later I regretted this and found a very original 1970 model. There are not many better-suited cars to get into the world of classics with – they offer simplicity, performance, practicality and even a good selection of spare parts.

Sadly I sold this one to fund a Ford Capri and then the 2002 prices took off. I too am left with a Hot Wheels model and a few pics.

But let's keep dreaming of 2002s.

Stuart





1969 Alfa Romeo 1300Ti
Maroon with black interior, exceptionally original car with known history, **R225,000**



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THE TEAM PLAYER



Before his passing, legendary South African racer Fanie Viljoen started penning his memoirs. Sadly he never completed the project but when his son **Grant Viljoen** saw the photo of Fanie with Jack Nucci in the December issue of *CCA*, he forwarded us an excerpt that chronicles the time with Nucci.

Otello Nucci (generally known as 'Jack') was the owner of a bus company, based in Pretoria. His buses ferried passengers to and from the outlying areas to the north and northwest of Pretoria. The bus depot and workshops were situated in Pretoria West. I had met Jack when I joined RW Evans Garage, where he made business visits. I am not able to clearly recollect what the business was about, but I suspect that he may have had an interest in a company that supplied RW Evans Garage with Maserati mopeds.

I received a phone call from Jack Nucci, who invited me to lunch at his workshop. He employed only Italian artisans to repair and maintain his fleet of buses. We sat down in a large kitchen with his workshop staff of 12 or 15 men, to whom I was introduced. We

were all presided over by Beppe, Jack's friend of many years, who was also the cook.

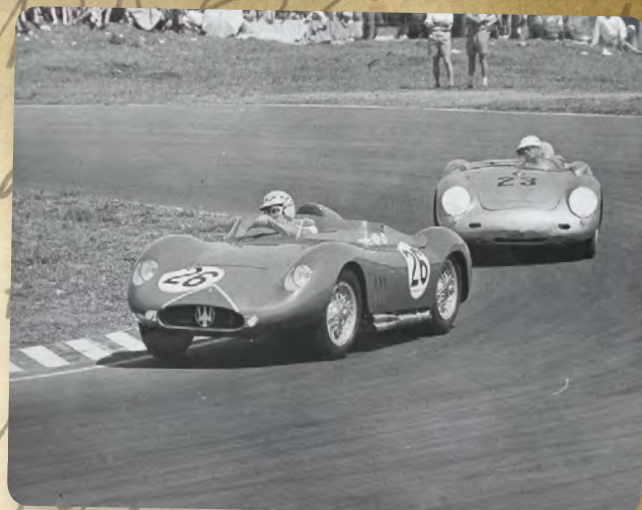
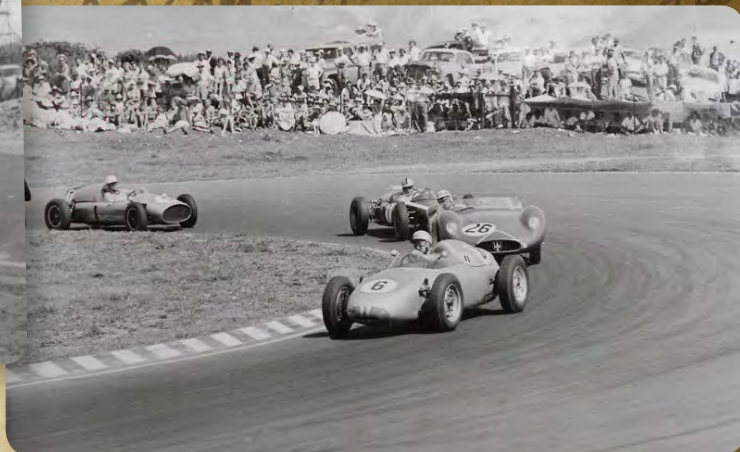
At the completion of our sumptuous Italian pasta meal, Jack arrived at the reason for his invitation to lunch. He had bought a Maserati 200Si at the beginning of the year. In fact, I had known about the car and had seen him take it up the LM hillclimb, in September. Jack asked me if I would drive the car at the forthcoming summer international races. These would take place at the new Killarney Circuit on 17th December 1960 and at the SA Grand Prix Circuit at East London on 27th December, 10 days after the Killarney race. I did not jump up and down and clap my hands with joy. I said, yes, that I would like to do that please, and asked him to tell me more. I tried to speak in a quiet, sophisticated-sounding voice. (I hoped.)

Jack would do all the administration work and pay the entries. Furthermore, he, his 16-year-old son Paul, Beppe and I would tow the 200Si down to the Cape with Jack's

We sat down in a large kitchen with his workshop staff of 12 or 15 men, to whom I was introduced. We were all presided over by Beppe, Jack's friend of many years, who was also the cook



Being overtaken but in good company. Jo Bonnier (#6 Porsche 718), Fanie Viljoen (#26 Maserati 200Si), Jack Brabham (#1 Cooper-Climax T53) and Count de Beaufort (#5 Cooper-Climax).



Rambler sedan. He also stressed that he would bear all the costs and that he did not want me to contribute financially at all. What a generous man, and a gentleman. We sealed the arrangements with a handshake. From Cape Town we would motor through the Garden Route to East London, where we would compete in the SA Grand Prix.

The field would consist of some overseas competitors in 1500cc Formula Two cars and the rest of the field would be made up of SA racing cars and one or two sportscars, including us. There was, of course, no way that we could possibly be competitive in the front of the field. The fact that Jack had sufficient confidence to trust me with his personal jewel was a great thrill for me, coming out of the so-called wilderness.

We arrived in Cape Town a few days before the races so that we could check over the Maserati and clear scrutineering and documentation. The 200Si Maser drew as many admiring glances as the works Porsches of Stirling Moss and

Jo Bonnier. The Maser was a beautiful work of art in the Italian tradition and the Porsches, Coopers and Lotus cars were just(!) functional racing cars.

The Maserati produced maximum power at 7800rpm. There was no championship at stake or the possibility that we could win the race, so for the sake of reliability and less wear and tear on the motor, we decided to limit the revs to 7500. After about four laps in practice I detected valve bounce at 7200rpm. I elected to limit the motor to 7000rpm, and this further lowering of the rev limit did not affect the lap times appreciably. Perhaps I was getting to know the car and the circuit better. When grid positions were put up on the notice board, we were about three-quarters of the way back from the pole sitters. Dawie Gouws in the Porsche Spyder was next to me.

The front row of the grid was filled by Moss, Bonnier and Taffy

The fact that Jack had sufficient confidence to trust me with his personal jewel was a great thrill for me, coming out of the so-called wilderness



*Tripps
place in Cape Town,
hunt - apparently
suffering from
the start igniting the*

von Tripps in a Lotus Climax. After one lap I was mixing it with the rear third of the field, being fast down the long back straight, but losing out to some of the lighter racing cars on the bends. The Porsche Spyder and the Maserati were still running close together. A strong wind had been gusting across the track for the whole race, and on the last lap I came around a bend to find the whole track surface covered with sand. The Maser slid off the track and sank in the sand, just spinning the wheels. The marshals rushed up and wanted to give me a push, which I frantically waved away as I was afraid that they would push dents into that beautiful lightweight aluminium body.


Then I saw bundles of light brushwood that had been blown up against the fence. I pointed to the brushwood and shouted to the marshals to bring a few armloads of the stuff. The good lads understood immediately and brought the twigs. Swiftly they scooped the sand away from the front of the rear wheels and wedged the brush under the wheels as best they could. I had the car in gear and let in the clutch sharply. The car lurched back onto the track and I was off, with a backward wave to the marshals. When I arrived at the start and finish line, I was flagged off with the chequered flag.

The works' Porsches were first and second, followed by Von

Tripps' Lotus Climax.

The East London race was titled 7th International RAC SA Grand Prix. Besides the two main players of Moss and Von Tripps in the works' Porsches, there was a new main character in the form of Jack Brabham in a Cooper Climax.

The front of the grid comprised Brabham, Moss and Bonnier. Von Tripps, who ran so well in third place in Cape Town, was not in the hunt – apparently his car was suffering from ignition bothers. At the start the two Porsches pulled away from Brabham. At the back of the field I was having a fairly serious race, fending off Dawie Gouws in the Porsche Spyder. The Maser had the edge on the straights, but on the corners Dawie and the Spyder were all over the back of the Maser. Eventually I was held up by a back marker and the Spyder got through and pulled away ever so slightly. I rued the loss of 500rpm, otherwise our contest may have been much closer.

The race ended with Moss and Bonnier in the lead, with Brabham third, having suffered broken goggles and a glass chip in the eye. A motoring magazine listed results up to 10th position and under 'finishers' listed me in 14th place, one minute behind Dawie Gouws. The next day Jack, Beppe and Paul went back by plane to Johannesburg, leaving me to return with the tow car, trailer and Maserati. 

At the back of the field I was having a fairly serious race, fending off Dawie Gouws in the Porsche Spyder

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With awesome beaches, captivating winelands and arguably some of the world's most spectacular driving roads, Cape Town has many fabulous attractions for the average tourist. What's less known, but inevitably spotted from the N1 highway by visiting petrolheads en route to the exotic automotive delights in Franschhoek, is the Wijnland Auto Museum – an enchanted resting place for all manner of classic cars in varying states of decay, says **Graeme Hurst**.

“It's not a hobby, it's a disease!” jokes Les Boshoff. “Whenever I hear of a doomed old car, I have to save it.” The 83-year-old Kraaifontein-based owner of Wijnland Auto Museum is a well-known member of Cape Town's old car scene who's spent the last four decades collecting old cars. “I started out wanting to restore cars but it turned into a collection as I heard of cars destined to be scrapped.” His mantra means his smallholding, some 30km outside Cape Town on the N1, now boasts quite some collection: Les gave up

counting at the 300 mark more than ten years ago. But walk through the sea of rust and you'll easily agree that figure could well have doubled since then.

From 1940s Chevrolets and Fords, such as a '41 Coupé and '46 Sedan Delivery to a Ford XR7 Cougar and Pontiac Firebird – both '69 models – and a Galaxie 500, a visit is akin to indulging in a bout of time travel through America's Midwest. And some of the metal on display is rare, like the 1935 DeSoto Airflow that helped pioneer aerodynamic styling. “I've had collectors in America wanting to buy it unseen and ship it over!” jokes Les.

The same goes for the remains of a pair of 1937 continental saloons: a Peugeot 202 and a Hotchkiss (one of just

two in SA), as well as a 1953 Talbot Lago that Les first knew of when it was still in running condition. “I saw it in Hout Bay about 40 years ago and later salvaged it from the scrapyard after I heard that it was scrapped.”

It's a similar story with many of the surrounding cars, such as a '53 Packard that Les picked up after someone rang up. “I got a call from a guy saying he'd spotted it on the back of a truck on its way to a scrapyard in the Strand.” But not all of the displays were destined for an appointment with the crusher; many of the cars were either donated or offered for sale as the owners wanted them to go to the right home, such as the wonderfully original 1940 Buick.

“It was owned by a farming family from Philippi from new. In the Second World War they supplied vegetables to the army and so were awarded the opportunity to buy a new

I started out wanting to restore cars but it turned into a collection as I heard of cars destined to be scrapped



car – normally there was a waiting list – as a reward for their services. They wanted a Chev which would've cost £435 but they were told there was only this Buick and it was £890 – take it or leave it," adds Les. The imposing American saloon came his way after the owner's children had no need for the car, which is complete with the original fuel ration coupons.

And sometimes it's also the knowledge that a labour of love will be further cherished that results in an enthusiast getting in touch to offer a car. That was the case with the pair of stunning Ford street rods that Les has on display in a room attached to his house, a 1923 Model T and a '34 High Boy. "They were built by Rob Heydenrych and he imported a lot of parts over the years to get them just right," explains Les. Looking at the raft of trophies on display – along with the

wall of award certificates – from various club shows, his efforts were clearly top class.

Other standouts include a mighty Mercedes 600 'grosser' that Les bought from someone in Zimbabwe – a way to get money out the country, Les reckons – and a Rolls-Royce Cloud II that he describes as 'his little slice of joy'. It's much coveted, along with another Brit icon: a left-hand drive Jaguar XK120 coupé that Les has had since the 1960s. "It was supplied new to Minneapolis and a tractor dealer from Cape Town who visited on business bought it and imported it. My late father was a tractor dealer here and bought it from him so we are the car's third owner."

Once Les's collection started growing word soon spread and he was asked to source cars for

television and film work. "This was long before Cape Town's film industry took off," muses Les, who's supplied all manner of cars for shoots – from Cadillacs for swimwear adverts to a Jaguar XJ6 that ended up on its roof in downtown Cape Town to create a delinquent urban scene for a jeans commercial. Les has also often had to oversee the creation of custom vehicles for a shoot, such as a scale version of Thrust SSC, the current land speed record holder jet car that Andy Green drove

And sometimes it's also the knowledge that a labour of love will be further cherished that results in an enthusiast getting in touch to offer a car



at 763mph to break the speed of sound on land for the first time in 1997. “We had it built for an advert for a European mobile phone provider.”

It was back in 2000 that Les succumbed to pressure from the old car community to open his collection to the public, and Wijnland Auto Museum was founded. But formalising the collection didn’t stop cars in need of a home arriving at the gate: two decades later, the displays are richer than ever with some of the cars lined up by make, including a row of 1950s and ’60s Jaguar saloons, a few with Zimbabwean registrations.

There’s also plenty of 1970s and ’80s fare scattered about but not all of it is exotic, as the remains of a Citroën GS and a Ford Cortina Bakkie attest. Some of it is, though,


like the partially stripped R107 Mercedes SL that appears to be off the road after a bout of rampant corrosion. Less common but adding to the eclectic feel is a row of jaded 1970s and ’80s American hearses – several from the same undertaker, who clearly enjoyed enough business to fund an upgrade every few years – and a Bedford fire truck.

While the ‘graveyard’ is enchanting for visitors, it earns its keep as a venue for fashion shoots. Same with the cars inside the shed which can be hired out, although Les is careful to point out that it’s tricky to get a decent return on investment. “A lot of people have to get married or go to a matric dance in a classic car costing half a million to make it pay!”

It was the commercial reality that led to Les’s most recent acquisition – one that’s sure to catch the attention of all manner of tourists driving by. Only for the first time the museum’s latest addition doesn’t have four matching wheels, but two matching engines. “It’s a Convair 580 that I found in Nigeria,”

explains Les when questioned about the 16-tonne aircraft mounted on pillars in the yard. “A lot of these were used for short-haul flights in Africa but the maintenance costs have just become too high to make them competitive.”

“I bought it to add some interest but also because there’s a lot of demand for aviation sets in the film industry, but the airport guys won’t entertain any film work,” adds Les, who jokes that he, “had to make a couple of adjustments to his bank account” to have the plane transported from Cape Town International Airport to his smallholding.

Fortunately the gamble appears to be paying off as Wijnland Auto Museum has already rented out the interior for a film shoot while another client modelled clothing for a fashion brochure next to the aircraft’s imposing landing gear. Like the sea of enchanted wrecks, the addition of the aged turbo prop is certainly beguiling, but quite what SANRAL makes of a plane with a 28m wingspan appearing to bear down on the traffic just metres away on the N1 isn’t yet known... 

See: www.wijnlandautomuseum.co.za to visit.

It’s a Convair 580 that I found in Nigeria,” explains Les when questioned about the 16-tonne aircraft mounted on pillars in the yard



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TRUE-BLUE

The Ford team at Kyalami with Alex Blignaut.



MAN

There are many enthusiastic supporters of a specific brand or special car model in the world of motorsport. One of these is Andrew Cave, who worked for Ford South Africa in Port Elizabeth during the Golden Years of local motorsport in the 1960s, '70s and '80s. He was also heavily involved in the Ford Falcon* GT-HO (High Output) that is the subject of the article 'Rumble in the Jungle' in this issue (first published in *Survivor Car Australia*).

By Roger Houghton

Andrew was born in Ladismith in the Cape in 1944 and his family moved to Port Elizabeth 10 years later. He matriculated in 1962 and his working career began as a surveyor working for civil engineering companies which built roads, railway lines and airports.

Andrew had been bitten by the motorsport bug early in his life and began racing a Ford Corsair at Port Elizabeth and East London in 1965. He said he was a mad-keen True-Blue Ford fan from the start and was very pleased when his father bought a Ford Zephyr 6 which "went like hell". Andrew had blown up the engine of the family's previous car, an Opel Rekord, even before he had a driver's licence. He and his brother, with some help from a neighbour, managed to rebuild the Opel's engine – to his father's delight.

Andrew was sent to work in South West Africa (now Namibia) in 1967 and then transferred to Mozambique where he worked until 1970 before returning to Port Elizabeth where he built his first rally car, a Ford Escort with 1800 BDA engine. Graham Stanton was Andrew's first rally navigator and he was followed by Dick Crosbie, who worked at Ford. It was during this period in

Andrew's life that he got involved with the Falcon GT-HO.

When Bernie Marriner started a motorsport competitions department at Ford he appointed Dick to the team and then asked Andrew, with his previous homegrown experience of building a BDA Escort rally car, to join the team. Initially Andrew joined Ford Motorsport for one year in 1973, intending to return to his career as a surveyor in the construction industry. But this never happened, and Andrew became an integral part – and one of the true characters – in the very successful Ford team.

Initially each mechanic built his 'own' rally car and was responsible for all aspects of the build, as well as for servicing it on events. As the department grew, Bernie changed this situation and established various specialist departments.

Andrew ended up building all the Ford engines used in rally and racing cars, while Geoff Blandford, another person who was

Andrew had blown up the engine of the family's previous car, an Opel Rekord, even before he had a driver's licence



at all. Of 39 starters, 21 were classified when the field reached the end at Pine Lake Inn, near White River.

Of course, there were the upsets. Jan Hettema, navigated this time by Richard Leeke, was well up the field when he sheared a halfshaft in his V8 Firenza 10 kilometres from the end of the last special stage and had to limp through to the finish on a locked differential. Ian Adcock, in a Datsun, was even more unlucky when the suspension of his car collapsed 10 metres from the final control.

Refreshingly, there were no protests or difficulties with the results at the finish, and all agreed that the organisation was of a high standard.

The first 10 cars home were placed as follows:

1. Odendaal/Kuun	Escort	8 677 points
2. Cloete/Dahms	Firenza	8 761
3. L. Fekken/Borman	Escort	8 862
4. R. Fekken/Broekemeyer	Escort	9 217
5. Hettema/Leeke	Firenza	9 897
6. Steyn/Steyn	Alfa	10 021
7. Coetzee/Deiner	Datsun	10 261
8. Venter/McGlew	Colt	10 323
9. Liebenberg/Elders	Colt	10 701
10. Barnett/Schofield	Escort	



The car that Andrew built.



Falcon GT laying rubber in SA.

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

FORD OF South Africa produced Cortinas from 1963 but it wasn't until the Mk IV arrived that they took a leaf from Basil Green's book and fitted the three-litre Essex V6.

At first the cars were produced purely as homologation specials to allow Ford to use them in saloon car racing, but demand was high for the new XR6. Many owners were already used to fitting this engine into their Fords, and the factory version became very popular.

The most powerful factory Cortina ever built must be the XR6 X-Ocet. This was put together by George Simpson, a Ford dealer, and Andrew Cave, who had previously worked for Ford's motorsport department.

The pair took standard XR6s from the Port Elizabeth factory and fitted a high-lift camshaft, free-flow exhaust and a four-barrel Holley carburetor with free-flow inlet manifold.

The result was 160bhp and a Cortina that hit 60mph in 8.5 seconds. The engine improvements made it run more efficiently, so the car was actually more economical than a standard XR6.

Advert for the Ford XR6 X-Ocet.



The car that Andrew built on a rally.

"It was quick," says Andrew. "Other people heard about this modified XR6 and wanted one too, so George arranged that we would modify them straight off the production line before they were delivered to the dealers..."

at Ford motorsport for years, worked on the ZF gearboxes and Atlas rear axles, besides being involved with fabricating bodyshells. His speciality was making up aluminium panels to save weight.

However, besides his love affair with the Falcon GT-HO sedan, Andrew also found a Ranchero bodyshell near Klerksdorp while on a rally. He fetched it and rebuilt it with running gear from a smashed Fairmont GT and fitted a PBR vacuum braking system to provide increased stopping power.

"This Ranchie was very quick and could clock 160km/h while pulling a big

Wilk 570 caravan that weighed 1 500kg," explains Andrew. "I really enjoyed blowing off unsuspecting cars with this rather standard-looking Ranchero. This included outpacing motorsport team boss Bernie Marriner in a trick Schnitzer 2-litre Opel Kadett Superboss."

Andrew married his long-suffering wife, Doreen, in November 1981 and after a four-day honeymoon he left with the Ford team for the Reno Rally in Nevada, which Sarel van der Merwe won. Andrew's responsibility for all the rally and racing engines meant he was away from home most weekends, which did not please his wife.

Andrew called time on his involvement at Ford Motorsport at the end of 1982 and started a company, Automotive Design and Development. He teamed up with George Simpson, a former sales

and marketing director at Ford who had set up his own dealership, Simpson Ford, in Port Elizabeth.

At that time Andrew bought Doreen a Ford XR6 which he then modified, fitting a four-barrel Holley carburettor to its 3-litre V6 engine, as well as a revised camshaft and Brospeed exhaust system.

"It was quick," says Andrew. "Other people heard about this modified XR6 and wanted one too, so George arranged that we would modify them straight off the production line before they were delivered to the dealers. We gave these 'hot' models the name X-Ocet, which was derived from the French Exocet missile, made famous when Argentinians used it to sink the HMS *Sheffield* during the Falklands War.

"We built more than 200 examples of the XR6 X-Ocet. In addition, our team built about 400 Cortina pick-ups fitted with Sport camshafts, Weber carburettors and a branch exhaust with larger diameter outlet pipe. We also changed the cross-ply tyres

We gave these 'hot' models the name X-Ocet, which was derived from the French Exocet missile, made famous when Argentinians used it to sink the HMS *Sheffield* during the Falklands War



Hot Ranchero with Wilk caravan.



Rally get-together at the side of the road.



Andrew Cave in Sparky Bright's workshop in Port Elizabeth.

for radials as they were a lot faster than the standard models. We called them Cortina Blitz Bakkies," adds Andrew.


Andrew then opened a workshop in the Deal Party industrial area of Port Elizabeth, where work included carrying out repairs to the Algoa Regional Services Council's fleet of rescue vehicles and ambulances, as well as servicing fleet vehicles for large companies.

Andrew's quest for more, even when working on mundane vehicles in an industrial estate, resulted in him developing conversion kits to fit Ford V6 engines into Toyota HiAces and Hiluxes, as well as Volkswagen Kombis. He also supplied more than 100 kits for DIY installation of V6 engines into Kombis.

"My first car was a Ford Anglia, which soon had its engine enlarged to 1200cc, before buying the Corsair in 1965, which led to my debut as a racing driver. I recently totted up the cars that I have owned and lost count after passing 30."

"I used to be a keen motorcyclist, but stopped riding motorcycles two years ago due to back pain and the doctor suggested I get rid of my last bike. Over the years I owned a wide range of motorcycles, starting with one of the first 4-speed Honda 50s, which was heavily modified by Bernie Marriner and superseded by a Honda 305 that nearly killed me a few times due to its bad road holding. I also owned a Honda 250 CBX, Honda 350XL, Honda 900, Yamaha 900 TDM, BMW 1200 Adventure, BMW 800 GS and recently I bought a Kymco scooter which really messed up my back. My back is now much better, so I suppose that is the end of my fun on two wheels," concludes Andrew.

"Today I still service a few of my previous fleet clients' older vehicles, because new vehicles come with service plans and electronic systems

which prevent most maintenance and repairs outside a franchised dealership," explains Andrew. "I also get involved in the training of truck and bus drivers, as well as evaluating vehicles for my customers. I am still interested in motorsport and help out at the Aldo Scribante circuit in Port Elizabeth when Clerk of the Course Sparky Bright requires assistance on race days." 

"The South African version of the Ford Falcon was the Fairmont, a name that was also used for certain of these cars in Australia, from which the Falcon/Fairmont originated. However, this specially imported model bore the Aussie Falcon nomenclature."

My first car was a Ford Anglia, which soon had its engine enlarged to 1200cc, before buying the Corsair in 1965, which led to my debut as a racing driver

A MOMENT OF MADNESS

Ease out the heavy clutch, add some loud pedal and it shudders into motion. I see 4000 arriving on the tacho and pull back on the bull ball-sized Hurst Shifter to grab the next cog. It pulls strongly, accompanied by a crackling V8 soundtrack. I'm being encouraged to give it some more right foot, so up it goes to the 6500 mark, adding a turbo-like whooshing sound as the vacuum secondary choke is sucked into action to satiate the demand for more mixture to feed a hungry engine. Now the madness begins; acceleration becomes mind-boggling, the exhaust tone earth-shattering. **Stuart Grant** takes in a Johannesburg sunrise with a South African legend that earned its stripes at the original Kyalami track in the 1970s.

Photography by Jan van der Walt







This surreal moment of driving a road-legal racer around Jozi came about following a drawn-out resurrection of Dick Sorensen's Chevrolet Firenza V8 Can Am, a process that started with the recommissioning of the engine in 2008. This is not a restored car with new and shiny replacement parts, simply because it didn't require restoration at all. Following its life on track in the 1970s, this machine hasn't turned a wheel or seen daylight until very recently, showing a just-run-in 31 500km on the still-functional speedo. The interior is 100% original, and it looks, feels and smells like it just pulled into the pits almost 40 years ago, because that is exactly how it was raced – without a racing seat, harness or roll cage.

Those of a certain age might remember

Dick's exploits at Kyalami in the popular Castrol Clubmans handicap races in the late '70s. The car stands out from its band of brothers by virtue of its 16-inch diameter, 12-inch wide Compomotive wheels nestled under wheel arches expertly fabricated in steel by an old-school Portuguese artisan down at Cornright's Motors. The man clearly had an eye for form, the recessed lip of the standard arches grafted on for a factory-made look. Such upgrades helped Dick wrestle this very machine from over two laps down relative to the first car away, un-lapping himself twice on his way to victory at the Kruger Day races in 1978.

Numbers run through my head as I watch the needle climb up the rev counter, onward and upward toward 8000, thanks to the short-stroke and bulletproof componentry designed for the Trans-Am-winning Camaros in the USA. I have over 400bhp propelling just 1 066 kilograms underfoot, present company excluded. Gripping onto the 3-spoke, over-sized, thin-rimmed steering wheel tighter than any driving instructor would be happy with, I struggle to

keep the barrel-like tyres from turning every tiny road irregularity into the scene of an accident. Such errant behaviour highlights how cars have come on in leaps and bounds in the decades that have followed, with even basic creature comforts such as power steering and air-con reserved for high-end luxury models back then. By today's standards the Firenza is simple, basic and feels dangerously fragile. The body is almost an afterthought; as though the idea was to wrap the smallest possible shell around the most powerful drivetrain. It's at once both terrifying and thrilling.

Gaining a bit more confidence, I give the Can Am a proper tonk and it takes off. The ridiculously heavy steering abates and the ride up Joe Slovo Drive past The Wilds never sounded so good. It's addictive, and I mentally pen a thank you note to those in charge of decision-making for looking the other way while such politically-incorrect madness was conceived into a corporate world. Consider that GM had a global 'non-participation in motorsport' clause in their charter at the time, and the company culture was anything but progressive.

As my speed climbs so does the demand for concentration. The seats, borrowed from

Following its life on track in the 1970s, this machine hasn't turned a wheel or seen daylight until very recently, showing a just-run-in 31 500km on the still-functional speedo



the Opel GT, are slightly more supportive than those of most cars of the early 1970s but fall way short of modern performance car furniture. I can't imagine how Dick held himself in place around Leeukop or braced himself while he threaded the proverbial needle through the super-fast kink halfway down the straight, aided only by a static 3-point seatbelt that serves little purpose other than to allow the marketing types to include it in a brochure. Mr Sorensen, you are a braver man than me.

Of course, the Can Am story is one we've told before, but having now had the chance to fully explore the fury of one of these cars, and finally realising just how brutal a machine it is, I feel it's worth a recap. It started with the legislatively-liberal approach of 'We need a competitive race car, so let's shoehorn the most powerful engine into the lightest body and convince the authorities to sell this model in sufficient numbers to the public' that spawned many homologation specials the world over, including the SA-specific BMW 530, Alfa Romeo 3.0 GTV 6 and Sierra XR8, to name just a few. In 1972 the requisite production volume was 100 and the advert provocatively read: "You and 99 others". The Sorensen car, tagged

575619, is the one of the last of the road cars off the line at the Kempston Road factory in Port Elizabeth.

Today a Can Am is a very rare beast, ever more so in anything approaching original, unmolested condition. Most were modified, drag-raced, broken, crashed and have at the very least been rebuilt from the ground up. A few have been shipped offshore too, now oddities in the UK, Australia, the US and Sweden. Dick's son Richard bought the car from his father quite recently, and rather than take it back to factory standard, it was simply wound back a notch to its slightly less wild 1978 spec. That makes it road-drivable at a stretch, but preserves the heritage of the only remaining Can Am with race-winning history in-era. Richard considers the car too special to track, considering it still has its original matching-numbers engine and gearbox, and fears the car might not pass scrutineering for lack of any kind of modern safety equipment!

Passionate about these unique SA cars, Richard founded The Chevrolet Can Am Register on Facebook in 2011, serving to find

and document the remaining cars. That number now sits at around 45, of which only a handful are still fitted with their original motors and transmissions. Time and effort contributed by members of the group ensures that they know all the tell-tale signs of the real deal versus a copy; more than 25 detailed differences that remain a closely guarded secret.

Credit for the gestation of the Can Am goes to Basil van Rooyen, following his efforts campaigning a V8 Capri Perana against the Basil Green-run car of Bobby Olthoff. Fed up with Ford's general lack of interest, he approached General Motors SA with the plan to get one over Ford using the Vauxhall Viva shell as a base, and adding a military-grade drivetrain in the form of the

I can't imagine how Dick held himself in place around Leeukop or braced himself while he threaded the proverbial needle through the super-fast kink halfway down the straight



1978 photo of the Sorensen Can Am in Benoni.



'67 Trans Am series-winning Camaro Z28 power plant with its 2-inch inlet valves, a steel crankshaft held firm by 4-bolt main bearing caps and high compression forged pistons, fed by an 800 CFM Holley carb. Very conservatively, it was officially rated at 290bhp for regulatory purposes, but was reputedly well over 300 without modification. Revising the choice of body at GM's behest to the popular Firenza coupé, Basil had Hennie van der Linde (yes, *that* Hennie) hustle together a couple of 150bhp 307ci-powered prototypes at his Superformance workshop in Wynberg – one manual and one automatic. Decked out with all the familiar Can Am trimmings, including the distinctive black-over-white colour scheme, Italian 4-spoke 13" alloy wheels and leather-bound steering wheel from Personal, they were finished off with an adjustable aluminium spoiler from American Racing adorning the boot lid.

Along with the idea to fund the team with a contribution of R5 per car sold by each GM dealer, it was sufficient to convince GM Managing Director Bob Price to give

the go-ahead for the necessary production run. Argus Production Car rules dictated a maximum capacity of five litres, and Basil knew well that the DZ 302 (4.95-litre) was fit for serious competition duty, but was told the States couldn't supply more than six, or less than 3 000, of the now out-of-production units. Some arm-twisting of Price's powerful Detroit contacts did the trick, resulting in 102 engines being hand-built at the Tonawanda plant and shipped to SA, along with a matching quota of Muncie M20 4-speed transmissions. A name for the new model was hotly debated, Basil favouring 'Can Am 5000', 'Hustler' or 'Mamba', but GM insisting on 'Little Chev', fearful that the public would fail to associate the car with the brand. In the end, period advertising called it a 'Little Chev Firenza V8', and the handbook supplement was stamped 'Firenza 302 Can Am', so take your pick.

While Van Rooyen and Geoff Mortimer started the build of the race and rally cars in preparation for the 1973 season, a small engineering team led by Jonny Pittaway at the factory in PE co-developed the most brutal of all South African road-legal specials to a level that somehow passed the General's tough testing standards in super-quick time. I suspect a little dirt was swept under the

carpet in the process, as standard Can Ams were known to have a few built-in flaws, including ready-to-fail clutch cables, inadequate brakes, and tyres that would self-destruct just north of 200km/h.

If durability was not its forte, performance certainly was. The road-going Can Am officially rocketed to 100km/h in just 5.4 seconds as tested by *Technicar*, completed a standing quarter-mile in under 14 seconds and topped out at 229km/h. The GM official test car considerably bettered those figures. If you can name a faster accelerating road car available in 1973 at any price, let me know.

But the real goal was to win on the track. Right off the bat, Van Rooyen and Mortimer finished 11th overall in the '72 9-Hour at Kyalami, running in the prototype class. Van Rooyen claimed victory on its Production Car series debut at Kyalami in January 1973 while Ford withdrew the Capri Perana, arguably figuring they would not win this fight. That left Chevrolet in the somewhat sad situation of staging demonstration races, with the only competition coming from the second Dealer Team car steered by guest drivers Paddy Driver, Eddie Keizan, Nols Niemann, Ray Emond and Colin Burford, with each 'duel' drummed up by GM's press department.

For the 1973 9-Hour at Kyalami the ultimate Can Am racer was built, with several key improvements over the initial Group 2-spec race cars, including 15-inch

The GM official test car considerably bettered those figures. If you can name a faster accelerating road car available in 1973 at any price, let me know



wheels to allow for larger brakes and revised suspension geometry. With the Can Am finished at the very last minute and starting from the back of the grid, Basil promptly stroked the car up through the field to catch the class-leading works BMW 3-litre CSL steered by Jacky Ickx and Hans Stuck, only for the gearbox to fail due to the small but critical oversight of installing a speedo drive to keep the oil in place.

With the oil crisis hitting South Africa, hard fuel rationing and a ban on motorsport events cut short the Can Am's factory racing career, while the road cars languished in Chevrolet showrooms through to 1975 – perhaps not surprising considering their ferocious appetite for fuel and a R5 800 price tag – double that of a 4-cylinder Firenza. The official Dealer Team closed its doors and for '74 Chevrolet dealers themselves took over the race cars which continued their winning ways in regional saloon car races in Natal, PE, East London and Cape Town. The eventual demise of these 'works' cars is well known, two donating their drivetrains to Chevairs being built for the emerging Manufacturer's Challenge series around 1978. One Dealer Team car, chassis 575528, enjoyed great success in Rhodesia until 1980, before returning to the Highveld and being raced against Sorensen's car in Castrol Clubmans by then-owner Mitri Mitri (yes, that's his real name). In the late '80s, that car was fully restored and raced in anger by Paddy O'Sullivan at Zwartkops

in the Ultimoil series, but was eventually exported to the UK and butchered beyond recognition as a result of a convoluted dispute over ownership.

That brings us neatly back to the car I'm driving today, initially purchased from the first 72-year-old owner by film director Tai Krige because he was struggling to operate the clutch. In Australia, Dick had owned one of the still-born 140mph Ford Falcon XA GTHO Phase IV homologation special supercars that had silently slipped out the back door of the Australian factory as RPO 83s, so unsurprisingly the wild Chevrolet V8 special caught his eye after he emigrated to South Africa after a stint in England. Having bought the car from Tai, it didn't take long for Dick to realise that the Chevy might be better suited to the track than the Saturday morning shopping run, prompting a visit to see V8 guru (and one-time notorious criminal) Derrick Preston at his Hi-Performance business in downtown Benoni. With the addition of a competition cam, quad Weber IDAs and up-and-over drain pipe-sized side-exit exhausts, the engine was progressively developed to liberate over 450bhp, propelling Dick to 260km/h through the speed trap after the Dunlop bridge.

By 1980, Dick had been convinced by the racing fraternity to put the Can Am aside and move into the Star Modified series, which he did

in the ex-Brian Cook Datsun 140Z, followed by the ex-Willie Hepburn Chevrolet SS, ex-Hennie van der Linde Datsun Stanza, ex-O'Sullivan Rover SD1 V8 and finally the ex-van der Linde Nissan Skyline GTX that is arguably SA's most race-winning car of all time. Dick finally retired from national racing in 1989, opening the way into the sport for his eldest son Richard, who claimed National Championships in WesBank Modifieds in a Mk1 Golf, campaigned the groundbreaking Audi Quattro 200 Trans-Am in the halcyon days of the formula before the rise of Super Touring Cars, and went door-to-door with the best in BMW and Audi Production Cars. Both have kept their hand in the game in recent years by competing in various historic events in the Skyline, Jaguar D-Type replica and a nimble one-off Australian-built special christened 'Nemesis', which Richard raced at the Phillip Island Classic last year following Dick's recent move back to his native Australia.

That meant selling off most of his 20-plus car collection, but the Can Am has remained in its homeland, right here in Johannesburg. 📍

It didn't take long for Dick to realise that the Chevy might be better suited to the track than the Saturday morning shopping run



PUTTING THE FUN INTO FUNCTION

Estate, variant or station wagon. Call it what you like but there is no denying that even in today's SUV-crazed society this original long-roof, big-booted sedan body style trumps in the family car/workhorse practicality department. When talking of this format there is one name that climbs to the top of the pile the world over... Volvo. **Stuart Grant** gets to work and play in a pristine 60-year-old example of the wagon that started the trend for the firm, a 1957 PV445 Duett.

Photography by Etienne Fouche





With the 1947 arrival of the 4-seater 2-door PV444 which evolved into the PV544 that we South Africans affectionately refer to as the 'Beetle-back', Volvo made its mark on the global sedan car market. While the sales of these impressed it was felt that the addition of a small commercial offering was needed to gain a larger footprint for the brand. Thoughts of converting the PV444 into a wagon crossed the planning table but the advanced-for-the-time monocoque construction meant that this was easier said than done. The solution saw Volvo go backwards on the technology timeline and

Thoughts of converting the PV444 into a wagon crossed the planning table but the advanced-for-the-time monocoque construction meant that this was easier said than done

put together a traditional chassis to which a body could be bolted.

The first of these chassis left the production line in 1949, destined for various coachbuilders who would then clothe them in a PV444-esque bodywork in either pickup, panel van or station wagon format. Enter the PV445.

445 power, 40 horses of it, came via the PV444 1.4-litre overhead valve 4-cylinder petrol but thanks to a low gear 3-speed manual gearbox, acceleration was good even when loaded with a few more kilograms than the recommended 500kg payload – this carrying capacity made possible by the use of a pair of heavy-duty semi-elliptical leaf springs rather than the PV444's coil spring setup. With sparse interiors the early 445s were favoured by small business rather than families but their ruggedness and reliability ensured they sold well initially.

It was this durability that caused some head-scratching

at head office, though. Reason for the consternation was that Volvo thought a few years of hard labour would see buyers returning to purchase a replacement workhorse, but instead the unbreakable character meant this did not happen and by 1952 Volvo had a stockpile of 1 500 chassis parked in the yard. For Volvo President Assar Gabrielsson this was simply not on and he issued the order to cut out the middle man and build an in-house van and wagon using these completed underpinnings.

Engineer Erik Skoog and a small team jumped into action and designed a body equally suited to carrying cargo or people. Tooling was ordered and 15 months later, on 4 July 1953, the first 445 Duett was delivered to an eager customer, Mr Gabrielsson himself. 'Duett' referred to the dual-purpose capabilities of load and people carrying, which meant owners could use it for work in the week and leisure activities on the weekend. With the option of rear side-windows or not, the Duett became an instant hit and soldiered on until it was given a refresh and the model



name changed to 210 in 1960. The main differences between the 445 Duett and the PV210 being a one-piece windscreen instead of a split item and a fourth cog being added to the 3-speed box. Two years into 210 production, the B16 engine was swapped out for a B18 1.8-litre motor and despite Volvo having already launched the latest generation 122 (Amazon) wagon in 1962, the popularity of the PV445 saw it continue alongside the more sophisticated 122 until 1969, when strict new crash tests were implemented in Sweden. But who can blame the 445; after all it was essentially a 1940s design. 97 000 factory-built PV445s left the plant and its demise signalled the end of all chassis and separate body construction for Volvo.

Although more refined and selling a decent 73 000 units, the 122 wagon didn't quite gain the status and following that the Duett did and it too stopped being manufactured in 1969. Volvo then took a dramatic turn in appearance with designers seemingly able to only draw right angles on the 140 Series. The new boxy look worked though, with the

144 sedan and 145 wagon selling well. This tendency carried on well into the 1990s with only one slight deviation coming in 1972 with the curvaceous P1800S. Perhaps not as utilitarian as the 445, 122 or 145 wagons, the Pelle Petterson-designed P1800ES must take the rank in the top three of all-time most beautiful wagons being based off the P1800 Coupé and although production only ran for two years, it formed the basis for Volvo design in recent times.

Before getting back to the 445 Duett at hand there is one more model that must be mentioned in any Volvo wagon story, the 850 T-5R. With the aim of taking on the //M and AMG performance arms at BMW and Mercedes, Volvo collaborated with Porsche. The result came in both saloon and wagon format where a turbocharged 5-cylinder engine delivered 243hp through the front wheels. With some trick body kit and reworked suspension and gearbox the T-5R was good for a zero to 100km/h sprint in 5.8 seconds. 850 wagons even

hit the track when Tom Walkinshaw Racing prepared a pair for the 1995 British Touring Car Championship with Rickard Rydell and Jan Lammers at the wheel. Although only finishing 8th in the Manufacturers' Championship, the sight of these unlikely looking race cars proved a marketing success for the brand.

But back to the pictured 445. Only a handful of Duetts are known to exist in South Africa. There might have been more back in the day but their hardworking ethic probably meant they were somewhat abused and although gallant fighters, eventually ended up on the scrap heap. A tendency to rust well could also be the reason for the scarcity. So it is remarkable to see one in such unbelievable condition as this 1957 version at Volvo dealers Tom

97 000 factory-built PV445s left the plant and its demise signalled the end of all chassis and separate body construction for Volvo



Campher Motors.

Gerard Campher purchased the car from the proprietors of Maizey Plastic around 15 years ago – the Maizey family being the second owners and having enjoyed many years of work/play with it. Although well used, the condition was surprisingly good and thanks to covered parking and the Highveld conditions the body was completely free of any rust but did have some hail damage. It took the Camphers three years to collect the car after paying for it but once back Gerard began a full restoration in their Johannesburg-based workshop.

The body was removed from the chassis and every part given the once-over. Where the original was in a standard high enough to reuse, new parts were shipped in from Volvo Sweden. Yes, that is correct, Volvo still stock new parts for these – and any

other classic Volvo for that matter. The result is a factory-fresh walk back in time with even the likes of the moulded rubber floor covering being brand spanking new. The seat upholstery looks new too, but these are in fact the originals, with only a small panel replacement job being done where the sun had taken its toll – unbelievably the exact fabric was sourced locally from Clive's Auto Trimmers.

Job completed, Gerard and the 445 scooped top honours in the 2009 Volvo Club Concours just after completion. For 2010 and 2011 he entered a different car but returned in 2012 to take the win again. He stayed true to his word of not entering the car for a further five years until 2017, when he once again engraved his name on the trophy.

Another accolade was top of class in the 2017 Concours South Africa event at Sun City, but this doesn't mean the Duett is a trailer queen. It can often be seen on car runs and is always

ready for a drive. I requested the use of it for a photo shoot and was able to take it immediately, without any battery charging or preparation needed.

A crank of the key and stab of the accelerator saw it fire up immediately as the single Zenith carburettor mixed the fuel and air needed by the 1582cc B16 engine. It gently ticked over without any fuss as I let it warm up and acquainted myself with the indicators, wing-mounted mirror location and seating position. Good to go I pushed the clutch in, selected a gear and released the pedal to ease forward out the showroom. Only I went backwards. Aha, it's a 3-speed with first in the downward position!

With this figured out, we loaded the photography gear into the rear wood-lined 'van' section and our snapper Etienne Fouche climbed into the rear seat area to catch an over-the-shoulder driver-in-action shot. There you have it, Etienne was working and I was playing. A true multi-functional machine. **C**

Yes, that is correct, Volvo still stock new parts for these – and any other classic Volvo for that matter

LOOK

WHAT'S ON OUR INVENTORY



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01

1969 JAGUAR E-TYPE
R1.2M



02

1978 PORSCHE 911 (930)
TURBO WITH RUF
CONVERSION
R2.1M



03

1962 ALFA GIULIETTA
TI
R350 000



04

1967 MERCURY
COUGA
R300 000



05

1961 CORVETTE C1
R1.2M



06

1970 FORD MUSTANG
COUPÉ
R550 000



07

1959 CADILLAC
COUPÉ DE VILLE
R1.3M



08

1964 CORVETTE
STINGRAY
R1.3M

"RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE"





A cloudy day in Cape Town with Table Mountain in the background.

Ross Vasse of *Survivor Car Australia* (www.survivorcaraustralia.com.au) tells the story of Australia's wildest-ever production car, the fastest 4-door production saloon in the world. Surrounded by murder, mystery and intrigue the thread of survival for this uniquely special Ford Falcon GT-HO unfolds on a distant continent and includes uncanny coincidences, some bad luck and some good fortune, with more twists and turns than an Alfred Hitchcock thriller.

On a miserably cold and windy winter's morning in June 1971, the Ford Motor Company's assembly plant in Broadmeadows, Australia, cranked up yet another day of production. Along the line, production workers assembled the XY model; mostly Falcons, Futuras, and Fairmonts. In a line of bodies coded as '54H', a batch of Falcon GTs were being assembled, but a few of these were destined to become much more. You see, some months prior, management had given their approval to build the third instalment of the mighty GT-HO, the Phase Three.

This was a car built with one purpose in mind: to win races, to conquer Bathurst. One car among this batch on the production line, a Raw Orange GT-HO, was earmarked as a special order. It was fitted with a 240km/h speedometer instead of the standard 140mph type. This car had marked 'For Export' on its windscreen.

This car had another destiny. Dennis Smith, who was the Sales and Marketing Director for Ford South Africa at the time, ordered the Falcon GT-HO Phase Three

primarily to evaluate it for the local market. He chose the Raw Orange colour because it closely resembled the orange of the Gunston cigarette brand which sponsored other racing Fords such as the Perana V8, a locally modified Ford Capri.

While the car was still en route to South Africa by ship, Smith was found murdered in Port Elizabeth. Spence Sterling, who was then Ford's Product Engineering Director, took the Falcon GT-HO as his company car, but handed it back a few months later as he found it too difficult to handle in heavy traffic.

Andrew Cave, who was a good friend of Spence Sterling and working as a technician at Ford Motorsport, drooled over the GT-HO for months. Eventually his nagging paid off and Spence signed off that Andrew could buy the car. Because the car was sold without warranty, it didn't even come with an owner's manual or service book.

Andrew used the HO for local quarter-mile sprints, recording a personal best of 13.91 seconds running the factory-installed 3.25:1 'Detroit

Locker' differential. "This was with a full tank of fuel to try and stop the rear-wheel spin," laughs Andrew. "If one could stop the savage amount of wheel spin it would have got down to about the 13-second mark."

He also raced the car on the old GP circuit in East London where he beat all-comers.

"The brakes overheated, but I finished the race in the lead using the handbrake and gears to slow for corners. The HO gave the people of East London a good show of power, with the car sliding through corners sideways and smoke pouring off the tyres," says Andrew with a smile. "The HO had a rev-limiter which cut out around 6000rpm. I disconnected it and regularly revved the engine past 7000rpm."

Pioneer Ford, the local dealership, was equipped with a dynamometer which could handle 300bhp at the rear wheels. "The

Dennis Smith, who was the Sales and Marketing Director for Ford South Africa at the time, ordered the Falcon GT-HO Phase Three



After Arthur bought it, he tidied up the GT-HO by painting the bumpers and the wheels black.



Arthur and best friend George discuss which car is faster.



Australian muscle in Africa, a rare sight indeed.



Gunston cigarettes sponsored motor racing, their brand colour was orange.

GT-HO destroyed the dyno in third gear at 7000!" exclaimed Andrew, who began to wonder if this was a freak engine or whether there was something else behind the incredible amount of raw horsepower this GT-HO could unleash.

After a year or so, Andrew decided to sell the GT-HO to a fellow named Mr Groenewald, who owned a used car business in Bloemfontein. The new owner called back a few weeks later to say he had lost control of the car in wet weather, hitting a pavement and damaging two wheels.

It was then on-sold to Jack Meyers, who used the car as a daily driver in Cape Town. It was during this time, in the mid-1970s, that the Falcon was taken to Windsor Motors which specialised in performance tuning.

Mr Loots, the owner of Windsor Motors, recalls the owner boasting that the engine could easily be revved beyond

7000rpm with the rev-limiter disconnected. This was met with scoffs, raspberries, and replies that no factory V8 could safely be revved past 5500rpm. The HO was promptly fired up and the accelerator floored with the engine still cold. "The poor

thing was screaming beyond 7000rpm until it blew," recalls Loots. A replacement engine was sourced from a Diamond Blue Fairmont GT, with the original, damaged GT-HO engine thought to have been scrapped.

Enter the final South African owner, Arthur Fotiu of Cape Town. "In 1980, I had just sold a motorcycle and had a few bucks burning a hole in my pocket," says Arthur. His friend George Michael (not the singer) had one of the few Holden Monaros with the 350 cid V8 engine and manual transmission.

An Aussie car freak, George had heard of a rather tatty GT-HO Phase Three for sale. "Practically no one in this country knew what a rarity and great performer it was," comments Arthur. "The owner said that he was battling to sell it and if he couldn't get the R2 500 asking price he'd enter it in the next stock car ('hell-driving') race and use it to put the local champion into the wall!" After this comment, nothing was going to stop Arthur from saving the GT-HO from certain death.

On a limited budget, Arthur set about tidying up the car. The Gunston (Raw Orange) paint was faded, but improved surprisingly well with a buff. The sunroof had collapsed on one side and the bumpers had

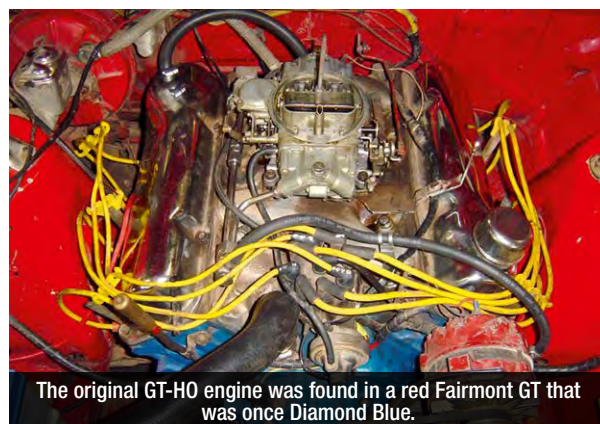
The HO was promptly fired up and the accelerator floored with the engine still cold. "The poor thing was screaming beyond 7000rpm until it blew," recalls Loots



Note custom-made Falcon GT badge on the bootlid.



The original engine is reunited with the HO after four decades.



The original GT-HO engine was found in a red Fairmont GT that was once Diamond Blue.

surface rust, so they were painted black.

George invited Arthur into a special car club, the Australian V8 Owners Club, which consisted of the Falcon GT-HO, George's Holden Monaro GTS 350, two Chev SS's, two XY utes (badged Rancheros in South Africa) and a Fairmont GT. "We all fitted CB radios which was handy for a natter while the club members were on the move," says Arthur. "We had lots of fun. That was one hell of a car!"

In the mid-1980s, with pending family commitments, Arthur decided to sell the GT-HO. He advertised it in the local classifieds as 'Australia's wildest ever production car' for R14 000, but received no calls. Sometime later he advertised it for sale in an American motoring publication, *Road & Track*, where a keen-eyed Australian by the name of John Smith became aware of the car.

It is worth mentioning here that it is something of an uncanny coincidence that the person who initially ordered the car new was also named Smith, and here it was about to be repatriated back onto Australian soil by a Smith! What are the chances of that occurring?

"I sadly drove it off to the container dispatching station and said goodbye to what was without doubt the most exciting

vehicle I have ever driven," says Arthur, with regret.

After 15 years on a continent that is 10 000 kilometres away, the big Falcon left Cape Town on 10 September 1986, sailing home on the *Safocean Mildura* container ship via Singapore, a 40-day voyage, before being unloaded in Adelaide.

The GT-HO Phase Three was finally back on Australian soil. It was then loaded onto a transporter and delivered to its new owner, John Smith, in Melbourne.

John is a car enthusiast who appreciates all different makes and models including older Rolls-Royces. His plan for the GT-HO was to enjoy driving it but firstly it needed some freshening up. Used sparingly over the next 14 years, John then decided to sell the HO.

Enter now Jack Darzanos, from South Australia, who fell instantly in love with the GT-HO and bought it. He then set about rattling the chains of history to piece together the complete history of this car, contacting all the previous owners and the Ford Motor Company.

Adrian Ryan, the then Ford Australia historian, claimed there was no record on official Ford

production data that this car was ever built. However, he did not doubt it and did his best to find out more. Ford South Africa was helpful, putting Jack in contact with the previous Ford employees who had owned the GT-HO Phase Three.

From this, rumour had it that the original engine had not been scrapped, but rather ended up in a Diamond Blue Fairmont GT.

Jack on-sold the GT-HO to Joe Barca, a respected Falcon GT collector in 2004. Joe had owned another Raw Orange GT-HO Phase Three previously, which he regretted selling. He'd heard about the South African GT-HO and decided to try and persuade Jack to sell it to him.

"When first I saw this car in the metal, I knew I had to have it," recalls Joe. "There

"When first I saw this car in the metal, I knew I had to have it," recalls Joe. "There were very few Phase Threes made with a wind-back sunroof, and this is the only one known to still be alive that was Raw Orange in colour."



were very few Phase Threes made with a wind-back sunroof, and this is the only one known to still be alive that was Raw Orange in colour.”

Joe has owned more than 28 GT-HOs over the years. About 15 of these had been Phase Threes. His first car when he was just 16 years old was a Polar White XT GT. Although Joe bleeds blue, he does appreciate other classics: “Ford, Holden, or Chrysler, we’re all brothers in arms now,” says Joe.

The South African GT-HO is now the nucleus to his collection, which contains some of the best and rarest GTs and GT-HOs in the country.

Being involved in the GT world, it doesn’t take long for rumours to get around. One such rumour was the possibility of an imported red Fairmont GT from South Africa being fitted with a GT-HO engine. The importer, Jan Williams, discovered the engine number belonged to a GT-HO Phase Three. Not just any Phase Three though, but to a Raw Orange one that was once in South Africa.

You see, with the muscle car boom at its peak in 2007, there were many South African Fairmont GTs imported to Australia. The story goes that the GT-HO engine was fitted into a Diamond Blue Fairmont GT belonging to the brother-in-law of a previous owner.

This Fairmont GT then passed through two other owners who were oblivious to the fact that it had anything but a standard GT engine. During this period, the blue GT was colour-changed to red, which was a colour of choice in South Africa.

The next owner drove the red Fairmont GT for a year before parking it in hibernation in an old barn on the rural outskirts of Johannesburg. Here it sat for more than a decade before being discovered by a young South African named Fernando, who believed he could turn a profit in the heady days of 2007 (before the global financial crash).

Through a network of contacts, the car was sold to Jan Williams who, unbeknown to any of the South African owners, recognised the unique origin of the engine and imported the Fairmont GT to Australia.

On arriving in Australia, the original GT-HO engine was removed from the Fairmont GT and sold to a collector who hoped one day he might be able to purchase the ex-South African GT-HO.

Eventually Joe was approached to sell the car, which didn’t eventuate. Instead, in yet another twist to this story, Joe bought the original matching-numbers engine and reunited it back into the GT-HO. After some 35 years apart the engine was back in its rightful place. The car was now almost complete.

“We found ‘X215’ stamped on the block and with the help of Mark Barraclough, the Ford GT Historian (www.acchs.com.au), worked out that there was a possibility this was one of 20 or so specially-built QC (Quality Control) race engines hand-built by the Ford Motor Company,” remarks Joe. This could explain why this GT-HO had an unbelievable amount of power that no other high-performance production car in South Africa could match. It’s quite possible that this is the only GT-HO Phase Three equipped with a hand-built QC race engine that was registered for regular road use!

To add to this uncanny chain of events, in late 2004 a representative of VIP Automotive Solutions who performs pre-purchase inspections on classic and unique cars stumbled upon another rare find belonging to this GT-HO. While inspecting a 1951 Chevrolet the retired owner of the Chevy, a Mr Hussey, made a comment regarding a Phase Three imported from South Africa. He said that he’d unloaded the GT-HO from the

The next owner drove the red Fairmont GT for a year before parking it in hibernation in an old barn on the rural outskirts of Johannesburg



240kph speedometer reserved for all South African GTs and GT-HOs.



Joe the current owner reckons Raw Orange is the best colour ever.



Only 22 GT-HO Phase Threes had factory fitted sunroofs.



Joe's passion for GTs started with his first car, an XT GT.

transporter when it arrived in Melbourne, and went on to say that he had kept the original South African number plates rather than throw them in the bin as he was told to do.

Recognising the historical significance of these number plates, the VIP representative promptly did a deal – which involved a bottle of Johnnie Red. In a chance conversation later, Joe mentioned to the VIP representative that he owned the South African GT-HO and was surprised to learn that the original Cape Town number plates had survived. The plates were then donated to the current owner to complete the full history of this very unique car.

Joe intends to continue enjoying the GT-HO to its full extent, driving it on weekends and showing it at Concours events. Although somewhat restored, *Survivor Cars Australia* (SCA) still consider this a Survivor, given what it has endured.

There are rumours of a second Falcon GT-HO Phase Three being exported to South Africa back in 1971, however this has never been confirmed. Could there be another one of these rare beasts hiding in the jungles of deepest darkest Africa? 🐼

This article has been re-published in *Classic Car Africa* with permission from *Survivor Car Australia* magazine www.survivorcaraustralia.com.au

DID YOU KNOW?

Ford South Africa assembled the Fairmont GT (XW & XY) which were sent from Ford Australia in CKD (Completely Knocked Down) form from 1970 to 1973. Altogether 1 824 Fairmont GTs were built, made up of 239 XW and 1 585 XY Fairmont GTs.

Ford Australia used both the Falcon and Fairmont names for its range of locally designed and developed large passenger cars.

The pecking order of the range in 1971 was:

- Falcon GT-HO (High Output) Phase 3 (King of the Road)
- Falcon GT (sports performance model equivalent to the Fairmont GT sold in South Africa)
- Fairmont (luxury model – SA also had this model in the local range)
- Futura (midway between luxury and upscale standard model)
- Falcon 500 (base model with some extra chrome trim)
- Falcon (standard base model).





EVERYTHING & THE KITCHEN SINK

With a consistent climate, decent road infrastructure, wide open expanses and a wide variety of scenery and activities at every corner of the land, we South Africans love nothing better than taking in an outdoor holiday getaway. And there's no better way of appreciating it to the fullest than hitting a campsite. Memories are made, and many of these will at some time or other involve some sort of Jurgens home away from home. **Stuart Grant** adds another Jurgens moment to the list with a look at a Volkswagen T2 Kombi-based Jurgens Auto-Villa.



Until today I had never set foot in an Auto-Villa, but still the holiday on wheels has burnt its way into the grey matter.

There was the one time as kids when we camped in a caravan park on the South Coast in the most rudimentary tent ever seen. Of course it rained solidly for three days and our tent was anything but waterproof. Alongside us was an older couple in an Auto-Villa. How we longed for the waterproof lid they had! And then there was the coolest part of it all, which we spotted while doing the dishes in the communal sink: the couple had Jurgens-branded crockery in the soap suds.

My second memory is of sitting behind an early air-cooled version as it gently trundled up the solid white-lined Long Tom

Pass without a care in the world. While it seemed a touch frustrating at this pace (I was in a 1980s hot hatch), it did strike me that it must be cool to take your home with you wherever you go and stop at a different place each evening.

With a Jurgens encounter at every holiday, the memories would fill these pages and more in no time, but I'll leave the nostalgia here with a final recollection. To the caravan fans out there it might be a sad, sacrilegious one but to an impressionable 10-year-old it was fantastic. It was a Friday night. My family packed a cooler box and blankets and headed for Sturrock Park oval track for some good old-fashioned banger racing. While the V8 sprint cars and hot rods were their usual spectacular selves, the real cap on the awesome night was a

caravan race. Old banger cars each hooked up a caravan and when the flag dropped set off in a tightly contested race, where from the outside it looked like the purpose was to destroy your fellow competitor's caravan while also leading the race. It lasted maybe 10 furious laps and the win went the way of a busted-up station wagon towing what the commentator said was a Jurgens – but in reality all that remained was an axle with an A-frame, with the caravan bodywork strewn around the dirt track.

The other day I was in a coffee shop where the door was covered with hundreds of photographic slides. And, you guessed it, a large number of these featured unknown families' vacation shots, complete with a T2 and T3 VW Auto-Villa. No matter where you go in SA you are sure to find a Jurgens



of some sort, but interestingly the Jurgens story has a Dutch beginning to it.

So let's go back to Holland in 1938 when Geert Jurgens, a truck and coach builder, built his own caravan. A 1950 move for the family to Johannesburg, South Africa saw him initially working at a local truck body-building outfit, but within two years he'd branched out on his own (with able help from his two sons, Dirk and Rieks) and started his own factory. Growth was rapid and a year later the staff had increased to 25 and the first SA caravan made by Jurgens

A 1950 move for the family to Johannesburg, South Africa saw him initially working at a local truck body-building outfit, but within two years he'd branched out on his own

was completed. Caravan building was still not the staple for Jurgens though, with the focus on truck and van bodies such as bread delivery units and even the odd mobile library.

But as the craze of caravanning swept through the land in the mid-1950s, so the operation reacted by adding caravan, trailer and motorhome manufacture to the repertoire. With more work than ever space became an issue, and by 1963 Jurgens had moved into a larger factory in Kempton Park. 1964 saw the addition of the crown to the Jurgens logo, which led to the 'King of the Great Outdoors' tagline. During '67, the firm added a canvas side tent to the menu and churned out its 10 000th caravan, which is why no real holiday was complete without seeing at least one Valiant pulling a 'sleepwa'.

Growth continued into the

1970s with in the region of 3 000 caravans rolling out the works in 1972, but for us motoring types the real excitement came in 1973 with the announcement of the first mass-production Jurgens compact motorhome – the Auto-Villa. We weren't the only fans though, with Karmann of Germany applying to produce the vehicle under licence.

The Auto-Villa craze took off both here at home and globally, perhaps aided by the fuel crisis that saw caravan sales drop as consumers stopped buying the thirsty large-capacity cars needed to pull them. Whatever the case, '74 was an exciting year with the delivery of the first Auto-Villas to clients. While companies had produced a number of Kombi-based campervans over the years, Jurgens used its expertise to built caravans into the rear sections of cut-down Volkswagen T2 panel vans. The results saw the Auto-Villa outclass the others in terms of space – it had standing room, a kitchenette



(with sink, gas fridge and two-plate stove), wall-to-wall carpets, beds (double or two single configurations) and even a sectioned-off area that could house a portable toilet or shower.

Before building any Auto-Villas, Jurgens were met with scepticism by Volkswagen technicians so the company took the plunge on its own, buying half a dozen VW Microbus panel vans at full-blown retail price from a dealership. These were taken apart, leaving only the engine, floorpan and cab section and then the rear caravan-type section added, with careful attention put into chassis strengthening and the changing of shock absorbers to double-acting load-adjuster units also built here in SA. VW's Type 2 Kombi was the chosen platform not only because of the natural tendency towards a camper but also because of the spares supply and dealership backing throughout the land, which is where these vehicles would be travelling. And in keeping it for the people,

the aim laid out was to deliver a comfortable and luxurious vehicle that was nimble enough for town driving, didn't need a heavy-duty licence and would cover the miles while being relatively light on fuel.

The first of the six purchased vehicles became the prototype shown to Volkswagen SA's decision makers who passed on the report to Germany, who in turn agreed to make custom chassis for Jurgens' requirements. VWSA then carried out a 20 000km test in South West Africa (Namibia) whereafter the official stamp of approval was given by Volkswagen.

Within a year the production units rolled out the Kempton factory and our favourite holiday home became a reality. Tests at the time concluded that the Auto-Villa was compact (only slightly longer than a

VW Beetle) and easy to manoeuvre but did move around a bit in the wind (though not much more than a regular Kombi). Reports suggest fuel consumption on the open road measured in at just under 12 litres per 100km and that the 1795cc air-cooled engine would power the house to a top speed of 100km/h.

But what really had the tongues wagging was the clever interior packaging, space and fixtures. Inside the living area anyone under 1.88 metres could stand upright, rubber-backed carpets were fitted and woodgrain Formica surfaces abounded on the kitchen

Before building any Auto-Villas, Jurgens were met with scepticism by Volkswagen technicians so the company took the plunge on its own, buying half a dozen VW Microbus panel vans at full-blown retail price



counters, dinette table, cupboards and ¾ wardrobe (which included a mirror on the door). There was a 102-litre gas fridge and two-burner stove with grill and glass-door oven. Inside a wall-mounted cabinet the awesome branded crockery for six was well packaged in a polystyrene box to prevent damage while on the drive. Best of all was a hidden kitchen sink that slid out from a cabinet drawer.

The dining table did duty as the base of the double bed and should the whole family be along for the campout, a folding single bed and hammock could be ticked on the options list. Interior lighting was provided by means of fluorescent tubes.

The automatic version sold at R5 500 while the manual was popular at R5 200, and because over 100 units sold in year one, demand soon outstripped supply. Continuous improvements meant that a few changes occurred over the years with the most notable being the position and shape of the side door – initially set forward and featuring squared edges but from 1975 further back and with more rounded corners. Minor interior changes,

like the replacement of the drawer-fitted sink with a countertop unit, occurred too but the real improvement was the release of the Luton extension in '76. This saw an extension of the 'house' part over the VW's cab, which meant the kids didn't have to sleep in a hammock anymore. The Luton was further modified in 1977 when the extension was reshaped with a lower profile for better aerodynamics, made possible by cutting into the Kombi's driving cab. From there on, until the swap-over to the Type 3 (T3) Microbus and the move to the more powerful 2000L Microbus underpinnings in 1979, the Auto-Villa remained all but untouched in basic design. With this new 1970cc air-cooled engine the performance improved to see the Auto-Villa reach a top speed of 112km/h but it was happier cruising at 80km/h where it returned 12 litres per 100km – there wouldn't have been enough juice in the regular tank size to really adventure. A set of twin 56-litre tanks were fitted either side the engine and gave a range of 900km or so. At just over R9 000 the Auto-Villa was not the cheapest form of motoring but then again it wasn't just a vehicle, it was also a cheap house.

The last T2 Auto-Villa gave way to the T3 in 1982, but sadly this model didn't live up to its predecessor in the sales department as competitors launched equally innovative designs. This, perhaps coupled

with the resignation of Rieks Jurgens, saw Jurgens lose market share dramatically and a partnership was needed. The Terexco Group came on board (VW was no longer the chosen Auto-Villa platform; Bedford trucks took over) but couldn't steady the ship and by 1989 ownership moved on to Michael Delport's Decagon Group, ending the Jurgens family's involvement in the company. Operating from a new factory in Ga-Rankuwa, the Jurgens brand started rebuilding itself by developing new models and re-establishing a decent dealer network. Slowly but surely the firm recovered to a 40% market share and by 1994 purchased competitors CI Caravans. With the release of the first mass-production off-road caravan in 1998, Jurgens again led the innovation race and sales soared. With Jurgens (now Jurgens Ci) back at the top of the pile once again, Delport figured he'd achieved what he wanted to do and sold the operation to the Imperial Group in 2008.

In more recent years, Jurgens returned to Volkswagen-derived Auto-Villas with the new front-engine Kombi models but to most of us the Auto-Villas we came to know and love are the versions with the engines in the back. Sure, they might slow you down on the mountain passes but there's no denying they hold a soft spot as a special bit of South African motoring heritage. And who wouldn't be slow carrying the bed, stove and kitchen sink across this awesome country? 🇿🇦

The automatic version sold at R5 500 while the manual was popular at R5 200, and because over 100 units sold in year one, demand soon outstripped supply



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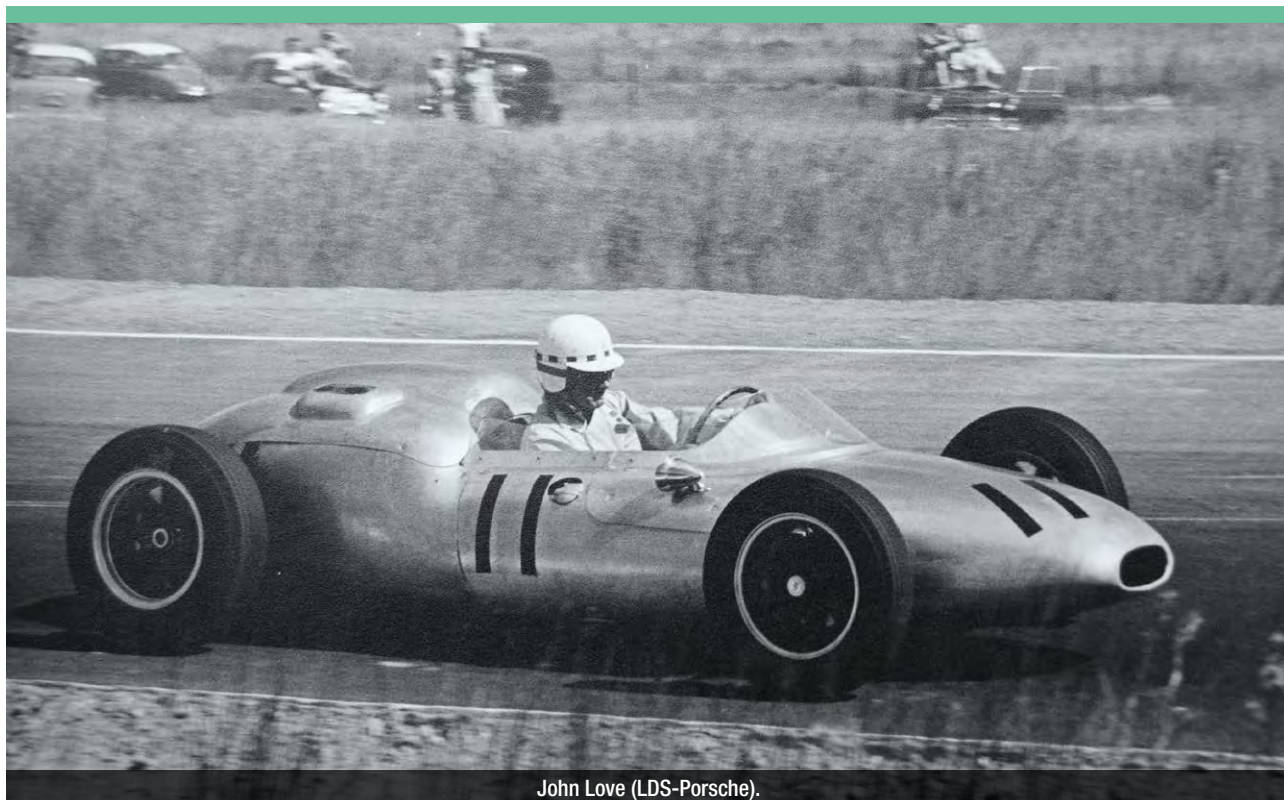
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John Love (LDS-Porsche).

SWINGING SIXTIES — 02 —

The second of two features by **Mike & Wendy Monk** revealing some previously unpublished photos that vividly capture the cars and drivers who raced in South Africa in the early 1960s.

Photos by Dudley Schonegevel

The Kyalami race circuit in Gauteng is currently undergoing a successful revival, having received a costly revamp since being taken over by Porsche. But back in the 1960s, the original circuit was thriving with all manner of racing taking place, including grands prix. Successful drivers became household names and received huge local support, especially when competing against overseas drivers. In those memorable days, the sport was far more relaxed and more easily accessed by the public, some of whom recorded events on film. One such individual was the late Dudley Schonegevel, an architect by profession

but also a passionate and award-winning photographer. While not a motor racing fan, he found the cars and drivers an interesting subject, and recently a batch of previously unpublished photographs of racing that took place between 1960 and 1964 emerged that are reproduced here. They illustrate the era superbly well; the cars with their unadorned bodywork, the drivers exposed to the elements, the concentration on their faces clearly visible.

The 4th Rand Autumn Trophy was held at Kyalami on 17 March 1962 and the two-heat race was won overall by John Love in his LDS-Porsche from Syd van der Vyver (Lotus 18-Alfa). Peter de Klerk was fourth overall in his Alfa Special.



Syd van der Vyver (Lotus 18-Alfa).



Peter de Klerk (Alfa Special).

While not a motor racing fan, he found the cars and drivers an interesting subject, and recently a batch of previously unpublished photographs of racing that took place between 1960 and 1964 emerged



Lotus 23-lookalike Rapido-Alfa of Nick Kingwill.



Dudley captured nose-to-tail dices between Brausch Niemann (Lotus 22-Ford), Trevor Blokdyk (Cooper T53-Alfa) and Doug Serrurier (LDS-Alfa).



Serrurier, Sam Tingle (LDS-Alfa) and Ernst Pieterse (Lotus 21-Climax).



Clive Trundell (Cooper T45-Climax) and Clive Puzey in the ex-Gary Hocking Lotus18/21-Climax.



John Surtees (Ferrari 156 Dino).



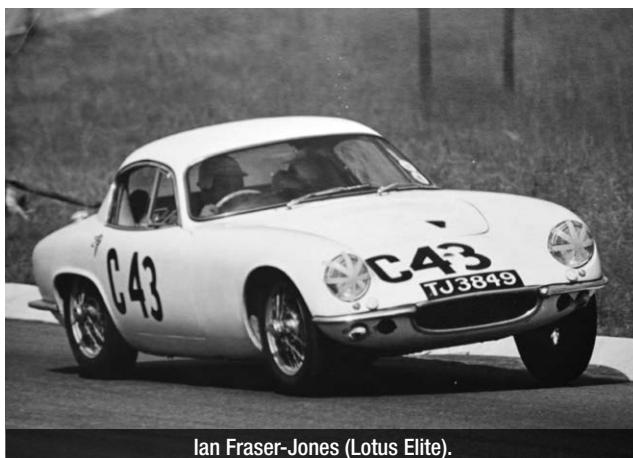
Lorenzo Bandini (Ferrari 156 Dino).



Peter de Klerk (Cooper T55-Climax).



Alex Blignaut (Cooper T53-Climax).



Ian Fraser-Jones (Lotus Elite).



Basil van Rooyen (Lotus Cortina).



Sir John Whitmore (Lotus Cortina).

In 1963, the Ferodo Sports Cars support race for the 5th Rand Winter Trophy meeting held on 3 August featured the Lotus 23-lookalike Rapido-Alfa of Nick Kingwill, who finished second in class and second overall. On 10 October, the 40-lap 3rd Rand Spring Trophy took place and turned into what was described as “the best race in the Transvaal for many a year”. Dudley captured nose-to-tail dices between Brausch Niemann (Lotus 22-Ford), Trevor Blokdik (Cooper T53-Alfa) and Doug Serrurier (LDS-

Alfa), as well as Serrurier, Sam Tingle (LDS-Alfa) and Ernst Pieterse (Lotus 21-Climax) and battling duo Clive Trundell (Cooper T45-Climax) and Clive Puzey in the ex-Gary Hocking Lotus 18/21 Climax.

Dudley clearly had a field day at the 6th Rand Grand Prix on 14 December 1963, capturing the main race and two supporting events. The Grand Prix had attracted a number of international stars including John Surtees, who was the overall winner of the two-heat race in his Ferrari 156 Dino from

team-mate Lorenzo Bandini. First South African home was Peter de Klerk (Cooper T55-Climax) in third spot. Kyalami Grand Prix organiser Alex Blignaut (Cooper T53-Climax) was eleventh overall.

In the supporting races, Ian Fraser-Jones drove a Lotus Elite in the sportscar event, while the saloon car race featured an exciting battle between Basil van Rooyen and British touring car ace Sir John Whitmore in their Lotus Cortinas, with Van Rooyen winning from Whitmore.




Bobby Olthoff/Jack Sears Shelby Cobra Coupé being pursued by the Basil van Rooyen/Bob Kelsey Ford Zodiac.

Dudley passed away in 1978 at the age of 53 from cancer, and we are fortunate to be able to look back at classic racing in the Sixties through his lens

The 7th Rand Daily Mail 9-Hour was run on 31 October 1964 and the variety of cars that took part is captured in Dudley's photo of the Bobby Olthoff/Jack Sears Shelby Cobra Coupé being pursued by the Basil van Rooyen/Bob Kelsey Ford Zodiac. The Shelby finished fifth overall, second in class and seventeenth on index, while the Zodiac later retired with suspension and diff problems.

On 12 December 1964, the 7th Rand Grand Prix was run over 2 x 25-lap heats. John Love (Cooper T55-Climax) finished fifth and twelfth, respectively, to be classified eighth overall. After finishing second in Heat 1, Briton Mike Spence (Lotus 33-Climax) went out on the second lap in Heat 2 with a broken suspension.

This two-part feature has shown most of the 45 photos that make up the Schonegevel collection. Dudley passed away in 1978 at the age of 53 from cancer, and we are fortunate to be able to look back at classic racing in the Sixties through his lens. 



John Love (Cooper T55-Climax).



Mike Spence (Lotus 33-Climax).

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SPANIARD IN

With links to the Mississippi and Michigan, DeSoto entered the market with a bang but left with a whimper. Nevertheless, the early cars had a lot to admire and enjoy. **Mike Monk** tries out 'Butternut', a 1930 roadster.

Pictures: Mike & Wendy Monk

The Roaring Twenties was quite a time in America; a period of dramatic social and political change. The nation's wealth more than doubled between 1920 and 1929, helping to turn the population into a 'consumer society', albeit one that did not automatically appeal to everyone... but as the end of the decade approached, the flapper era was in full swing. For American motor manufacturers it was a time of rapid growth to meet the increasing demand for personal transportation, and the Chrysler Corporation was busy in this regard. On 4 August 1928, Walter Chrysler created Plymouth as an affordable family car brand to take on the likes of Oldsmobile, Buick, Mercury, Studebaker, Hudson and Willys in the mid-price class. Around this time, Chrysler also bought Dodge to bridge the gap between the Chrysler products, which was also partly what DeSoto was aimed at doing.

The story goes that Walter created DeSoto to frighten the bankers controlling Dodge into selling the company to him, but by the time Dodge was acquired DeSoto was on the production line, leaving Chrysler with two house brands competing with each other, with DeSoto the marginally lower-priced of the two. However, this duplication would ultimately be the undoing of DeSoto.

Before I go any further, what's in a name? For some reason there are a number of ways this American brand's name gets spelt, but DeSoto is the accepted correct

On 4 August 1928, Walter Chrysler created Plymouth as an affordable family car brand



THE WORKS





version. That it often gets split into De Soto (as stamped on an under-bonnet plaque) is because the brand is named after a Spanish explorer and conquistador named Hernando de Soto. Why? Well, in the early 1530s de Soto is credited with leading the first European expedition into Peru (which he helped conquer) and Central America, and for discovering the Mississippi River. In the 1920s Chrysler was launching new brands to fill niches in the marketplace and was adopting an 'Americana' approach and must have felt DeSoto fitted the bill – without perhaps taking cognisance of Hernando's warring tendencies. But the official reason is a matter of conjecture. As an aside, in

Well, in the early 1530s de Soto is credited with leading the first European expedition into Peru (which he helped conquer) and Central America, and for discovering the Mississippi River

1913 a de Soto (note spelling) was launched in Auburn, Indiana, but the company closed down the following year.

But back to the future. I doubt even Walter would have anticipated the impact DeSoto had when it hit the showrooms. Upon the introduction of the 2866cc 6-cylinder Series K on 6 August 1928, *Automobile Topics* described the brand as follows: "Most emphatically it is not just another model to be dragged along by the tractive effort of Chrysler advertising, prestige and popularity." By the end of the year over 34 000 cars had been shipped to a 1 500-strong dealer network, and in its first full production year – 1929 – no less than 81 065 cars were sold, eclipsing the record set by Graham-Paige the previous year and setting one that would last for 30 years.

As became fashionable in America for many years, auto manufacturer model years began months before each New Year's Day and DeSoto was well ahead of the game

when the 1930 model year began in July 1929 with a practically unaltered Series K. In January 1930 it was joined by a 3404cc 8-cylinder Series CF, which was claimed to be America's cheapest 8-cylinder. Then in May the range was increased further with the introduction of a Series CK – dubbed a Finer DeSoto – powered by a 3110cc version of the cast-iron block, in-line, L-head 6-cylinder. Its looks were little altered from the Series K, save for a deeper radiator shell and cowl headlamps mounted on top of the front fenders. Now standard with Delco-Remy ignition, the Series CK's engine delivered 45kW at 3400rpm and 163Nm of torque at a low 1200. It was mated with a 3-speed sliding gear transmission with a conventional clutch and shaft drive to the semi-floating rear axle with a 4.7:1 final drive ratio. Lockheed hydraulic brakes were fitted all round.

As a brief aside, 1930 was a landmark year for DeSoto. During the calendar year the company produced 34 889 vehicles and in the process built its 100 000th car. A total of 35 267 sales were registered and it was



ranked America's 15th largest auto maker. 1930 model year production was 32 091.

Affectionately known as 'Butternut' due to its main bodywork colour, FMM's two-tone, 2-door, 4-seat 1930 Series CK roadster certainly has an eye-catching appearance – a far cry from the often monochromatic paint schemes of many of its rivals. The motor swings into life with ease and as soon as I pull away it is apparent why the car was so popular – its lively performance. Having recently driven a number of popular cars from the period, the 1 300kg DeSoto's 'get-up-and-go' personality was something of a revelation by comparison. Steering, pedals and gear change are all relatively easy to operate and such is the engine's torque that reaching and maintaining a comfortable cruising gait is fuss-free. For sure, the brakes need a firm shove but nothing to make calf muscles ache. I did not try the car's optional freewheel function as I was too busy enjoying the drive.

Despite being in the throes of America's Great Depression that began in October 1929, DeSoto was clearly on to a winner.

But in 1933 when nearly 25% of America's workforce was unemployed, the company suffered a major setback when Chrysler reversed the market positions of the DeSoto and Dodge in the hope of boosting the latter's sales. As a result of its elevated status, the following year DeSotos sported Chrysler's new, advanced, streamlined Airflow body style approach, but on the shorter DeSoto wheelbase "the design was a disaster and was unpopular with consumers." Without any other, more traditional-looking models to offer the public, DeSoto struggled until the following year when Chrysler's conventional Airstream look was introduced, but by then the damage had been done.

The 1942 model, with its pop-up Air-Foil headlights ("Out of sight except at night"), revived company fortunes until war broke out. Production resumed in 1946 and stability returned. In 1955, along with all other Chrysler brands, DeSotos

sported Virgil Exner's 'Forward Look' and with his permission, the Cole Porter song *It's De-Lovely* was paraphrased in DeSoto's advertising campaign between 1955 and 1957, the lyrics revised to say "It's delovely, it's dynamic, it's DeSoto".

But the melody could not help keep DeSoto alive. The 1958 recession hit DeSoto particularly hard and plans were set in motion to close the brand. Production ceased on 30 November 1960, with more than two million vehicles sold during the company's lifetime. After a record-breaking beginning, it was a sad end to a brand that had battled through both national economic adversity and mismanagement by the Chrysler empire. 📺

But in 1933 when nearly 25% of America's workforce was unemployed, the company suffered a major setback when Chrysler reversed the market positions

COOL
NAME,
COOL
CAR,
COLD
SALES



The Opel Manta was a car that had everything: looks, economy, performance and a great name. In fact, the April 1971 issue of *CAR* magazine South Africa gushed: "... on the basis of this first Test, we have no hesitation in rating the Opel Manta as the greatest GM car we have ever driven, and one of the finest cars available to South African motorists." Then why is it, wonders **Sivan Goren**, that this car that seemed destined for great things faded into obscurity and all but disappeared?



The Manta was derived from the Opel GT which had begun life as an experimental model and had later gone into production as a low-cost sportscar.

Unveiled in 1970, the Manta A was a 2-door coupé with a 1584cc overhead-camshaft engine and a 4-speed transmission.

At a time when the world was obsessed with American pony cars and the sexy Ford Capri had already roared onto the scene, the Opel Manta became Europe's first affordable muscle-looking car. It quickly

gained 'street cred' amongst the boy-racer crowd and was very well received by the general public too.

When the Manta was launched in South Africa, Opel was already a dominant force in the South African motor industry, with models like the Kadett and Rekord already firmly established. In 1971, the year the Manta 1600 was launched locally, one of these cars would have cost you around R2 627. For your money you would have got 0-100km/h in 14.2 seconds and a maximum speed of 157.4km/h, not to



mention terrific fuel economy for a car of its size. In fact, you pretty much would have got bang for your buck in every department; this was a car that was comfortable, offered brilliant handling and performance (but with a smooth and quiet

ride), and let's face it, was definitely not hard on the eyes.

Truth be told, it was hard to find fault with this car. *CAR* summed it up thus: "Its clever styling not only gives it fine aerodynamics, aesthetic appeal and a pretty spacious interior, but makes the car easy-driving because it does not feel as big as it is. This is a warm-hearted car with considerable prestige value, yet within easy financial reach of the average motorist. As long as production is able to keep pace, we expect that the Opel Manta could very easily move straight into a 'Top Ten' position among South Africa's best-selling

cars." High praise indeed!

And even though the Manta was a car clearly aimed at men – you only have to look back at the period advertising with tag lines like: "If you've got what it takes – Take a MANTA and live like a MAN should" – even the ladies found things to like about it. In a special 'Woman's Comment' section of the test in *CAR*, a female member of the panel reported that the car felt solid and handled beautifully and that she absolutely loved the foot pedals because "even my small feet managed them easily". So something for everyone, then.

The Opel Manta 1900 became available in the same year and received reviews as glowing as its predecessor – perhaps even more so. The two models were essentially the same inside: both two-door coupés with a boot big enough for a decent

In fact, you pretty much would have got bang for your buck in every department; this was a car that was comfortable, offered brilliant handling and performance (but with a smooth and quiet ride), and let's face it, was definitely not hard on the eyes



shopping spree, reclining front rally-type seats, full instrumentation and sports-type gearshift on a centre console. The cylinder bore diameter was increased from 85mm in the 1600 to 93mm in the 1900, which resulted in 0-100km/h achieved in only 12.1 seconds and a top speed of 164.3km/h. And even fuel economy, though not quite as good as that of the 1600, was still pretty darn impressive. The 1900 would have set you back R2 766 – with an extra R41 if you opted for the vinyl roof (I totally would have – just saying).

All in all, when you weighed up all criteria, this was a car that was hard to beat. In the August 1971 test of the Manta 1900, *CAR* magazine said: “The Manta is an engineer’s car, with the accountants taking a back seat. It is obvious that no effort or expense has been spared to give

this car directional stability and fault-free roadability... The car itself is so good that it has to be experienced to be believed. Rarely has any car – regardless of price – excited us so much. And the Manta is very much a low-to-middle-price car.”

In its first year, 742 units of the Manta 1600 were sold in South Africa. In 1972, this number dropped by more than 50% to 339 but then jumped to 648 the following year. But by 1974, the year it was discontinued, only 61 units were sold. The 1900 version did slightly better, selling 1 216 in 1971 but then dropping steadily each year thereafter. By 1976, it too was discontinued.

Surprising? I think so. Why is it that a car that seemed almost perfect could

not maintain sales? Was it that, as the test writer had feared, production could not keep up with demand? Could it be that, despite everything it had going for it, the Manta just did not find favour with the South African public as much as other models did? Perhaps the days of the coupé were over and 4-door saloons became more popular as practical family cars? Or could it be that maybe the Manta was shoved aside because another model in the GM stable was in direct competition with it? Maybe someone out there knows the answer. But whatever it is, the fact remains that the Manta was a car that got far less glory than it deserved. 📌

Why is it that a car that seemed almost perfect could not maintain sales?

THE SON OF THE BEETLE'S FATHER

This month's fictitious interview by **Jake Venter** is with Ferdinand Anton Ernst 'Ferry' Porsche (19 September 1909 - 27 March 1998). He's the son of Ferdinand Porsche Senior, the creator of such memorable cars as the Volkswagen Beetle and the Mercedes-Benz SS range.



The Porsche family has produced at least two other famous motoring personalities. Ferry's sister Louise married Anton Piëch; their son Ferdinand is responsible for a number of Audi and Volkswagen designs and Ferry's son, Ferdinand Alexander (nicknamed 'Butzi') styled the Porsche 911 and became a well-known industrial designer.

Ferry was born in Wiener Neustadt (50km south of Vienna) on the day that his father finished first in his class at the Semmering hillclimb in a Maja, a product of the Austro-Daimler company. At that time Ferdinand Senior was the technical manager of that company and liked to indulge in competitive motoring from time to time.

Ferry's school career started in Wiener Neustadt, but finished in Stuttgart. Soon after he turned 14, his father joined Mercedes at Stuttgart where he took over as technical director from Paul Daimler,

the son of Gottlieb Daimler, who built the first 4-wheeled car.

Ferry left school at the age of 18 and spent a year at Bosch as a trainee, but then decided to be his father's work-shadow. He obtained special permission from the Mercedes management to work at his father's side (most likely without pay), and essentially stayed with him for the rest of Ferdinand Senior's life. He retired in 1989 to the family farm at Zell am See in Austria, and I interviewed him there a few months after his retirement.

I felt that it would not be appropriate to turn up at the farm in anything else but a Porsche so I hired one and drove to Zell am See, about 350km southwest of Vienna. I enjoyed a light lunch next to the beautiful lake and presented myself at the farm in the early afternoon. It was a glorious spring day, and we sat outside amidst a riot of flowers.

JAKE: I'm thrilled that you've agreed to talk to me. I last saw you nearly forty years ago at your father's birthday party at Solitude Castle when I interviewed him on his 75th birthday, but I didn't actually meet you.

FERRY: I'm very pleased to hear that you've met my father. It will make it easier to talk to you. Now that I'm retired I find that it's fun to talk about the old days. The sad side of my life is now further away.

JAKE: My intention is to talk mainly about the early days. About the way you were involved in

the Beetle project and the creation of the 356 and 911 models.

FERRY: I'm happy to do that.

JAKE: I believe you started driving a car at a very early age.

FERRY: Yes, my driving days started on Christmas Eve of 1920 when I was ten. My parents gave me a miniature coach pulled by a goat. I was very upset, but my disappointment turned to joy when both Mother and Father burst into laughter and presented me with the real present: a toy

car designed by my father and built in the experimental workshop at Austro-Daimler. It was powered by an air-cooled 4-stroke 2-cylinder engine and had proper controls, so I could learn the rudiments. At the age of

12 he let me drive one of his other designs in the factory grounds. It was the Austro-Daimler Sascha that won its class in the 1922 Targa Florio.

JAKE: How did you get on at school?

FERRY: I wasn't a very good student, but I loved mathematics. When I was very young my father was the engineering director at Austro-Daimler, and in my teenage years he was the engineering director at Mercedes. My training consisted of spending as much time as possible with him at these two companies. I even accompanied him on business trips.

JAKE: I cannot imagine a better way to learn automotive engineering.

FERRY: That's true, but I did go to the Robert Bosch Company for a year as a trainee, though my heart wasn't in it.

At the age of 12 he let me drive one of his other designs in the factory grounds. It was the Austro-Daimler Sascha that won its class in the 1922 Targa Florio



JAKE: The major change in your father's life came about when he disagreed with the Mercedes-Benz management and started an automotive consulting company in April 1931 in Stuttgart. Were you there at the start?

FERRY: Yes, but I didn't take part in any design projects. I had to coordinate the efforts of the engineers, maintain good relations with the clients and organise product testing.

JAKE: What was your involvement with the Beetle project?

FERRY: Once the project got going I was put in charge of testing the vehicles. Later I accompanied my father on visits to the USA to study production methods and in 1938 I was made deputy manager of the complete Volkswagen project.

JAKE: I'm afraid I have to ask this question. What

did you do during the war?

FERRY: I spent most of my time with my father at the design office in Stuttgart. We were involved in all sorts of projects, from military vehicles to tractors, and we also designed two versions of the Beetle, the Kübelwagen ('bucket-car' or 'bakkie') and the Schwimmwagen, which was a 4-wheel-drive amphibious vehicle. When the bombing started I moved my family and most of the design staff to Zell am See or Gmünd in Austria. I remained in Stuttgart.

JAKE: When the war ended you were arrested by the Allies. When I interviewed your father I could not bring myself to ask him for details; the memories were still too raw. Would you mind talking about it now?

FERRY: This happened 44 years ago, and so much has happened since that I can talk about it without rancour. The

American authorities arrested Father, me and Anton Piëch as war criminals. This was understandable, because my father was often consulted by Adolf Hitler on technical matters, and we were involved in designing such vehicles as the famous Tiger tank.

JAKE: Did they treat you well?

FERRY: In the beginning, yes, but when the French government heard that we were captured they asked Father to help design a French 'people's car'. Louis Renault was working on a new small car, but he died in October 1944 and the Renault engineers needed some help. We were taken to Baden-Baden and started to negotiate with French government and Renault company officials, but after a few days the mood suddenly changed and we were arrested by the French authorities. They demanded 500 000 francs bail money for each of us,



but the family could only get enough francs together to release me, so that I could look after our company business.

Father and Anton were taken to Paris where they were initially kept in the porter's lodge at Louis Renault's villa. Later they were transferred to a cold and damp prison at Dijon, and released 20 months later after we could get enough money together to bribe somebody. It seems the French motor industry felt threatened by the Porsche involvement, and pulled some strings.

JAKE: The post-war conditions must have made it very difficult for you to run the consulting company. How did you cope?

FERRY: I could not get to Stuttgart, because that was in a different sector of Germany, so I gathered any of the old staff I could find at our second base in Gmünd, Austria. We survived by repairing cars and making water pumps.

JAKE: How did you get the money to release your family?

FERRY: That was a lucky break. We received a visit one day 'out of the blue', as you say in England, from Pierre Dusio. He was an Italian industrialist and racing driver. At the time his company, Cisitalia, were

producing some beautiful small racing and sportscars using Fiat components, and he wanted us to design a very advanced racing car. He paid a large sum of money upfront, and we were able to get Father and Anton released in August 1947. The car had a 1.5-litre flat-12 engine, based on the 1.5-litre V12 that we designed for Auto Union in 1939. Neither one of these cars was raced; the former because of the war and the latter because Dusio ran out of money.

JAKE: We now come to the part of your life that people will remember for a very long time. The creation of the immortal Porsche 356.

FERRY: Don't tell me you're a 356 fan!

JAKE: I'm afraid so.

FERRY: (Laughs) We've designed so many wonderful cars during my time at Porsche. What's so special about the 356?

JAKE: You shouldn't be asking me; you should be telling me! I think it's the unique combination of light weight, aerodynamic shape, boxer engine at the rear and air cooling that gives the 356 a personality that is irresistible. Your later designs may be faster, but they're bigger, heavier and less nimble than the 356, and the driver is more isolated from the mechanisms.

FERRY: You may be right, but I can't take all the credit. We had to use my father's Beetle design as a base, and we took a long look at the very streamlined Volkswagen that my father designed for a proposed Berlin-Rome race that never took

place. Incidentally, my father saw the first Porsche when he was released, and he said he wouldn't change anything.

JAKE: Where did you build the first units?

FERRY: At an improvised workshop inside a sawmill at Gmünd. By June 1948 we had completed 50 aluminium-bodied coupés, and we also sent six floorplans to Beutler in Switzerland to be fitted with cabriolet bodies.

JAKE: You must have moved back to Stuttgart at some stage.

FERRY: Yes, that happened in September 1949, after I signed a deal with the Volkswagen Company. Good old Heinz Nordhoff, who was in charge at Volkswagen by then, and who played a major role in making the Beetle a worldwide bestseller, invited me to Wolfsburg and offered me a contract that I could not refuse. In exchange for Porsche designing services the company would provide a share of the profits from each Beetle sold, the raw materials for building Porsche vehicles and the usage of the Volkswagen dealer structure for sales and technical services. In addition, I would become the sole importer of Volkswagens into Austria.

JAKE: That seems very generous.

FERRY: True, but we must remember that the new Volkswagen Company, which was formed in January 1948 when Nordhoff was appointed, was given a successful vehicle design on a plate. In May 1949 the company celebrated the production of

In May 1949 the company celebrated the production of 50 000 Volkswagens since the war ended, in spite of serious material shortages



50 000 Volkswagens since the war ended, in spite of serious material shortages, and by the end of that year there was a waiting list of more than 20 000 names. Also, at that time none of the plant engineers knew as much about the Beetle as we did.

JAKE: Were you able to move back to your old premises at Stuttgart?

FERRY: Yes, but that happened very much later. Our building was occupied by the American forces with the result that I had to hire some space from Reutter (an automotive body builder).

JAKE: Did you accept any other design work at the time?

FERRY: Nothing worth mentioning. We had an income from VW, and we were working on the Carrera twin-cam engine that was later introduced on the 356.

JAKE: Did the sales success of the 356 surprise you?

FERRY: Totally. We planned to build 500 a year, but by the time we changed to the 911 we had produced more than 76 000 units.

JAKE: The 911 is an even more phenomenal success story than the 356, but there is a saying amongst 356 fans that a real Porsche must have pushrods.

FERRY: (Laughs) The later cars are more luxurious and a lot faster, but I have to agree that the early cars were very nimble and can be very pleasurable to drive.

JAKE: The body shapes of the 356 and the 911 have stood the test of time. Was Erwin Komenda

responsible for both?

FERRY: No. Erwin has been with us since the start of the consulting company. He designed the bodies for the Beetle and the 356 but when we designed the 911 my son Ferdinand Alexander, known as 'Butzi', presented a design that Erwin did not like, so we took the drawings to the Reutter body shop across the road and they built the first example of a car that we started to sell as the 901.

JAKE: I've never heard of it.

FERRY: You're not likely to. As soon as it was released Peugeot complained that they had the exclusive right to model numbers with a zero in the middle. We changed the name to 911, and the rest is history.

JAKE: We're coming to the end of a long interview,

but I must ask you about Butzi. Is he still with the company?

FERRY: No, not really, but we make use of his services. He studied industrial design after leaving school, worked with us as a stylist and was responsible for the shape of the 911 and sports-racing Carrera GTS (type 904). In 1972 he started his own industrial design company.

He called it the Porsche Design Studio, and since then he's been designing watches, luggage, T-shirts and even streetcars under the 'Design by F A Porsche' brand.

JAKE: Thank you, and thanks for allowing me to take so much of your time.

FERRY: Thank you for being interested. It's been a pleasure to be reminded of past glories. 📷

1. Ferry managed the company from 1951 when Porsche Senior died until 1972 when the Porsche family decided that no member should be allowed to be involved in the daily running of the company, to avoid conflict. He then became chairman of the board of management, and when he retired in 1989 he was made the honorary chairman of the supervisory board. He died in 1998 at the age of 88, at the family farm in Zell am See. He was awarded at least 14 honorary doctorates, professorships or medals.
2. I can't resist mentioning the name of Porsche Senior's consulting company: Dr. req. h.c. F. Porsche GmbH, Konstruktionen und Beratungen für Motoren und Fahrzeugbau! It's interesting to note that Porsche's title – and the fact that it is an honorary doctorate (h.c = honoris causa) – is part of the company's title.
3. Ferdinand Alexander 'Butzi' Porsche (11 December 1935 - 5 April 2011) retired in 2005 due to ill-health and was also given the title Honorary Chairman of the Supervisory Board. He died at the age of 76, in Salzburg.

FRIGHTENING THE DESERT FOX

BY ANDRE STEMMET



On 17 July 1944, Field Marshall Erwin Rommel was a troubled man. The commander of the German Army in France, he was fighting a desperate battle against the Allied Forces which landed on the beaches of Normandy on 6 June, pushing their way into Europe and, eventually, onwards to Germany and the supreme prize, the capital Berlin. Rommel was already a living legend – a veteran campaigner against the Allies in the North African desert and now

in Normandy – known colloquially as the Desert Fox. But he could see the writing on the wall: to his inner circle he had confided that Germany could not win the war while fighting on two fronts; it should make peace with the British and Americans to prevent the Russian army taking Berlin. But it was clear that the German leader, Adolf Hitler, would repel any thought of an armistice with the Allies. Furthermore, he was also aware of whisperings in the German High Command of a plot to get rid of the *Führer*.

A hands-on commander, Rommel would travel more than 300 kilometres every day from his headquarters, Chateau de la Roche Guyon overlooking the Seine River, to meet his commanders on the battlefield. On the afternoon of the seventeenth, his Horch staff

car was on its way back to the *château*. Approaching the village of Vimoutiers, two aircraft dived towards this target of opportunity, the first Spitfire's cannons and machine guns already clattering. Metal fragments and glass cut Rommel's face, the driver lost control and the Horch careered into a tree while the second Spitfire attacked it. Rommel was thrown from the car, striking his head on the road, and immediately lost consciousness.

And this is where the South African connection comes in. Behind the controls of one of the Spitfires was Squadron Leader Johannes Jacobus 'Chris' Le Roux, commander of Royal Air Force No. 602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron.

Born in 1920 in Heidelberg in the then Transvaal, Chris was educated at Durban High School, after which he trained as an apprentice in the Springs Mines. An adventurer at heart and with war clouds

Approaching the village of Vimoutiers, two aircraft dived towards this target of opportunity, the first Spitfire's cannons and machine guns already clattering



Marshal Erwin Rommel.



Supposedly an image of the Horch wreck.

By 19 September 1944, Chris had carried out 200 sorties, won a Distinguished Flying Cross with two bars, and destroyed at least eighteen enemy aircraft in combat fighting

gathering over Europe, he attempted to join the South African Air Force, but was unsuccessful due to its small budget. In February 1939, eight months before World War II broke out, Chris travelled to the United Kingdom and joined the Royal Air Force.

After completing training, he was posted to No. 73 Squadron, flying Hurricanes as part of the Advanced Air Striking Force in France in 1940, covering the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk. Wounded, he spent six weeks in hospital. He later flew Spitfires in North Africa during the Tunisian campaign, and after stints as an instructor at Rolls-Royce, manufacturer of the Spitfire's Merlin engine, was posted to No. 602 Squadron as its commander.

By 19 September 1944, Chris had carried out 200 sorties, won a Distinguished Flying Cross with two bars, and destroyed at

least eighteen enemy aircraft in combat fighting, mainly Messerschmitt 109s and Focke Wulfs 190s. On that fateful day Chris, a popular commanding officer, hopped over the Channel from the Deurne airfield in Belgium where the squadron was stationed, according to one unconfirmed report to fetch beer for the squadron. The ingenuity of thirsty air force men knows no bounds: auxiliary fuel tanks for Spitfires were designed, dubbed 'Modification XXX Depth Charges' in order to get official approval, and filled with what became known as 'XXX Joy Juice' to execute the weekly 'beer run' for many squadrons stationed in France and Belgium. Upon return he ran into bad weather and crashed into the Channel, leaving an English wife and two children. It is ironic that Chris was killed on a routine flight, having survived many combat sorties and bailing out aircraft on twelve occasions.

He is commemorated with some 20 000 other women and men of Allied Air Forces who have no known grave in the Air Forces Memorial in Runnymede, west of London, while the Ditsong National Museum of Military History in Saxonwold also honours him and some other South African World War II pilots in an exhibition.

Rommel survived the attack. Two days later, while he was still in the Luftwaffe hospital at Bernay, Hitler survived an assassination plot hacked by senior military men. Rommel, accused of being complicit, committed suicide on 14 October 1944, rather than facing a humiliating trial.

But so great was his reputation that the Nazi propaganda machine's official version was that he died of a heart attack or a cerebral embolism, a complication from the skull fracture sustained during the attack on his car, and was given a state funeral. **C**

THE
POWER

GAME

How much is too much? **Gavin Foster** asks the question... and then answers it.



1972 Norton Commando Interstate 850. With 65hp it was described as “mechanical silk” beyond 1000rpm and hardly leaked any oil. “Any owner could sort those out in a couple of hours at most” the tester said. It could cruise at 110 - 130km/h with standard gearing and “goes like stink.”

So, just how much power does a sporting motorcycle really need? Back in the late '60s Honda launched the first Japanese superbike, the 750 Four, with a stunning – gasp – 67hp 4-cylinder engine. It retailed at just over R1 000 in SA and the naysayers had a field day. “All those moving parts!” they cried. “It’ll never last!” “Who on earth will pay more than R1 000 for a motorbike?” exclaimed others. “It’ll be too fast for anybody to ride on the road,” lamented a third group.

The big Honda was, in fact, no faster than the cobbled-together 750cc Triumph Trident and BSA Rocket 3 models that the stressed-out and desperate Brits had launched a few weeks earlier, but the Japanese machine did some other important things that the Brit bikes didn’t. Like start at the push of a button, keep the engine oil inside of the crankcases where it belonged, and continue running flawlessly for thousands of kilometres between services without breaking down.

Kawasaki entered the fray with their giant-beating 60hp 500cc 2-stroke triple, the Mach III, and a couple of years later trumped that with the ferocious 750cc Mach IV, built to the same recipe to give 74bhp.

For the next 15 or so years the Japanese manufacturers – the Brits were fast falling by the wayside – engaged in a horsepower war, with overweight ill-handling lumps of steel, aluminium and plastic wobbling out of the factories to be sold to a public who were at that time interested only in standing-start, ¼-mile (400m) dragstrip times and top speeds. And these were impressive, with big, heavy 100hp or so bikes like the Yamaha XS1100, 6-cylinder Kawasaki Z1300, Honda CBX1000 Six and Suzuki GSX 1100 running quarter miles in the 11 second bracket in the '70s, while topping out at 220 to 230km/h. Cornering? Shush. It would be rude to bring that up now!

So where does all this take us? To April 1972, which is the date on the cover of the *Motorcyclist Illustrated* magazine I stumbled across in my office recently, as one does. There, a fellow called John C. Gee wrote about the ongoing horsepower war in his ‘Racing Reverberations’ column. “From time to time,” he pontificated, “racing machines arrive which are alleged to have too much power. Alleged, because power is often made the scapegoat for material failings in other departments – overweight, poor handling and such. As perseverance invariably puts those things to rights, the so-called over-powerful machine is eventually proved nothing of the kind. Suddenly, or

The big Honda was, in fact, no faster than the cobbled-together 750cc Triumph Trident and BSA Rocket 3 models



Surely one of the most elegant profiles in the business?
BMW 500 from 1972. It boasted 32hp. With its 0-96km/h time of 9.8 seconds and 145km/h top speed as tested, performance was considered adequate in 1972.

New Kawasaki 750 Mach IV

a whole new world of performance from the fastest-accelerating street machine

Kawasaki has perfected the 2-cycle, 3-cylinder—the smoothest, most powerful production power plant for motorcycles, and put it in the new MACH IV 750. The new big bore 74 hp Kawasaki 750 developed from the brilliant MACH III 500 is the fastest-accelerating bike on the street. Twelve seconds flat over the S S 1/4 mile. That's moving. A high of 126 mph (203 kph). And the handling and stability is something to believe in.

Racing-design disc brake
A big new hydraulic disc brake up front works like a drag shoe. No grab. No fade. Dependable.

CDI: unique ignition
Kawasaki's revolutionary electronic capacitor discharge ignition system: just know it's the greatest innovation for bikes in years. It means easier starting and works better than conventional systems.

Greasy new styling for '72
Look at the high-flying cut-off racing tail and three-up sweeps, tuned pipes. Greasy speed stripes and new paint. Everything designed for action.

Kawasaki


Kawasaki 750 Triple pictured in 1972.

maybe gradually, excess bhp becomes the formula for winning everywhere. So, for one thing, the fondly held 'horses for courses notion' is proved so much nonsense."

He then bangs on a bit about Mike Hailwood's "crazy Honda 500 Four" GP bike of the '60s, with its obviously excessive 100hp, before moving on to the production racing version of Kawasaki's new 750cc 2-stroke triple and the possibility of it and similar machines being suitable for a new production bike-based Formula 750 or Superbike world championship. "It's just that, in theory at any rate, semi-privateers will suddenly be let loose on 100hp impossible-to-manage 750s," he laments. "Don't be left on the sidelines, folks," he mocks, "go from Seeley singles to 175mph projectiles (280km/h) in one – probably your last – easy lesson! Imagine lesser riders wrestling their 100hp screamers around Brno – in the rain. It's all very fine talking ton-up bhp in the Daytona context.... but hordes of 100hp machines on European circuits? Nonsense!"

Mr Gee had obviously given the matter much thought though, because he then broke cover for the other side with a surprisingly perceptive observation. "Such assumptions are dangerous, however. They take no account of technical progression. Moreover, racing does not stand still, so

it's pointless having a stick-in-the-mud brain that only computes 'impossible!'" He points out how the Yamaha 250 and 350cc 2-stroke production-based twin-cylinder machinery had recently demonstrated the capability to humiliate all the top 500 and 750cc 4-strokes before BSA and Triumph came back with their even more powerful Rocket II and Trident-based 750 triples to win Daytona in 1971. "That's progression," he said, before moving on to attack those who claimed the Isle of Man TT, Mallory Park, Assen and other circuits were reputedly too dangerous for the Yamaha 2-strokes that were streets faster than anything ever raced there before. "Perhaps the 750s have arrived just in time to prevent the ban-everything brigade taking control like it has in Formula One car racing. Certainly, riders like Paul Smart, John Cooper and others would scoff at the suggestion that the big ones are beyond the limit. Thank Heavens for that!"

Which takes us back to my original question. How much power does a motorcycle really need? The answer now is roughly the same as back then, I suppose. Two or three times as much as common sense would have us believe. The trick is in knowing how – and when – to use it. 

Perhaps the 750s have arrived just in time to prevent the ban-everything brigade taking control like it has in Formula One car racing

QUO VADIS? – 2018



This past year the NRC (National Rally Championship), under the auspices of Motorsport South Africa, presented a championship category for classic rally cars in South Africa. **Terry Ilman** believes it was a success and that the motorsport fans of South Africa want to see the class continue in 2018.

Photography by Sue Vacy-Lyle & Johan Niemand

In 2017, fans were treated to nostalgic and spectacular rally action – Webers barking, rear-wheel drive sideways action, Cibie Super Oscars or PIAAs picking out trees, rocks or kerbstones, dust and clods flying – from some of the cars that were at the forefront of rallying in South Africa and around the world about 30 years ago. Yes, there were front-wheel drive cars too – four of them during the season, all VW Golfs.

As the 2018 season approaches, a small team has been tasked with taking classic rallying into the new year and growing the sport and I, for one, relish the thought.

Classic stage rallying is well supported in the United Kingdom, Australia and Europe, especially the Scandinavian countries. Certain marques remain extremely popular, especially those with good rally DNA. Fords are extremely ubiquitous, stemming from the fact that there are several companies in


the United Kingdom who still manufacture and distribute top-class rally components, from body parts to engines, suspension and transmission items and ancillaries. Ford Escort, Sierra/Sapphire and Capri parts are all quite easy to obtain. Mini, Porsche, Datsun/Nissan, Toyota, Opel/Vauxhall and Volkswagen models are all still seen regularly.

By way of an example, Viking Motorsport in the UK is owned and run by Phil Mills, who navigated Petter Solberg to his WRC Championship in the Subaru in 2003. Viking has the capability of building top-quality Gp4 MkII Ford Escorts. In 2015, Viking brought three Escorts to South Africa to compete in the Classic Rally South Africa, run in the White River/Nelspruit, Sabie, Graskop area. Two of the cars finished the event, which ran over five days, one with an Argentinian crew and the other a Swedish crew. Sadly, Lee Rose and Pierre Arries in the third car broke a cambelt on day three and retired whilst running in 2nd position. That car has remained in South Africa and in fact won the 2017 Championship in the hands of owner Lee Rose, with notes being read by Elvene Coetzee, multiple NRC Co-

Driver's Champion. (Elvene's father is well-known Kassie Coetzee, a classic himself, who pedalled Datsuns and Nissans from the period with extreme skill.)

There are well-known South African race and rally car builders too, who are fully capable of building and preparing period-correct classic rally cars. We need not stand back for anyone.

The FIA runs a European Historic Rally Championship, which enjoys strong support from Finland, Spain, Sweden, Italy, Hungary, Norway and several other European countries. Ford Escort, BMW 2002ti, Porsche 911, Opel Ascona, Lancia Stratos, Fiat Sierra, BMW, Volvo 122S and even Alfa Romeo are some of the names that feature on the strong entry lists.

A little way to the north of us, in Kenya, classic rallying enjoys good support. The East African Safari Rally, once part of the WRC, now runs as the East African Safari Classic Rally. The 2017 event which was run in November featured amongst the finishers mainly Porsche 911s, Escort MkIs and MkIIs, several Datsun 240Zs, a Mercedes Benz 350SLC and two Triumph TR7s. Geoff Bell, who now lives in Cape Town, finished 4th in a Datsun 260Z. 

As the 2018 season approaches, a small team has been tasked with taking classic rallying into the new year and growing the sport



CLASSIC RALLYING IS POPULAR AND IT IS SPECTACULAR.

WILL IT GROW IN POPULARITY? YES, IT WILL, THE PASSION IS BACK!

To put the ethos of classic rallying into perspective, I am going to use a quote from the UK's HRCT Home page:

"Historic Cars may be used for competition under a set of rules that preserve the specification of their period and prevent modifications of performance and behaviour which could arise through the application of modern technology. Historic competition is not simply another formula in which to acquire trophies, it is a discipline apart, in which one of the essential ingredients is a devotion to the cars and to their history. Historic Motor Sport enables the active celebration of the History of the Motor Car."

One can go into long and boring detail about 'Original', 'Authentic', 'Replica' and 'Authentic Replica' and generate waffle and conjecture about what classic/historic cars should conform to. Let us be realistic about one thing: rally cars, more so than in any other form of competition, take a pounding. It is all

very well building static Concours cars, show cars, or even historic track cars. One must accept that it will be more difficult to maintain period accuracy with a rally car. Administrators will need to stay abreast of world trends and disciplines necessary to keep the sport alive without compromising authenticity. We need to remain realistic.

For those who are planning or building cars for 2018, please keep in mind all that has been set out here. The Spirit of the Regulations is that cars shall be true to period, with no advantage built in through the means of modern technology, parts or methods. I am fully available to offer advice to anyone who wishes to explore the possibilities of competing in 2018 and welcome your enquiries. (Email Terry Illman at aviationparts50@gmail.com or call 071 643 6868.)

Do not assume. Do not build a car without establishing first that it will conform to the regulations. The new

regulations should be published before the end of January. You do not want to make expensive assumptions.

It is the intention that the onus of proving compliance with the regulations will rest with the entrant/competitor at all times.

I am going to quote one more saying from the HRCT Home page, and in the interest of 'keeping it classic', I trust they will forgive me:

"Rules are rules and broken by fools, so otherwise Prove it or Remove it."

Seventeen different conforming classic cars made an appearance in 2017, with nine classic entries on the York Rally, nine entries on the VW Rally in Port Elizabeth and eight travelling all of the way to Caledon. So let's see a minimum of 12 entries per event in 2018!

Rumours abound of cars in build or in planning: Mercedes Benz 280 CE, Mercedes Benz 190E, Volvo 164. There are some Datsun Skylines around, a Stanza, a 1600SSS... Bring on 2018!

DATSUN IS RISING

Andrew Langham moves from Mini to Datsun, to moderns and back to Datsun with a sunny look into the story of a B110 Datsun 1200.



It all began in Harare, Zimbabwe. I was born with (rationed) petrol in my veins – my now 93-year-old mother says I said ‘car’ long before I said ‘pa’ or ‘ma’.

I had already acquired my first set of wheels (a 1959 Austin Seven 850 – yes, one of the very first Minis). My mom played bridge every Tuesday afternoon and Mrs Rose had arrived in a brand-new buttercup yellow Datsun 1200. Due to sanctions, new cars were in short supply and it took little to disturb me from my homework. I rushed outside to look over the sweetly proportioned little car. From its chrome trim to its black vinyl roof and full wheel trims it looked a treat.

To my absolute surprise, I was tossed the keys. “Take it for a spin!” Mrs Rose said – what a wonderful woman she was. We lived down a cul-de-sac which was only 500m long, and I was allowed the privilege by my parents and neighbours of using that as my Mini’s test track. I jumped into the Datsun; everything felt just right. The easy start, light clutch, precise gear change and positive steering. Just a few days later, in the

Royal Salisbury Golf Club car park, I saw a bright red 1200 GX coupé that had just been imported from South Africa. It looked sexier than Olivia Newton-John from the recently released movie *Grease*. One day I would own a Datsun 1200. Little did I know that I would have a life-long affair with these endearing little cars.

It was not until 1981, after proving to my dad that I was well on my way to passing my university degree, that he bought me a second-hand cream-coloured GX sedan for my 21st birthday present. The GX’s standard features included twin carburettors, a double spring and large-ported cylinder head, a cluster of round instruments including a rev-counter, a centre binnacle and, unique to SA, domed hubcaps. Mine came with a Rally radio and rear Venetian blinds. It wasn’t long before it was also fitted with an under-dash Panasonic tape deck and 60W speakers were housed in specially-made boxes placed on the rear parcel shelf blasting out ‘Sugar Man’ by Rodriguez.

That car saw it all: trips to Plett with the mates, camping in the Cederberg, my first kiss with my now wife. It was sold six years later to make way for an Escort RS2000, then a string of Golf GTi’s, some family wagons and now some wild Subarus. But Datsun 1200s keep appearing in my life. My wife had had some unreliable European hatches and as money was tight when the kids

arrived and she became a stay-at-home mom, a mustard-coloured 1200 Deluxe was found in the *Weekend Argus* classifieds and put into daily service.

A move from Cape Town to Gauteng in the mid-1990s meant that I was surrounded by an almost endless supply of rust-free Datsuns. Over the years I have bought and sold many of them, the joy for me being in rescuing them from becoming oval dirt-track cars and getting them back to close-to-factory spec.

The Datsun 1200 was packed with features for the time and, combined with outstanding reliability and economy, it became one of South Africa’s best-selling cars in the 1970s. The GX model produces 62kW of power and develops 97Nm of torque, while weighing just over 700kg, and it proved quite sprightly. The March 1972 *Car* magazine tested a 0-100km/h sprint time of 14 seconds and a true top speed of nearly 160km/h. The engine lends itself to tuners and several options to increase power were marketed in the 1970s, including the likes of Alconi, who offered the Datsun Zero with stage 1 and stage 2 performance enhancements.

The tough little car soon became a class winner on the race tracks and rally circuits – initially the conversion from road to track just involved the removal of the hubcaps! Soon motoring aces such as Santana and Van der Linde were getting behind the wheels of some well-sorted track cars.

We lived down a cul-de-sac which was only 500m long, and I was allowed the privilege by my parents and neighbours of using that as my Mini’s test track



Even today most historic race days will see a big contingent of 1200s battling it out for the honours in various classes and a steady demand exists for straight body shells to be converted into track cars. The preferred engine conversions are the Nissan SR20 or the Toyota Twincam mated to a 5-speed Cressida box and diff.

My preferred option with all cars is to get them back to factory spec, but this does require finding a car which has had a relatively good upbringing with limited rust, most trim intact and only a few modifications. The favoured 'wild-boy' modifications on 1200s is to change the original steering wheel, carbs, radio and wheels. These modifications are generally easy to rectify after sourcing original parts from Gumtree, OLX and Junk Mail ads or visiting your local swap meet. Though a set of 13" 6J Minilite lookalikes do look good!

The nearly 300 000 Nissan 1400 bakkies produced in South Africa mean that most front-end panels, rubbers, mechanical and electrical parts, and suspension components are widely available and affordable. There are some nuances to watch out for however... for example, the 1200 sedan requires a windscreen from an early low-cab bakkie, while the later high-cab bakkie's windscreen can be shaved to fit the coupé. Replacing the suspension bushes and those at the bottom of the gear lever normally brings back a new-car feel immediately. Remember to respray the engine block, tappet cover

and air cleaner to factory colours. The diffs sometime become noisy and it could be necessary to replace them with second-hand ones or replace the diff and driveshaft with ones from a Nissan 1400.

The original upholstery is very durable but if it does need to be redone then it should be upholstered per the original fabric, stitching pattern and in either black (coupé), brown or tan (sedan). Carpeting is black for coupés and brown for sedans. The dashboard is a weak point and most are now badly cracked from sun damage. There are a few professional restorers who can bring them back to new – at a cost – or else they can be discreetly covered with a nicely trimmed black carpet.

Datsun 1200s originally came in a wide variety of attractive colours, including some eye-catching oranges, reds, blues, turquoises, yellows and browns, all of which show off the bright chrome work to its best. Finding replacements for any lost or broken badges can be frustrating. Some can be ordered new off the Internet but others will require scouting around weekend after weekend at club meets. Don't despair, its chart-topping sales record means that there are many wrecks with all the right pieces hiding in backyards across the country. Replacing the front and rear window rubbers should only be done after careful consideration as it is difficult to refit the trim inserts.

The South African production run only included 4-door sedans in Deluxe and the sportier GX versions plus GX coupés. A few 2-door sedans found their way to SA from Zimbabwe where they were a CKD import from Japan. In Japan they were also produced in a station wagon format and, of course, in SA as our 'Champion of Africa' bakkie. Although the 4-door GX version is perhaps the most likable model, the coupé remains the most sought-after and the model most worth investing time and money in. Low-mileage, rust-free coupés are now worth well over R100 000 but good, unrestored, original cars and coupés can be found for around R50 000.

The 1200's dimensions mean it is an easy-to-store classic and, as long as its battery is charged, it should start on the first turn – no matter how long it has been standing for. Other than our very own Datsun collector hero, Freek de Kock, situated in the Free State town of Bothaville, there is a huge following of Datsun enthusiasts in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the States. The international fraternity is growing but unfortunately the UK and Ireland are importing many of our best cars. Considering what sweet driving and pretty cars they are, it is not surprising! 🇿🇦

A few 2-door sedans found their way to SA from Zimbabwe where they were a CKD import from Japan



GETTING GROOVY

Although the origins of electric model cars can be traced back to the turn of the 20th century, it is generally accepted that slot car racing is a direct descendent of rail racing, which was popular during the 1950s. Richard Dempewolff's *Table-Top Car Racing* states that model electric racing cars first whizzed around table-top tracks in England shortly after World War II. **Russell Sheldon** gets into the groove with a look at the international and local model racing scene.

D.J. Laidlaw - Dickson, editor of *Model Maker* magazine, credits Geoffrey

Deason, who in 1948 suggested battery-driven cars could be raced on small indoor tracks guided by wooden rails, as the founder of rail-racing. The idea was an adaptation of the outdoor tracks used for racing diesel and gasoline engine cars – bigger cars, at 1:18 to 1:16 scale that ran largely uncontrolled on sprawling tracks, were held on a rail by a pair of spool-shaped devices known as 'zonkers'.

Late in 1954, a *Model Maker* reader wrote in saying that he'd installed an electric motor in a wind-up toy car that ran on a slightly raised rail, from which it picked up current. A second rail, flush with the track surface, provided the negative current. Brass shim stock was used for pick-ups beneath the chassis and a rheostat controlled the speed. A single shoe-type guide, attached to the chassis, guided the car along the raised rail but allowed it to slide and even leave the track if driven too quickly.

Refining the theme using HO scale electric train motors and 12-volt car batteries for track power, a group of British hobbyists from the Southport Model Engineering Society built a six-lane track with a 60-foot lap length. The guide-rail was made using HO scale train track. In the same year, the Southport club held its first Grand Prix, with 30 cars entered. This event was reported in detail in *Model Maker* and table-top racing took off in England. Across the pond in 1955, a group in Michigan, USA formed the Model Automobile Racing Association (MARA) and built a track and cars to conform to the 'Southport

Standards'. In 1956, MARA mailed four cars to Southport, to be raced by proxy in the Southport Grand Prix. The cars took second and fourth place in the event, the first officially recorded 'proxy race'.

Slot car home racing systems became popular in 1957 when a small British company, Minimodels Ltd, unveiled a commercially available system at the Harrogate Toy Fair, under the product name Scalextric. Having a recessed slot with electrical contacts on either side, the system looked far more realistic than the rail racing tracks with protruding rails. Orders flooded in, outstripping the company's production capacity so much that in November 1958 Minimodels sold out to the Tri-ang group, a company with larger resources. Tri-ang quickly introduced many improvements and additions; the variable-speed hand throttle replacing the original 'dapper'-type controller, and the track was changed from rubber to polyethylene.

Scalextric proved immensely successful around the world, and other manufacturers soon climbed on the bandwagon. Soon British companies such as VIP, Wrenn, SRM and Airfix had slot racing systems; Aurora, Strombecker, A.C. Gilbert and Eldon followed suit in the USA, while Europe saw the likes of Miniamil, Circuit 24 and Jouef in France and Faller, Fleischmann and Carrera in Germany.

By 1963/64, slot car racing had become big business – Jim Clark appeared in advertisements for Scalextric, while Jouef had Alain Delon and Aurora featured Stirling Moss. During this period, the latter sold some two million slot racing sets and over twelve million cars.

The hobby side of the industry was also booming, with the first national association,

the ECRA (Electric Car Racing Association), being formed in Britain in 1963. At the end of that year, Revell came out with the first mass-produced low-price, high-quality slot racing car kit, soon followed by Monogram, K&B, MPC, AMT, Cox, Atlas and others. The Japanese were quick to join in with companies Tamiya, Tokyo Plamo and Marusan producing cars and sets. This popularity was fuelled by the growth of commercial raceway centres springing up. The race was on, and owners soon opened up luxurious racing emporiums, with up to seven eight-lane tracks, some over 100 metres long, with straights close on 20 metres. By '66, there were 3 000 commercial raceways in America and over 200 in Europe. They sold the latest cars, controllers and parts to enthusiasts, resulting in the slot racing industry generating annual sales in excess of \$500 million for three years in a row.

In addition to established hobby brands, more specialised companies like Russkit, Dynamic, Classic, Champion and Mura emerged and gave rise to professional slot car racing. In the United States the American Model Car Racing Congress announced a contest with \$100 000 in prizes and Strombecker organised a nationwide contest, with the grand prize being a trip to Paris. In Paris a major competition at the Palais Berlitz racing centre in 1966 attracted 10 240 drivers – all vying for the first prize of a real Matra Jet motor car.

Unfortunately, in '67, the bubble began to burst. It had become a veritable 'arms race', with the cars becoming increasingly sophisticated – and expensive. Manufacturers formed factory teams, finding and sponsoring the best drivers. An over-the-counter car was no longer competitive,



and to win you had to rewind motors, design and build trick chassis using brass tube and piano wire, and spend hours tuning and testing. As a result costs escalated and it became difficult for the masses to compete. Youngsters deserted the commercial raceways to such a degree that by 1969 there were only 50 venues left in the USA.

Fortunately, hardcore clubs around the world survived and Scalextric continued to produce home racing sets and cars, but the halcyon days of the mid-1960s had slipped into oblivion. The early 1990s saw the beginning of a revival, particularly in home set racing, thanks mainly to a new Spanish manufacturer, Ninco, who began producing cars and later sets of superior quality to the Scalextric offerings at the time. By the mid-1990s another Spanish manufacturer, Fly Model Car, upped the game even further and this impetus gave rise to a mini-boom in commercial raceway centres, particularly in the USA.

In South Africa slot car racing became popular with the introduction of Scalextric around 1960. A number of 'Scalextric' clubs sprung up and many leisure and sports clubs had Scalextric track layouts. And it got bigger when commercial raceways opened.

Pix Raceways was located in Johannesburg, but the most impressive of all was Miniways, located on Cape Town's foreshore, which opened in 1966. Miniways had three huge eight-lane AMF tracks: a 155' Blue King, a 110' Orange Monarch and a 90' Black Prince. The raceway also had a vast inventory of cars, controllers and spare parts. There was also a smaller raceway located in Sea Point.

Around 1969 the raceway closed down but a group of enthusiasts bought the Sea Point track and formed the Cambridge

Model Car Club, which is still active today in the same location.

At first, the club raced 1:24 scale cars but by the early '60s, 1:32 scale became the mainstay of local racing – Cambridge converted to 1:32 scale in early 1974 and built a new six-lane track that could accommodate the 1:24 scale cars as well. The '60s era was characterised by enthusiasts scratch-building cars, building chassis from brass and steel rod and tuning their own motors. The South African Model Car Association (SAMCA) was formed at this stage – responsible for standards and national championship racing. And national it was, with clubs in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Kroonstad, Port Elizabeth, East London, Pietermaritzburg, Durban – which has one of the oldest clubs, Ecurie Elite Model Racing Car Club (EEMRCC), founded in 1963 – and elsewhere. Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South West Africa (Namibia) weren't left out either.

In the '70s it was not uncommon to have 80 drivers at a SAMCA national. Being contested over four rounds on four different tracks, where a driver's best three results were counted, the standard was extremely competitive. Drivers were graded into three classes, depending on ability and

experience, and a national title bestowed upon the winner of each of class. SA National Champion honours went the way of the overall winner in Open Class.

Sadly, by the mid-1990s competitive slot racing in South Africa was on the wane. The cost of spares, coupled with the cost of travelling to venues across the country, had become too expensive. Property rental price increases also saw many of the established clubs closing. There was however a resurgence on the home racing front, with private clubs, using Scalextric, Ninco or Carrera tracks, springing up in homes across the country.

Good news is the hobby is currently experiencing good growth, with Scalextric again producing top-quality and innovative products, along with Carrera, SCX, and a host of smaller manufacturers like Italy's Slot.it and NSR. Today there are active clubs in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, Malmesbury and Cape Town.

The Cambridge Slot Car Club is located at 10 Cambridge Road, Maitland and meets twice a week. 1:24 scale cars are raced on Tuesdays, with the faster national cars tussling on Fridays. Racing commences at 20:00 and visitors are always welcome. 🏁

GOING INTERNATIONAL

A number of South African slot car racers have competed in the International Slot Racing Association (ISRA) World Championships. Russell Sheldon set the trend by competing in the very first ISRA event held in Česká Lípa in the former Czechoslovakia in 1992. Multiple time South African Champion, Gustav Heymann, has competed in ISRA events in Holland, the United Kingdom, Italy and Canada, acquitting himself extremely well against some of the world's best slot racers. Other South Africans who competed were Johan Louter, Fanie Viljoen and the late Dawie van Rooyen. Find them on Facebook: www.facebook.com/CambridgeSlotCarClub

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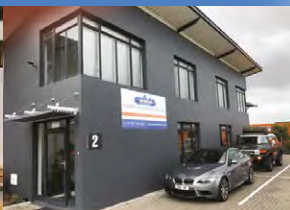


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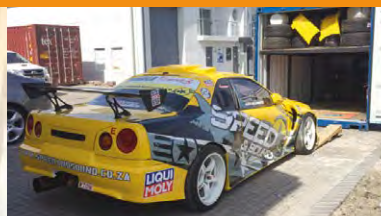
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Annals and Magazines. Full set of pre-digital Wheels Annual from number 1 in 1981 to number 31 in 2012 as well as the original Classic Car Africa ranging from Volume 1 No 1 December 1994 to the last issue Volume 8 no 4 Winter edition 2004. Please contact Dave at daveadnams@vodamail.co.za or 082 570 7785.

WANTED

Lancia Beta Spider spares.

Somebody from the East Coast area called Lancia Auto with news that they had spare Lancia Beta Spider perfect for parts. If this is you or you know of one please contact Felix at sales@lancia.co.za.

BMW 2002 Parts. I am quite near the completion of my 1972 BMW 2002. My only headache now is to get a brake booster and the dashboard heater vents. Should anyone have these parts or know how to source them contact Pierre on 061 312 3482.

1952 BMW R60. I am looking for a 1952 BMW R60 that my Dad sold/gave to someone in East London in about 1973. It had '600' painted on the tank. He was in the police force with SAR&H and lived in Vincent. I am sure this bike is still standing under a tree somewhere in a garden in East London. I used to ride pillion from about the age of 6 on it and would like to locate it and if possible to restore it as it has sentimental value. Contact Dave on 082 870 2291 or dave@dalgen.co.za.

Kyalami programmes. Looking for programmes from the 1967, 1968, 1969, 1971 and 1972 Grands Prix as well as the 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1972 and 1973 9-Hours. Contact John at vintageracer73@gmail.com.

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