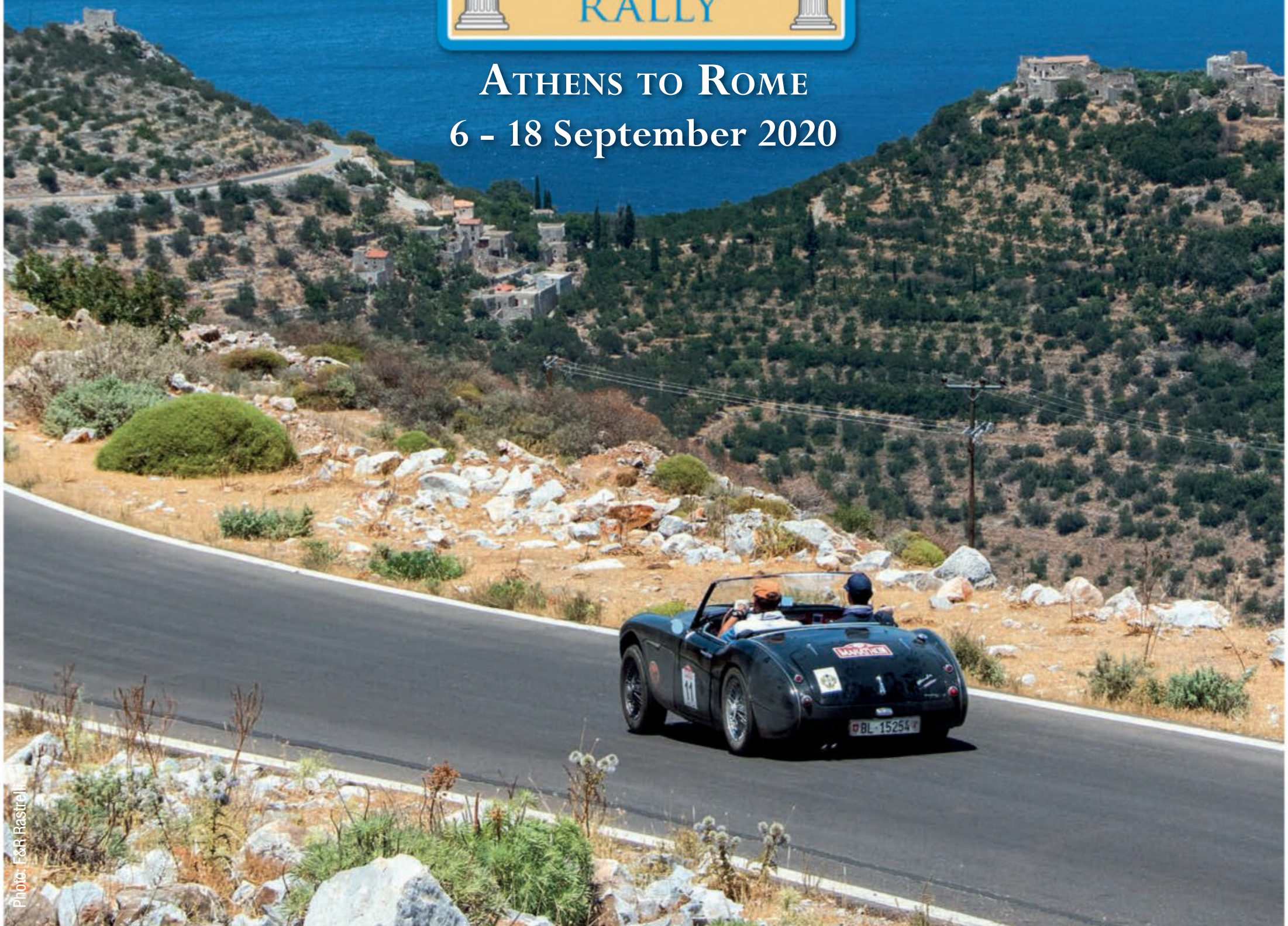




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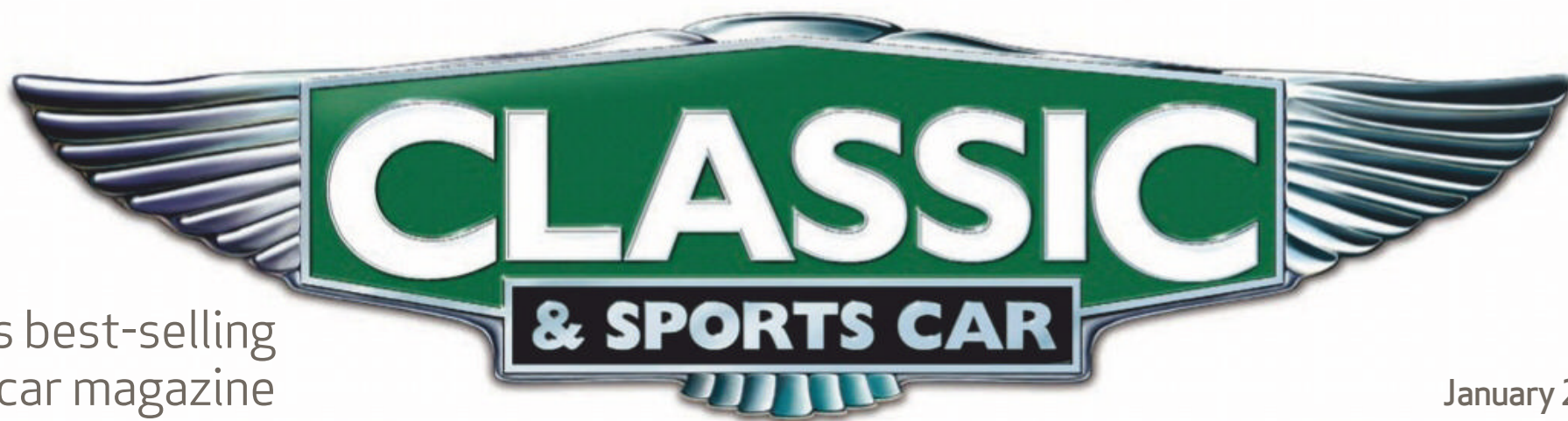
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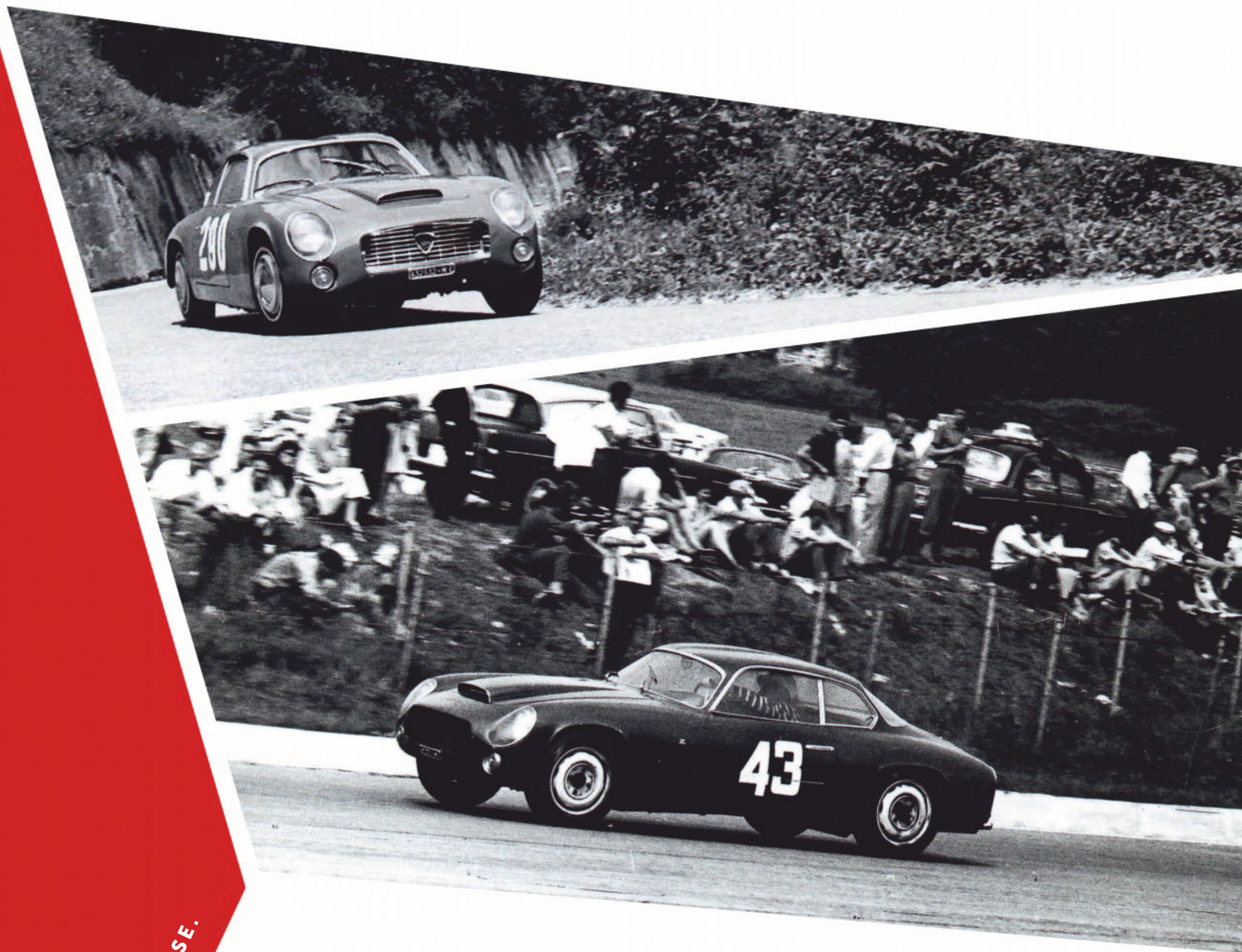
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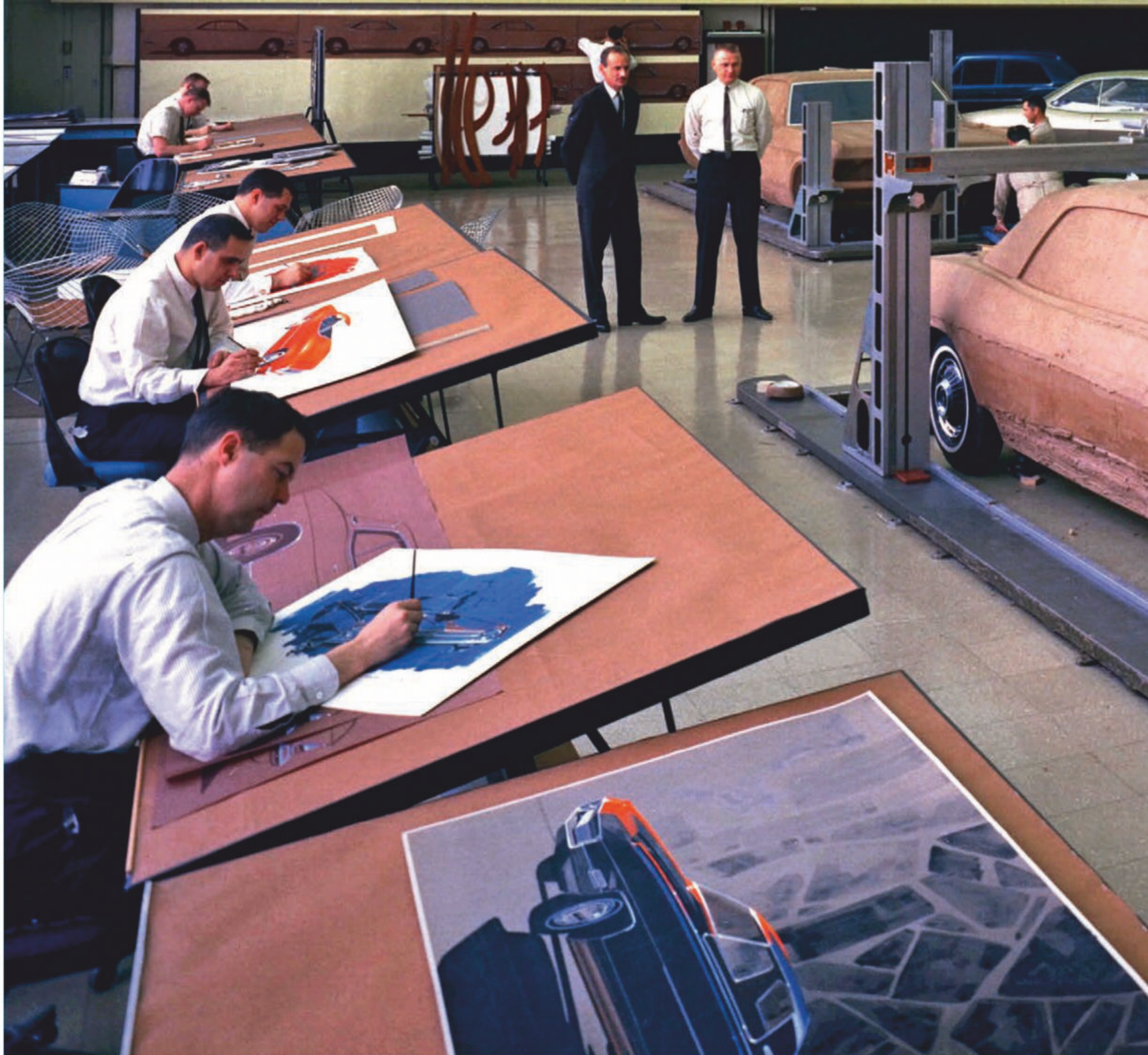
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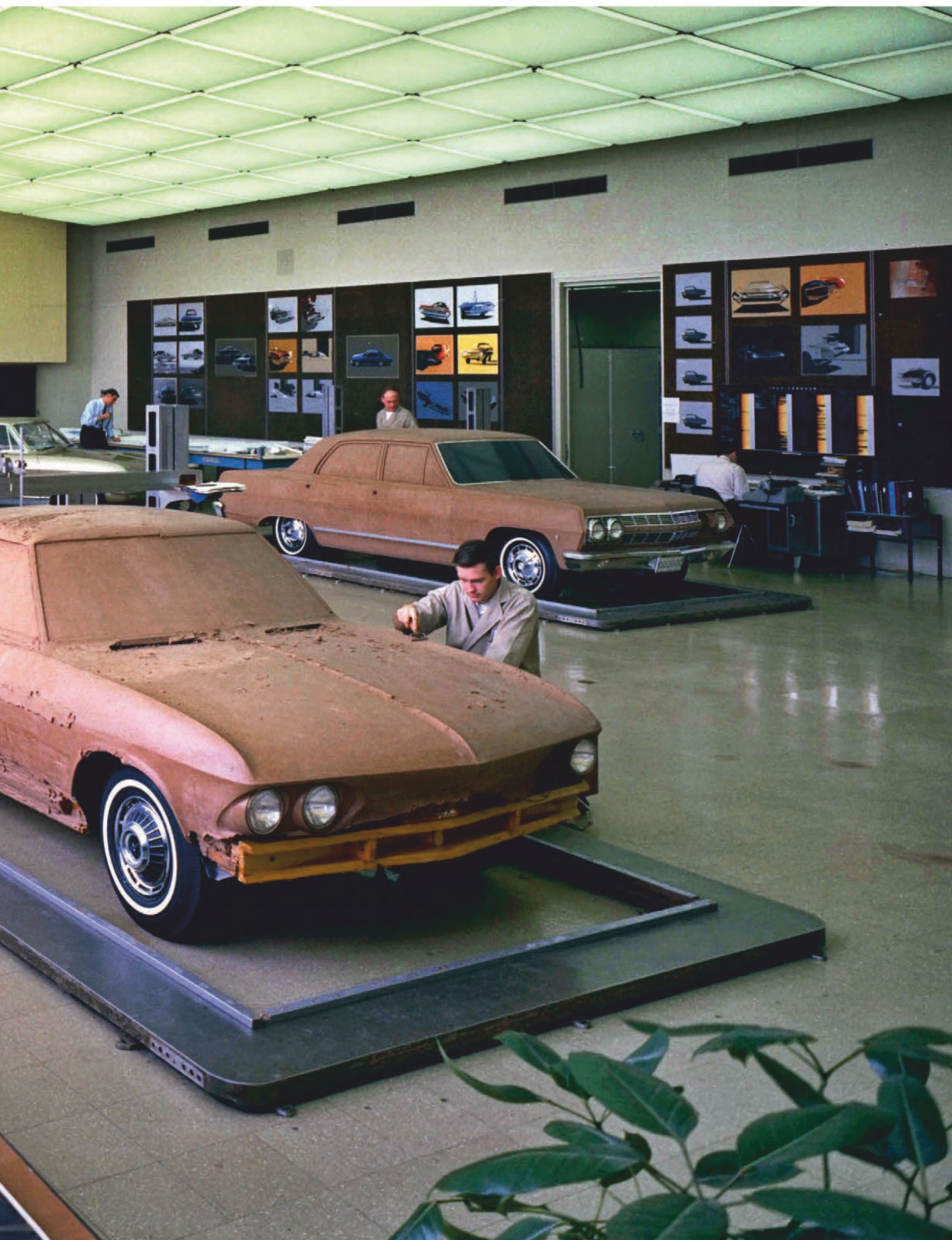


THE BIG PICTURE

American car styling studios were highly creative design hubs producing a wealth of drawings, most now long lost. Collector Patrick Kelly became fascinated by these stylists' work and started saving as much as he could find. His new book, *Imagine!*, pays homage to these unsung talents (p40). Here the beautiful second-generation Corvair convertible takes shape as a full-size clay model in the Chevrolet studio under Bill Mitchell in March '63.

Irv Rybicki chats to Henry Haga (standing, l-r), while Ned Walters and Phil Garcia are among the artists at work on the boards. **MW**





Welcome

After 200 issues, our long-serving and often long-suffering art editor Martin Port has moved on to pastures new. It's a moment that I couldn't allow to pass by without paying tribute to a much-loved member of the team, both among colleagues and readers. From the moment he fixed a blown head gasket on his MGB GT in his first week we knew he was going to fit in, and throughout his 16 years with the magazine he has shown an unquenchable passion for old cars, so I'm delighted that Martin is going to carry on as a regular contributor to *Our classics*.

But as one door closes another opens, and I am thrilled to welcome the hugely talented Damon Cogman to the *C&SC* team. Not only does our new art maestro bring with him a wealth of experience and enthusiasm, but he also suffers from the same incurable love for classic cars; you can meet the first of his fleet on p170.

Sadly, he didn't arrive in time to join us for this month's cover story, which I hope will be half as much fun to read as it was to put together. As members of the team old and new gathered at Curborough Sprint Course, it was a graphic reminder of just how much variety – and quality – the often overlooked world of GRP has given us.

And while they were all winners, we couldn't resist a secret ballot to find the overall favourite from the day. My lips are sealed, but let's just say it had a decidedly East Anglian flavour...



ALASTAIR CLEMENTS

Editor in chief, *Classic & Sports Car*

'Many an enthusiast dreamed of building their own car, and the arrival of glassfibre brought that dream within reach'



116



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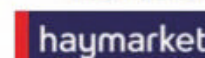
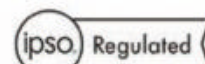
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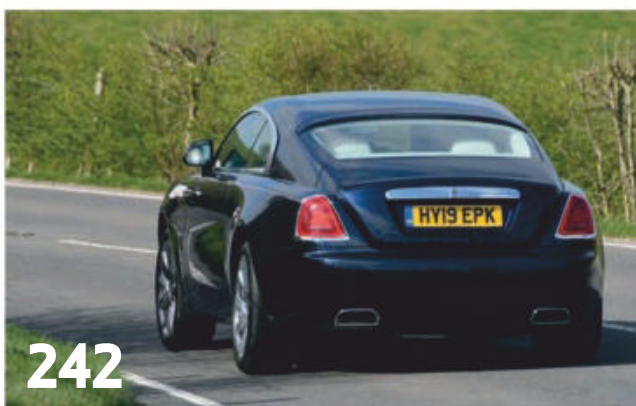
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Saturday, November 28th

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Mercedes-Benz World
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Brooklands Museum
Mercedes-Benz World



The combined efforts of four Citroën clubs produced a brilliant display spanning a century of the French marque, from 1925 C3 to 1993 Xantia Activa



Sensational Alvis SA Airline was C&SC's Car of the Show. Peel OC (above right) was Best Small Club Stand



CLUBS DECK THE HALLS

An enticing theme and a gaggle of anniversaries to celebrate made for a vintage year at the NEC

WORDS **C&SC TEAM** PHOTOGRAPHY **MARTIN PORT/MICK WALSH/WILL BROADHEAD**

More than 71,000 visitors flocked to Birmingham's NEC from 8-10 November to help the Lancaster Insurance Classic Motor Show celebrate its 35th birthday in style, complete with probably the biggest-ever game of Top Trumps and the usual dazzling array of cars.

Some 300-plus car clubs turned out for the traditional season-closing indoor spectacular, with most taking part in the show theme by creating giant versions of the famous card game. But only one of them, the MG Car Club, had its very own set printed, with every car

on the stand featuring in the pack. That was enough to convince C&SC's team of judges to award it Best Themed Club Stand at the annual Classic & Sports Car Club Awards, held once again with the support of the show's headline sponsor Lancaster Insurance – which also produced a bespoke pack of Top Trumps featuring 30 cars to represent the 3000 or so models filling the NEC's halls.

Among the other stands to take home trophies at the awards, held after the first day of the show, were the AC Owners' Club (Most Interesting Selection of Cars), the Enthusiasts of British Vehicles Built Before 1985 (Lancaster

Insurance Sponsor's Choice), the Peel Owners' Club (Best Small Club Stand) and the Allard Owners' Club's 70th-anniversary display for the J2 (Best Medium Club Stand).

Another celebration secured the gong for Best Large Club Stand, which was awarded to the combined efforts of the Citroën Car Club, the Citroën Specials Club, the Traction Owners' Club and 2CVGB for a superb centenary tribute to the Double Chevron.

Despite the presence of an incredible Porsche 917/30 (below), the judges were all in agreement that the Car of the Show should be Ann Bradnum's unique and elegant Gurney Nutting-bodied



1977 Paris-Dakar rally two-door starred for the Range Rover Register



Peter Bullard's wild F40 on the C&SC stand. Below left: Allard OC marked 70 years of the J2



THE C&SC TEAM'S FAVOURITES



1973 PORSCHE 917/30

What makes this Porsche 917/30 even better is that it was on loan from an actual Porsche Club of Great Britain member. The spare for Mark Donohue's incredible Can-Am year, it's a multi-million-pound car with four-figure bhp and dressed in that synonymous Sunoco Blue. The 917 had been so dominant in Europe that it had to be outlawed, so Porsche looked Stateside, turned up the wick, strengthened and widened nearly everything and simply blew everyone out of the water there, too. And the manufacturers and fans switched off. Not far away in PCGB's expansive corner of the NEC was a 910 sports-racer, which was so dwarfed it looked as if it was miles apart – in every way. **JP**



1974 BITTER CD

I'm a sucker for both rare cars and futuristic '70s wedges, so this was a no-brainer. This German GT was born out of Opel's astonishing Coupé Diplomat concept, which had wowed the crowds at the 1969 Frankfurt show. It inevitably lost some of its more daring touches in the transition to roadgoing form – not least the jet-fighter-style canopy – but it remains an attractive slice of Euro-exotica.

Sadly, it arrived in 1973 just as the oil crisis was hitting, so former racer Erich Bitter's plans for Baur to build 200 a year never came to fruition. Instead, a mere 395 were produced over a seven-year period, with Andrew Grace's pristine car at the NEC the UK's sole remaining example. A rare treat. **MM** ►



Federico Berbet and Nick Bloxham tackle the NEC leg of the Rally of the Tests en route to Class 9 victory in their 911



The Retro Caravan Club carries on camping



Sensational 1965 Unipower GT prototype

1936 Alvis 3½-litre SA Airline Pillarless Saloon, the centrepiece of the Alvis Owner Club display. Colin Feyerabend's wacky Adams Probe 16 – the star of *A Clockwork Orange* – landed the C&SC Special Award for the car that stole the judges' hearts. For a full list of winners, including those decided before the show, turn to p16.

C&SC wasn't the only one doling out trophies at the NEC. Dave Rippard's 1959 Morris Mini-Minor won the Meguiar's Club Showcase, while another Morris –

Ted Brooke's 1961 Minor Million – was victorious in the Lancaster Insurance Pride of Ownership. There was competition of another sort for the first time this year as the RAC Rally of the Tests brought live motorsport into the halls of the exhibition centre (see p29).

Elsewhere, there were stories to be found across the event. A Sunbeam-Talbot Alpine MkIII that appeared at the very first show was back for 2019, while the Federation of Historic Vehicle Clubs' remarkable 'Village Green'

display came complete with white picket fences and a double-decker bus, and was thronged with interested visitors across the weekend. Likewise the Retro Caravan Club's wonderful tribute to 50 years of *Carry on Camping*.

The Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club displayed Graham Adam's glorious 1919 Silver Ghost. Fitted with rakish tourer coachwork by Fripps of Birmingham for first owner Alfred Ash, the car was marking 60 years in Adam's custody. "It's definitely not a

museum piece because I love driving it," said Adam, who motored to Switzerland and back last summer with the Ghost.

To see one Unipower GT is special, but three historic cars were presented by the Unipower GT Register including the original 1965 production prototype. The only example fitted with a 997cc Cooper engine and featuring many unique details, the car was last exhibited at the 1966 Racing Car Show and is soon to return to the road after a thorough restoration.



1931 BUGATTI TYPE 50

The Bugatti Owners' Club has brought some amazing sets of Molsheim marvels to the NEC and this year's 'Lets go racing' stand theme was very special. Taking centre-stage was Mike Preston's well-used Type 50 Le Mans car, towing his T35B racer. Driven to the event and presented with road grime, it looked magnificent among the other competition cars. Preston continues the inspiring tradition of Bugatti towing Bugatti set by his late father, Ian, who towed his GP car with a T50 cabrio.

The 1931 Type 50 was due to start the 1935 Le Mans but was badly damaged in a pre-race crash. This spectacular machine was later owned by Kenneth Bear, a founder member of the BOC. **MW**



1964 CITROËN BIJOU

It was no surprise that Citroën owners pulled out all the stops in the brand's centenary year, and the combined forces of the UK's main marque clubs did the Double Chevron proud with a display so impressive it was voted Best Large Club Stand at our Club Awards. And my car of the show comes from this line-up: 'Monique', a 1964 Bijou.

Coincidentally, current owner John Leaney bought his car in November 1990 via an advert in a magazine he picked up at that year's NEC Classic Motor Show. Acquired in dismantled form, it took him 24 years to rebuild and I couldn't resist the Peter Kirwan-Taylor-styled compact's quirky mix of DS and 2CV, and the fact you so rarely see them. **LP**



1962 AC GREYHOUND

Choosing your favourite AC is never easy, and it takes a brave soul to look beyond the sublime Ace and Aceca. But of the cars built in Thames Ditton, I've always had a soft spot for the elegant and rare Greyhound. This car's first owner, Victor Yates, obviously found it harder to choose – he owned one of each model until his death.

Ian Bullen-Bell's car is thought to be the last production Greyhound with Bristol's 100 B2 'six', and wound up in storage after Yates became one of the first victims of the 70mph speed limit on the M1. Such was the fine, he decided to lock the car away, where it remained until being exhumed by racer and AC fanatic Kevin Kivlochan. **GM**

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1919



Heather/Danny Bristow's Jensen 541 was the focal point of the JOC tribute to the '59 London to Paris Bleriot Anniversary Race



Club Peugeot UK's 205 T16 with bizarre '89 505 Dangel Estate 4x4 behind



'66 flat-six-powered 910, one of the more overlooked Porsche prototypes



Lurid 1969 Adams Probe 16, one of three and star of A Clockwork Orange

Wheeler Dealers host Mike Brewer kept the crowds entertained on the Live Stage, while Silverstone Auctions drew some impressive sale results (see p186) and the Sporting Bears gave 750 'Dream Rides' on the club's 28th appearance at the show. Another £30,000 was added to the £2.3m this remarkable group has raised over the past 30 years, making it a worthy winner of the Best Contribution to Charity trophy at the C&SC ceremony.

Both the show and Lancaster Insurance were celebrating their 35th birthdays, so Hall 8 was entitled 'From 1984 - The 35th Anniversary Hall'. The centrepiece was the Greatest Hits Radio stand, featuring a pristine 1984 Vauxhall Astra GT/E and providing a period soundtrack of '80s music.

With visitor numbers matching last year's total, this superb show continues to buck the downturn in the classic market. Everywhere you looked there was a mouth-watering exotic (we loved Hamish Roberts' delicious Maserati Mistral Spyder), a beautifully preserved classic such as Malcolm Graham-Jones' Toyota Celica GT, or a fascinating oddity such as Andy Bye's Hillman Imp-powered Rootes Farmobil prototype. Oh, and there was also a rather magnificent Ferrari F40 - courtesy of generous owner and reader Peter Bullard - on a certain classic car magazine's stand...

The 2020 Lancaster Insurance Classic Motor Show, with Discovery, will take place from 13-15 November. See www.necclassicmotorshow.com

ALL THE WINNERS

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sunbeamtotalalpineregister.co.uk

MOST IMPROVED CLUB MAGAZINE

WC Reading Matter, West Cheshire MG Owners' Club

CLUB MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

The Citroënian Magazine, Citroën Car Club

BEST CLUB RUN/RALLY

Rootes Around Britain, Sunbeam Rapier Owners' Club



BEST CLUB SHOW/EVENT

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AC Owners' Club



BEST THEMED CLUB STAND

MG Car Club

BEST SMALL CLUB STAND

Peel Owners' Club

BEST MEDIUM CLUB STAND

Allard Owners' Club

BEST LARGE CLUB STAND

Citroën Car Club, Citroën Specials Club, Traction Owners' Club and 2CVGB

C&SC SPECIAL AWARD

Colin Feyerabend's Adams Probe 16

CAR OF THE SHOW

Ann Bradnum's 1936 Alvis 3½-litre Airline Pillarless Saloon

YOUNG ENTHUSIAST OF THE YEAR

Darby Harris, Honda S800 Sports Car Club

CLUB PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

Aubone Braddon, Ford Anglia 105E Owners' Club

CLUB OF THE YEAR

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Collectors gather here.



British motorsport royalty: Paddy Hopkirk's Mini Cooper 'S' rally car and Sir Stirling Moss' Osca



The 'Beast of Turin' at Chateau Impney, competitive event winner



Wood brothers Andrew and Paul's Bentley work impressed judges



STYLISH DEBUT FOR RAC AWARDS

November proved a busy month for the Royal Automobile Club, beginning with its usual packed schedule of events for the annual London Motor Week (28 October-3 November) and culminating on 21 November with its inaugural Historic Awards ceremony, held at a gala evening in the elegant Pall Mall clubhouse.

A special display in the Rotunda featured Sir Stirling Moss' own Osca, which is maintained by the Club in its Woodcote Motor House, and Paddy Hopkirk's Mini Cooper 'S' still wearing the mud-spatters from its victory on the RAC Rally of the Tests.

Hosted by Channel 4 Formula One presenter Lee McKenzie, the Awards were created to build on the Club's long history of supporting the UK's automotive achievements by celebrating the people involved in the British historic motoring and motorsport scene, and their incredible work. *C&SC's* editor in chief Alastair Clements, editor at large Simon Taylor and group editor in chief Steve Cropley were all among the lead judges for a set of awards that is likely to grow in stature in the coming years, going by this impressive first showing.

The Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court Palace topped a strong shortlist (see panel) to land the Motoring Spectacle trophy, while in the Competitive Event category top honours went to the Chateau Impney Hill Climb. The Historic Sports Car Club's Historic Formula 2 International Series claimed victory in the Race Series section. "Our ambition was always to take the wonderful F2 cars to the best circuits and the best events," said the championship's chairman Roger Bevan. "The world is our oyster!"

There were double winners in the Personality category, as brothers Paul and Andrew Wood capped a superb year in which the Bentley 8 Litre Gurney Nutting they prepared for Sir Michael Kadoorie brought them a dream Best of Show victory at Pebble Beach. "Everybody said it was impossible but we proved them wrong," said Paul. "We couldn't do it without a brilliant team and the support of an owner who pays us to do what we love doing."

Competition was fierce in the Restoration group, for which the three finalists assembled in a head-to-head judging session at Bicester



TV presenter McKenzie anchored awards



Allan Winn-er: Lifetime Achievement award



The beautiful Hampton Court helped Concours of Elegance to Motoring Spectacle victory



Opened in 2019, the Jim Clark Motorsport Museum has been a big success in his home town

TONY MARSH/LIVE BORDERS



PARIS RUN TURNS 20

Traversée de Paris returns for its 20th winter edition on Sunday 12 January. Around 700 crews in vehicles of at least 30 years old will take in 20 *arrondissements* and 20 monuments. For more, visit vincennesenanciennes.com



DAVE AIRSTON

MODERN JAGS CROWNED

A 1997 XK8 coupé took the Jaguar Drivers' Club Champion of Champions at the NEC Classic Motor Show. Long-standing club member David Fisher has owned the car from new. Gareth Jones' 2007 S-type R won the Harold Meyer Endeavour Trophy.



MUSEUM GO-AHEAD

A new interactive 100-car museum is to open in Ambergate, Derbyshire in April, celebrating a century of motoring in the UK. Named Great British Car Journey, the museum will offer driving experiences with 30 cars. See greatbritishcarjourney.com



FIVA CONFIRMS NEW HEAD

Tiddo Bresters (above) has taken over as the new president of the Fédération Internationale des Véhicules Anciens (FIVA) after nine years as the organisation's vice president. The Dutchman succeeds Patrick Rollet, who was FIVA president for six years.

SHORTLIST IN FULL

COLLECTION

- British Commercial Vehicle Museum
- The Bugatti Trust
- Jim Clark Motorsport Museum

COMPETITIVE EVENT

- Castle Combe Autumn Classic
- Le Mans Start Silverstone (VSCC Formula Vintage Festival)
- Chateau Impney Hill Climb

MOTORING SPECTACLE

- Bentley Drivers Club 1001 Bentleys at Blenheim Palace
- Bicester Heritage Super Scramble
- **Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court Palace**

PERSONALITY

- Ian Ferguson, VSCC
- Julius Thurgood, HRDC
- **Paul and Andrew Wood, P&A Wood**

OUTSTANDING JOURNALISM

- Mark Evans, 'Inside Jaguar: A Supercar is Reborn'
- Doug Nye, 'Enzo, The Man'
- **Nick Trott, 'Helter Skelter'**

RACE SERIES

- Classic Racing Motorcycle Club
- Equipe GTS & Classic Relay
- **HSCC Historic Formula 2**

RESTORATION

- 1939 Corniche, Bentley Motors
- 1948 Land-Rover Series One, Land Rover Classic
- **1967 Lotus 38 Indycar, Nick Fennell/Classic Team Lotus**

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

- **Allan Winn**



STUART ADAMS

The HSCC's Historic Formula 2 International Series scooped the Race Series honours

Heritage ahead of the awards. But the deserving winner was the 1967 Jim Clark Lotus 38 Indycar, restored by owner Nick Fennell and Classic Team Lotus. "This is incredibly satisfying after three years' hard work," said a thrilled Fennell. "Classic Team Lotus has all the drawings so we could go back to first principles, and the team has done a fantastic job."

There was a second win for the Grand Prix great as the recently rejuvenated Jim Clark Motorsport Museum was adjudged the top Collection. Clark's cousin Doug Niven paid tribute to the support the museum has received, in particular from fellow Scots Sir Jackie Stewart, David Coulthard and Dario Franchitti. "We've lived and breathed this project for seven

years," said Niven, "and there are so many who have helped. Without them it wouldn't have happened."

After Nick Trott collected the Outstanding Journalism award for 'Helter Skelter', his feature on the Porsche 917 for *The Road Rat*, the final gong was the Lifetime Achievement award, given to an individual who has made 'an outstanding contribution to the British historic motoring movement across many years'. Joking that winning in your own lifetime is "a bit like being measured for your coffin", former Brooklands Museum director – and arguably the true saviour of the historic site – Allan Winn expressed his delight at being the inaugural winner, saying: "I've just been allowed to get on and do what I believe in."



Clockwise from main: distinctive 1896 Salvesen Steam Cart heads for Brighton; 1904 Mercedes passes The Cenotaph; Rambler, also 1904, on The Mall



BRITS IN BELGIUM

A new exhibition on the UK's car industry from 1950-'70 is coming to Autoworld Brussels. 'So British!' will place 50 post-war classics in a London 'Christmas shopping' scene. It runs from 13 December until 26 January.



MIURA'S LONDON JOB

Hot on the heels of C&SC's cover story last month, *The Italian Job* Lamborghini Miura was shown in the Royal Automobile Club's Rotunda on 11 November as part of a celebration of the car's discovery and restoration, hosted by Lamborghini Polo Storico.



BIG APPLE BENTLEYS

New Yorkers marked Bentley's centenary on 19 October with five parades of models of all ages, which converged on Brookfield Place. This was followed by a concours starring the current range plus classics, and the Centenary Grand Ball.



Mk2 MAGIC DOWN UNDER

The Jaguar Car Club of Victoria's gala Display Day near Melbourne on 17 November drew more than 300 cars and celebrated the Mk2's 60th. The President's Choice gong went to Geoff Leake and Wandy MacIntyre-Leake's stunning MkV drophead coupé.

Tragedy strikes on Veteran Run

Nearly 400 vehicles spanning 120 different marques delighted the crowds that lined the route of the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run on 3 November.

Sadly, an otherwise fantastic event was marred by the death of Canadian businessman and keen enthusiast Ron Carey, 80, who was killed when he took a wrong turn and his 1903 Knox Runabout 'Old Porcupine' was hit by a lorry on the M23. Our thoughts go to his wife, Billi, who suffered severe injuries.

Ahead of the world's longest-running motoring event, seven pre-1905 motorcycles and seven veteran bicycles departed Hyde Park under the cover of darkness, followed at 6:56am by the first of the horseless carriages, an 1894 single-cylinder Benz 1.5HP.

Other vehicles embarking on the 60-mile journey included Britain's oldest Fiat, celebrating the Italian marque's 120th birthday; an 1896 Salvesen Steam Cart, complete with coal-shovelling stoker; and

Harrods' battery-powered 1901 Pope Waverley. Among the celebrities taking part were Alan Titchmarsh and Fuzz Townshend, piloting a 1902 Mors and 1904 De Dion-Bouton respectively.

Some 90% of the event's starters completed the route before the 4:30pm deadline. And while the Run is non-competitive, more than 230 crews contested the regularity time trial between Crawley and Burgess Hill, won by Paul-Emile Bessade aboard a 1904 Darracq.

CALIFORNIA OFF-ROADIN'

More than 85 classic Land-Rovers gathered in Los Angeles on 17 November for the second Trans Terras, also known as the 'Land Rover Love-In'.

Owners brought Series One-III Land-Rovers, first-gen Range Rovers, classic Defenders and even an ex-military Land-Rover 101 Forward Control, enjoying music and drinks, plus showings of Camel Trophy films. Classic Ferraris and Porsches joined in, too. "It's about shared interests and providing community," said event founder Jared Zaugg. "I wanted to create something that united enthusiasts."



Reborn Riley is revealed

The first-ever Riley, Percy Riley's 1898 Voiturette, has been recreated by the Riley Motor Club and Riley Register, with the encouragement of William Riley's grandson, Victor. And with no original car for reference, it wasn't a simple task.

The replica was unveiled at Coventry Transport Museum on 6 November and the project is supported by the University of Warwick, which has donated £2000 to help with the construction of its period-correct engine. The plan is to have a roadgoing car ready for 2021, when Coventry will be the UK City of Culture.

The Riley car company was formed in 1890 as the Bonnick Cycle Company of Coventry before William Riley Jr incorporated the Riley

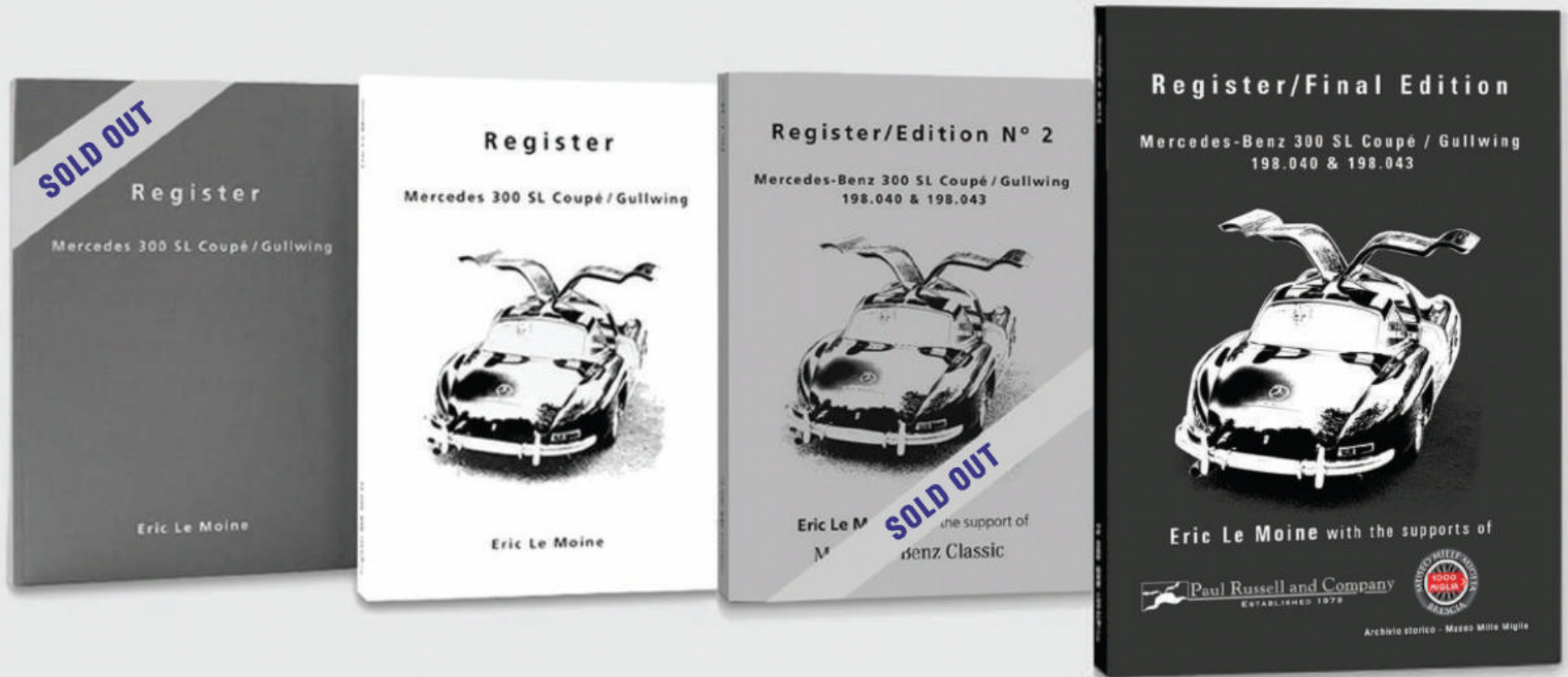
Cycle Company in 1896. His son, Percy, started building his first car in secret, aged 16, in 1896 and completed it in 1898. By 1903 the Riley Engine Company was established, becoming Riley (Coventry) Limited in 1919.



Victor Riley with the meticulously crafted Voiturette replica

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V&A looks back to the car's future



Firebird 1 was all but an aeroplane on wheels. Right, from top: Chevy Impala Low Rider; half-track expedition Citroën



MAX EDELSTON

The role of the car in exemplifying and accelerating change during the past 130 years is being celebrated at the V&A Museum in London. The display opened on 23 November and runs until 19 April 2020.

'Cars: Accelerating the Modern World' features exhibits from around the globe, many not seen in the UK before. It not only showcases 15 diverse and obscure vehicles from all eras – from Karl Benz's Patent-Motorwagen No 3 to the Audi Pop.Up Next concept from 2018, which can move on the ground and in the air via drone-like

rotors – but also traces the car's role as a catalyst in society.

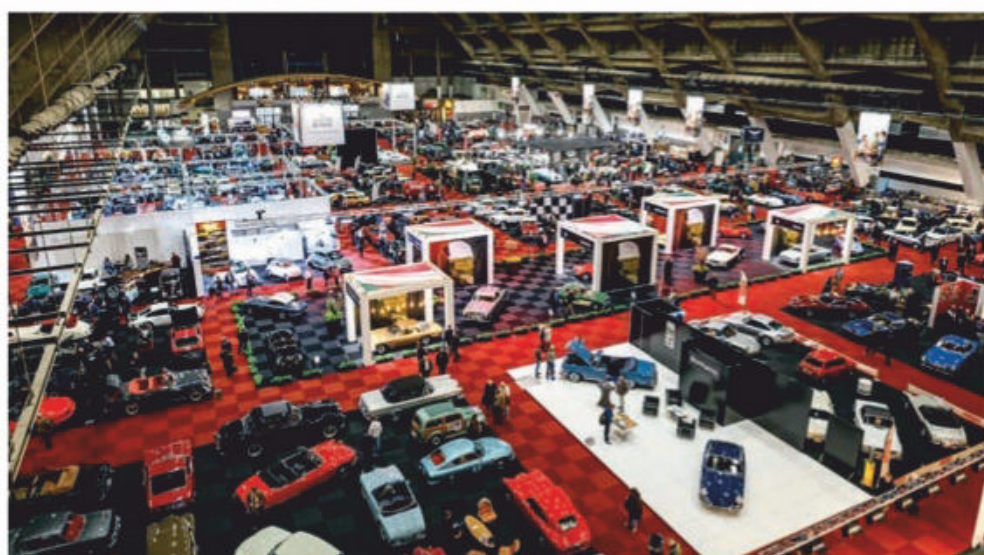
Among the highlights are the concept cars, with an emphasis on how technology came to depict the future. GM's 1953 Firebird 1 is present as the poster vehicle of the genre, while a model of Ford's nuclear-powered concept of 1957, the Nucleon, is displayed as testament to the free-thinking opportunities that new power sources brought into an altogether more innocent world.

Away from cars – from Model T to early Mustang, all the way to the

Paykan, Iran's national car – there's an emphasis on how the automobile changed the landscape and attitudes around it. Another section considers the car's role, positive and negative, in accelerating mass production.

The exhibition juxtaposes going fast against the challenges of safety – without judgement: the question is neatly posed as to what other inventions would be so celebrated if they were the root cause of so many deaths and injuries.

A comprehensive display of 130 years of the car it is not. But, for many reasons, this is a must-see.



GERLACH DELUSEN

More than 1000 classics were on display from across Europe at the Brussels Expo centre

Brussels salutes designers

An eye-catching celebration of Italy's most revered design houses headlined InterClassics Brussels from 15-17 November, drawing more than 25,000 visitors.

The Great Italian Designers centrepiece comprised 15 classics representing Pininfarina, Ghia, Touring, Bertone and Zagato, including a Ghia Fiat Otto Vu, a Pininfarina Cisitalia and a Bertone-styled Lamborghini Miura.

A remarkable display of Bentleys gathered to mark the firm's centenary year, with the first and final models to be designed by WO: a 1921 3 Litre Harrison two-seater and a 1930 8 Litre.

The Belgian Vintage Vehicles Association laid on a smörgåsbord of classics in the club section, while it also proved the perfect place to do some car shopping, with dealers and showgoers' vehicles for sale.

FERRARI'S GREATEST

The latest Greatest Hits collector's edition from C&SC focuses on the magic of Maranello. The 196-page compilation is packed with the very best Ferrari stories from the magazine's past decade, from Enzo's first roadgoing machines to more recent hypercars.

The seventh volume in the series is in shops now, priced at £10. Visit magsdirect.co.uk/ferrari to buy it, or to pick up two previous editions for £15.



GROWING APPRECIATION

A 1967 Ford Mustang has taken an unlikely runner-up award... for gardens. The unloved convertible was transformed into a vibrant horticultural display by Corrine and Stephen Aylen for the 'Make Southend Sparkle' competition.



CHANGING OF THE GUARD

After seven years as a director and many more as a club official, Roger Kemp has been appointed chairman of the Jaguar Drivers' Club. A member since 1985, he owns three Jags and aims to attract younger members to secure the club's long-term future.



TR REGISTER

DEREK POLLOCK, 1926-2019

The president of Club Triumph, Derek Pollock MBE, has died aged 93. An ambassador for the marque since 1954, he was instrumental in setting up the Round Britain Reliability Run and its charitable element, which has raised more than £685,000.



'60s ICON GOES ELECTRIC

Morris' J-type van has been reimagined for the 21st century as the all-electric Morris JE. It features a 200-mile range, a carbonfibre body and a modular chassis, and is expected to be priced at £60,000 in 2021. See morris-commercial.com

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1967 FERRARI 330 GTS

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2019 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance® | Chassis 13603



1973 FERRARI DINO 246 GTS

Low-Mileage Example Presented in
Attractive Color Combination
Coachwork by Scaglietti | Chassis 05534



1948 TUCKER MODEL 48

A Highly Original Example with Known History
from New | One of 12 Originally Finished in Waltz
Blue Metallic | Chassis 1034




1965 FERRARI 500 SUPERFAST

Ferrari Classiche Certified, Matching-Numbers Example | The Only 500 Superfast Originally Finished in Black
Coachwork by Pininfarina | Chassis 6305

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Mille Miglia
Ferraris 166 (left)
and 375 starred
in the collection
of Barchettas



Ford's popular Transit was in the spotlight



Alfa (€639k) missed its €725-825k guide

Auto Moto show is biggest ever

A record 130,000 people flocked to Fiera di Padova in northern Italy for the 36th Auto e Moto d'Epoca from 24-27 October.

Around 5000 cars joined the dealer-led display across 11 halls, with the Ferrari 166MM Barchetta first owned by former Fiat boss Gianni Agnelli among the leading attractions. It formed part of a set of roofless Prancing Horses that also featured a 340MM Vignale, 375MM Pininfarina, Ferrari 750

Monza, 500 Mondial and a more recent SP Monza, among others.

A pair of new A110s marked the rebirth of Alpine, standing guard in front of an A310 and an original A110, while the Ford Transit was celebrated in its 60th year – a 1953 Taunus Transit and the new plug-in variant bookended its timeline.

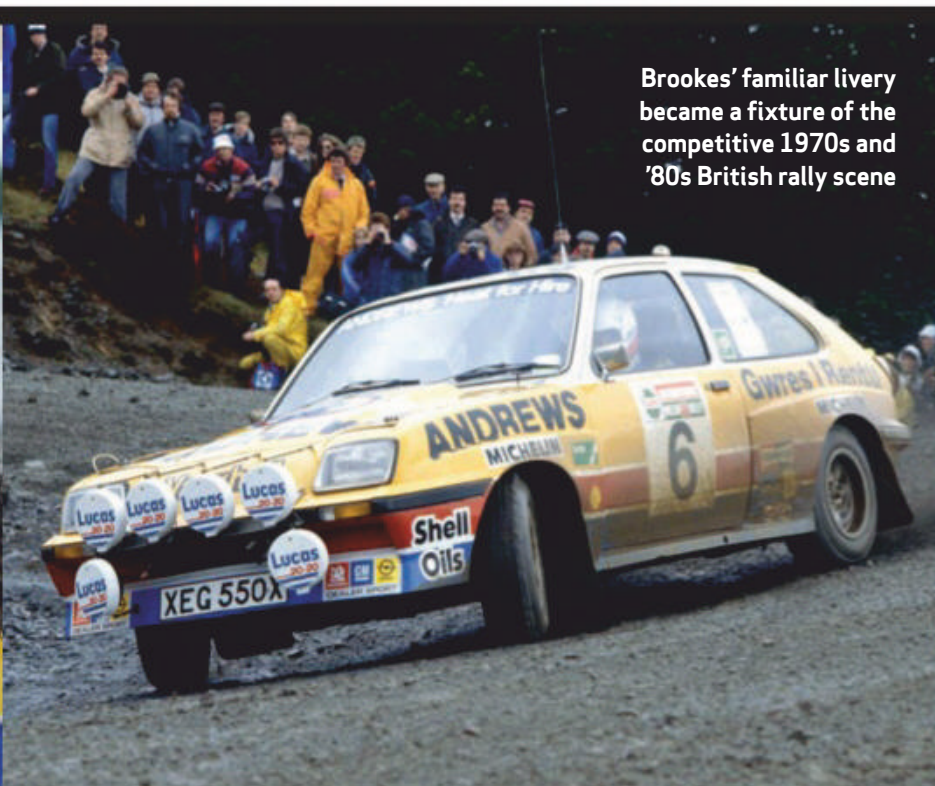
Other landmarks included 20 years of the Pagani Zonda and 35 of the Giugiaro-penned Seat Ibiza, plus the centenaries of Citroën

and Bentley. Porsche, meanwhile, brought along a 1971 Porsche 917 to mark the iconic sports-racer's half-century year, alongside the original GT2, a 993.

The centrepiece of the event is the Finarte auction, where the 1947 Alfa Romeo 6C-2500 Sport that contested the '49 Mille Miglia sold for €639,060 to take headline lot.

Organisers have confirmed the dates for the 2020 event, which will take place from 22-25 October.

Obituary



Brookes' familiar livery became a fixture of the competitive 1970s and '80s British rally scene

RUSSELL BROOKES 1945-2019

Double British Rally Champion Russell Brookes died in a cycling accident at the age of 74 on 30 October.

Born in Redditch in August 1945, his 'Andrews Heat for Hire' livery became an iconic sight on the side of Escort RS1800s and Vauxhall Chevettes and Mantas, winning the hotly contested title for Ford and Vauxhall

ahead of world-famous names. His varied career also found him piloting Sierras, Sunbeam Lotus, Mini Coopers, Opel Kadetts and even a Lancia Stratos.

His talents shone on the world stage, too, with a hat-trick of podiums on the RAC in 1977, '78 and '79, the latter his best finish of second behind Hannu Mikkola.



Federation update

The NEC Classic Motor Show features more than 300 historic vehicle clubs, and an annual attraction for them is the C&SC Club Awards. It's a great social event and a chance for C&SC and Lancaster Insurance to recognise the achievements of many clubs.

We were delighted to host Patrick Rollet, president of the Fédération Internationale des Véhicules Anciens (FIVA) on his last official engagement prior to retirement after six years in the role. He was highly impressed by this event, and the show as a whole.



Outgoing FIVA president Rollet's appearance was his last in the role

At present, FIVA can boast more than 85 member organisations across 62 countries. There is a tangible role for the parent organisation coordinating the work of national organisations as we address a changing environment. There is a need to ensure the continued supply of fuel, and also to understand how our classics will exist alongside autonomous vehicles.

Fundamental to this work is the recognition that our vehicles form an important part of our heritage; we are able to work effectively with organisations such as The Heritage Alliance and the National Trust, but we need FIVA to achieve the same success with UNESCO.



DAVID WHALE
FBHVC CHAIRMAN

The FBHVC lobbies in Westminster and Brussels. Call Emma Balaam on 01708 223111, email secretary@fbhvc.co.uk or see www.fbhvc.co.uk

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CLASSIC DIARY

All the shows, festivals, tours, meets and races that matter

DECEMBER

7 Jaguar Breakfast Meet At the BMM, Gaydon 01926 641188; www.britishmotormuseum.co.uk

7 Monty Peters Historic Sporting Trial Classic mud-plugging in Kent 07739 464170; hsta.org.uk

7-10 Le Jog 25th gruelling enduro from Land's End to John O'Groats 01656 740275; heroevents.eu

7-8 The Christmas Cracker At the Museum of Transport, Manchester 01612 052122; www.gmts.co.uk

8 Palm Beach Concours Glitzy new show in Florida, USA 001 561 568 8882; www.palmbeachconcours.com

15 Festivals of Speed – Orlando More than 300 cars, both vintage and contemporary, in Florida, USA 001 352 406 9325; festivalsofspeed.com

26 Steam Carnival & Vintage Vehicle Boxing Day Meeting Ockbrook, Derbyshire www.bsabantamclub.com

26 Benington Classics Boxing Day meet near Stevenage, Herts 01438 869665; www.lordshiparms.com

29 Enfield New Year Autojumble At the Whitewebbs Museum of Transport, Enfield 020 8367 1898; www.whitewebbsmuseum.co.uk

JANUARY 2020

1 New Year's Day Classic Gathering See *Pick of the month*

1 Yeovil Car Club New Year's Day Meet 2020 Popular gathering at Haselbury Mill, Somerset 01935 429806; www.yeovilcarclub.com

1 New Year's Day Charity Meet at the Classic Motor Hub Special 'Coffee and Classics' event to raise money for charity. Bibury, Glos 01242 384092; classicmotorhub.com

1 Phoenix Inn New Year's Day Meet (TBC) Informal gathering of classics around the pretty country pub in Hartley Wintney, Hants 01252 842484; www.phoenixinn.co.uk

1 Vintage Stony See *Pick of the month*

1 Classic Cars on the Prom Seaside gathering for classics. Bournemouth, Dorset 01202 418900; ccotp.com

3-4 Exeter Trial Long-running car and 'bike rally in Devon 07941 328613; www.themotorcyclingclub.org.uk

3-5 Planai-Classical Winter rally for pre-'72 cars around the Dachstein glacier in Austria 0043 3685 23270; www.planai-classic.at

5 Sunday Scramble The first of the year, in the wonderful grounds of Bicester Heritage, Oxon 01869 327928; www.bicesterheritage.co.uk

9-12 Autosport International With a display to mark 70 years of the first F1 Championship race. NEC 08443 388000; autosportinternational.com

10-12 Romania Historic Winter Rally 2020 In Brasov, Romania 0040 4 90 28 79 01; romania-historic-rally.com

11-19 The Scottsdale auctions

Curtain-raiser to the 2020 season in Arizona, USA, has all the big players including Barrett-Jackson (11-19), Worldwide (15), Russo and Steele (15-19), Bonhams (16), RM Sotheby's (16-17) and Gooding & Co (17-18)

12 La Traversée de Paris Hivernale Classics cross the French capital on hugely popular multi-marque club event vincennesenanciennes.com

12 Coffee & Chrome At Chateau Impney in Droitwich, Worcs 03332 076000; www.footmanjames.co.uk

16-19 InterClassics Maastricht This year's theme is 'Forgotten Classics.' The Netherlands 0031 43 38 38 333; interclassicsmaastricht.nl

22-26 Palm Beach Cavallino Classic With a 140-car Ferrari concours, a car show and more. Florida, USA 001 561 994 1345; cavallinoclassic.com

For full event listings, visit www.classicandsportscar.com/calendar

Pick of the month New Year's Day special



NEW YEAR'S DAY CLASSIC GATHERING 1 JANUARY

By all rights, New Year's Day should be a nightmare. It's cold and it's dark and you're almost certainly hungover. But wait! Because New Year's Day is also one of the best days to be a classic-car enthusiast, with several great events dotted around the UK. The biggest of them takes place at Brooklands, with more than 1000 classics expected at the historic Surrey track. Last year there were record numbers – 8000 punters and 1700 cars – with everything from hot-rod Fords to campers and even a Chrysler Alpine joining the fun. 01932 857381; www.brooklandsmuseum.com

VINTAGE STONY 1 JANUARY

If you fancy something a little smaller and more informal than the Brooklands bash, try Vintage Stony. This excellent event takes over the pretty Buckinghamshire town of Stony Stratford, near Milton Keynes, for a day of classic fun plus food and drink. The Market Square is reserved for pre-war cars and 'bikes, but there are also several areas set aside for more recent classics and the variety is outstanding – last year there was everything from a 1932 Alfa Romeo 6C-1750 to a Nissan Micra 1.2 GS! Oh, and make sure you don't miss the minute's noise at midday. www.vintagestony.co.uk



Looking ahead



RÉTROMOBILE 5-9 FEBRUARY

We don't yet know much about the next Rétromobile, but that shouldn't stop you putting the dates in your diary anyway. After all, the Paris show is undoubtedly one of the highlights of the year – partly because of the cars on display and partly because of the general ambience. We do know it will feature the glorious Alfa 8C that sold at 2019's Artcurial auction for €17m, and we also know there will be an AMX 13 VCI tank and a display of 30 historic tractors. That'll do us for now. 0033176771111; www.retromobile.com



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Steve Entwistle and Mark Appleton scored a fairytale win in the Mini's 60th-anniversary year



WILL BROADHEAD

RALLYING AGAINST THE ELEMENTS

Described by competitors as the toughest yet, HERO's 2019 RAC Rally of the Tests was dominated by one crew from 7-10 November. When Paddy Hopkirk loaned his Morris Mini Cooper 'S' to Steve Entwistle, he joked: "They'd better win!" Entwistle and navigator Mark Appleton didn't disappoint, as they topped the Prologue and never looked back. It was a record-breaking sixth win for Appleton and the car's third, having previously taken victory with Rauno Aaltonen and Roger Clark.

Behind them on the Torquay-to-Chester epic, father-and-son crew Mike and Matthew Vokes ran as high as second on day one, dropping to fourth on Saturday and up to third on the final day, despite remodelling their Ginetta G15 against a wall on a kart-track test. Their car is too young to qualify for an overall award, however – likewise the Ford Escort Mexico of Dutch pairing Harm Lamberigts and Arjan van der Palen, who fought from sixth on day one to finish second on the road.

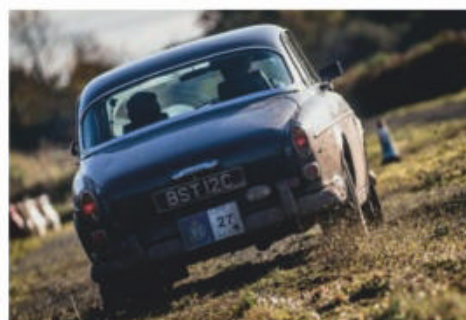
Taking that second step on the podium, nearly four minutes adrift of Entwistle/Appleton and despite losing the use of their tripmeter



at times, was the Porsche 911 of racing driver Phil Hindley, who was making his rally debut alongside Martyn Taylor. Third overall were Paul Dyas and Martin Pitt, battling back from beaching their Volvo Amazon with its front wheels in the air and necessitating a tow.

In an event where just finishing was a major achievement, special mention goes to Stuart Anderson and Leigh Powley who were not only exposed to the cold, rain and snow, but also had to manhandle their 1937 Derby Bentley through the demanding tests. Having run in the top five for most of the event, their reward was victory in Class 1 and fourth overall.

The rally featured a test at the Classic Motor Show (p12) in front of an estimated 4-5000 showgoers, the first time the indoor event has incorporated live motorsport.



Clockwise from far left: 1937 Bentley plugs on; plucky Amazon claimed third; rookie rally driver Phil Hindley took second with Martyn Taylor





Two-hour tussle for Cottingham/Bryant (Cobra) and Kent/Ward (E-type) for pre-'66 spoils



The Wood/Morgan Skyline won on Sunday



Kent/Ward Lister-Jag races into the dark

ERIC SAWYER

Classic duels at Iberian festival

Barely a second split winner James Cottingham (AC Cobra) from Richard Kent (Jaguar E-type) in the super-clean Pre-'66 GT & Sports Car Cup thriller that topped Portugal's 11th Algarve Classic Festival from 1-3 November. Oliver Bryant and Chris Ward respectively took the middle stint before the owners resumed and scrapped to the chequered flag.

Cottingham had already won Motor Racing Legends' Pre-'63

GT race with Harvey Stanley in a Jaguar E-type. Kent/Ward aced Saturday evening's '50s sports-car enduro in the former's Lister-Jaguar Costin; Justin Maeers/Charlie Martin (Cooper Monaco) outran Gary Pearson/Carlos Monteverde (Lister-Jaguar Costin) for second. On his Ford GT40's debut, Bernardo Hartogs won both Iberian Historic Endurance contests with Will Nuthall.

Turbo cars blitzed the Historic

Touring Car Challenges: Julian Thomas/Calum Lockie (Ford Sierra Cosworth RS500) snared Saturday gold with a final flourish and Ric Wood/Adam Morgan (Nissan Skyline GT-R R32) won Sunday's wet sequel.

The Chevron B19 of Max Smith-Hilliard and Nick Padmore took the pre-'75 sports car honours from 18-year-old Bradley Burns, who gave Chris Drake's McLaren M1B an impressive premiere.

Paddock profile



ALAN & GEOFFREY LETTS

Car 1963 Lotus Cortina
Series U2TC and Masters
Historic Racing

Brothers Alan (left) and Geoffrey Letts got into the sport in 1980 and '82 respectively, but moved into classics in 2006. "We heard U2TC offered two-driver, one-hour races at the best historic circuits in Europe and were sold," says Alan. They've had much fun since. "I remember driving blind with a broken windscreen in the 2015 Spa-Classic," he adds.

It's 2011 at the 'Ring that stands out for Geoffrey: "It was the Oldtimer-Grand Prix – a four-hour marathon in the rain!"



CUMBRIAN CLASSIC TRIALLING

The Vintage Sports-Car Club's 51st Lakeland Trial on 9 November comprised 13 challenging hills including the snow-topped Drumhouse, which has been used since the event's inaugural running.

Taking top honours was Peter Kite in his 1921 GN Sports, but Macdonald Trophy winner Hughie Walker deserves special mention. He drove his 1930 Austin Vat 69 to the trial from Nottinghamshire, broke it when competing, borrowed a farmer's workshop to fix it, resumed competition, then drove home.



Andrew Isherwood in his Austin Seven

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CHARLIE WOODING

Experienced competitor Mark Howse and his Impunity were first in the Post Historic class

Mud, mud, glorious mud!

Entrants to Midland Trials Car Club's Wotton Historic Sporting Trial in Gloucestershire on 9 November had six hills to tackle – and for newcomers, it was a case of being thrown in at the deep end.

On the first lap, every section was cleaned by at least one competitor, but alterations for lap two presented a more demanding route – in the Historic class only John Fack and Mike Bletsoe-Brown, in Cannons, managed to crest hill six.

Mark Busfield's full-on attempt at the final muddy climb on section four in the CWB Trident drew applause, while Stuart Roach's round of five in his Alexis was only one behind the class winner.

In the end, the experienced drivers shone: Mark Howse (Impunity) took the Post Historic class from Andy Gowen (Facksimile) by 12 marks. It was much closer for the Historics, as Ian Wright (Cannon) beat Fack by just two marks.



MSUK ON THE MOVE

Motorsport UK, Britain's governing body for four-wheeled motorsport, is moving to Bicester Heritage in 2020. It's hoped that training, testing and sprints will be held on the proposed track, once redevelopment is complete.



NEW SERIES REVEALED

The Historic Sports Car Club has launched the Production Car Challenge, a series for 1980s production touring, sports and GT cars. Pilot races in 2020 will be followed by a full programme in 2021. See hsc.org.uk

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One of the sheds in West Virginia after several cars had already been moved, with a Midget, MGBs, Elva and Lotus Seven among those left

MASSIVE HAUL OF BRITS ABROAD

Kevin Richards has acquired an amazing hoard of British sports cars. "Three years ago we were told of a gentleman who had passed away, leaving a collection of odd glassfibre cars," he explains. "The family was trying to make head or tail of it and work out how best to sell it. The majority of the cars were in three sheds in West Virginia, USA, about an hour and a half from me. We found everything from Gilberts to Turners, an Arkley to Elvas and even a Lotus Seven."

The late owner, Howard Hayes, was a real enthusiast who raced some of his cars at Sports Car Club of America meetings. After making a bid, Richards left and then heard nothing for three years before getting a call out of the blue to say his offer had been accepted and all the cars, shells and spares had to be off-site within three months before the buildings were demolished.

The early Gilbert was found to be formerly registered 584 GBC, and a past owner of the car when contacted explained that he went on his honeymoon in it. There were four Elva Couriers, including

a 'notchback' coupé that had been raced in the UK by members of the Cemian Motor Club in a 750 Motor Club race at Silverstone.

Elsewhere there are four MGBs, three Spridgets, an engineless Lotus Seven – thought to be the second example imported into the USA – a TVR and an Arkley. But perhaps of most interest was a trio of Turners, two of which had been raced in the past. Chassis 30/149 was not known to the Turner Register and had been thought to be lost. "The red car was covered in thick dust and under the bonnet had become a nest for squirrels," says registrar Russell Filby. "To remove the car, the driveshafts had to be disconnected because the rear axle was locked solid, but ►



Above: disconnecting the driveshafts of Turner's seized rear axle. Left: the red Turner out in the open. Far left: unusual notchback Elva was a UK racing car



The collection included a number of Elva Couriers in various states of repair, including this burnt-out roadster



Above, left-right: 1968 TVR Vixen is removed; early Gilbern, 584 GBC; fastback Elva Courier is thought to be one of just 27 examples made



Above: engineless black Turner racer as found. Right: chassis 30/251 is a remarkably original 1959 Turner road car that was supplied new to Ohio



following a good clean it appears to be a remarkably complete car and in good condition.”

According to the paperwork, the Turner's first owner was James Pinson III of South Carolina, then Dennis James and Wayne Sutherland, who raced it many times before Hayes bought it in 1978.

There was also another Turner racer with no engine or documentation, along with a car that was on the register, chassis 30/251. This turned out to have been stored in another location under a cover since the 1980s. The 1959 car was supplied to Tri City Sports Cars of Ohio, but no history was known to the Register prior to 1987 when Hayes made contact. The title shows that the previous owner was George Erwin Dausman of Oakton, from 1968 until '78, when Hayes bought it. “It's incredibly original with matching numbers,” says Filby, “and quite a discovery.”

Look familiar?

Want to track down a lost love or looking for history on your current classic? Send details and pictures to the p10 address or email your requests to alastair.clements@haymarket.com



SEARCHING FOR DEREK

Mark Swindells is tracing the past of the '64 Jaguar E-type his father bought in 1978. Originally Golden Sand and registered BGC 20B, it is now red and 800 RHT. “A ‘Derek’ responded to my post online, but didn't leave details,” he says. Email markswindells00@gmail.com



NOT SO CLEVER TREVOR

Gerard Burke owned a 1959 TVR Grantura, UBU 243, from '65-'68. “It had a 1500cc MGA engine and proved quite fast, albeit a handful in the wet,” he says. “There were numerous problems, so it sadly had to go. Is it still around?” Email gerryburke345@hotmail.co.uk



SILVERSTONE REUNION

Dunstan Rickard would like to trace his father Dudley's Healey Silverstone, to reunite them for his 80th birthday. “He raced KYL 689 with success,” says Rickard, “but had to sell so he could afford to marry our mother!” Email dunstan_rickard@hotmail.com



MICHAEL WARE

Former curator of the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu. Send submissions to waremichael29@gmail.com



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Royce goes from film star to support car

It was not unusual for large early saloon cars to have a body change later in life. Some became trucks and pick-ups, while during the war many were requisitioned to be ambulances or NAAFI wagons.

In late 1924, Mr (later Sir) Bullwell Smith, chairman of Arsenal Football Club, bought a Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, XT 209, with a formal closed body by Windovers. No history is known until '51, when the car appeared in *The Man in the White Suit*, with Alex Guinness. A continuation logbook shows that

the Rolls then belonged to Carr Bros, which hired out cars for filming as well as specialist vehicles for the movie industry. Soon the Royce was registered as a 'utility', having become a camera car with a woodie body by an unknown coachbuilder.

"It has a strong roof over the front, and a ladder for a cameraman to climb up," says owner Bob Vass. "There are fittings between the dumb-irons for a camera platform, with a tube for a safety harness."

In 1958, ownership changed to Prof George du Boulay, who made

some repairs and used it for camping holidays. A few years later the car was pushed into a shed and left. Shortly before he died in 2007, du Boulay bequeathed the Rolls to the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation. After a few years it was offered for sale, when Vass and wife Hilary bought the Royce to save it from being turned into another tourer. The car is now ready to show, though it hasn't been repainted because, as Vass says: "A modern, high-gloss respray would destroy its character."

Clockwise from top left: Ghost emerges from store; restored to camera-car form; in *The Man in the White Suit* (rear left)



From far left: 1951 Ford as found; the Vedette was well hidden in the French farmhouse garden; the interior has deteriorated badly due to exposure

FORGOTTEN FAST FORD

Jon Driver is known as a BMW man, but his latest discovery wears a Blue Oval rather than a propeller. "I found this Ford Escort RS2000 through a third party and bought it from the owner's estate," says Driver. "It has been dry-stored with a Mk1 since the early '90s in the north-east of England. It is one of the first Custom models, registered in September 1978, and is a two-owner car in its original Signal Orange."

"It's a true timewarp, needing only sympathetic restoration – the body is solid, and the fishnet trim is perfect bar a good scrub!"



Mk2 Ford RS2000 is remarkably sound

French Ford is a playground no more

When Dutchman Rien Quist bought a farmhouse in central France 17 years ago, he knew that it needed plenty of effort to turn it into the home of his dreams. The small farm had been run by a local couple, Monsieur and Madame Vincent, who had moved out some years earlier. "There were no children and they had kept most of the place for their livestock and little for themselves," says Quist, who

even found a newspaper dating back to 10 May 1940, the day the Germans attacked Paris, among the many piles of detritus.

But the biggest surprise lay hidden deep in the overgrown garden: the Vincents' old Ford Vedette. This model was built by Ford of France in Poissy between 1949 and 1954, with American-inspired styling, 'suicide' doors and a 2-litre flathead V8 engine. This

particular car has the one-piece windscreen of the facelifted model, introduced in 1951.

Quist's neighbour remembers Monsieur Vincent driving it, but he thinks it was parked up at least 30 years ago. Quist has now decided to part with the Ford: "Initially we thought we'd keep it for the grandchildren to play in, but it is very rusty and they are not as adventurous as we had hoped!"

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Dusty Buckland is ready for salvation



During a recent visit to a family friend, Royal Automobile Club head of motoring Jeremy Vaughan was surprised to uncover a rare AC Buckland Tourer that has been off the road since the 1990s.

The 1951 car, registered JUS 916, was originally supplied by the Maidstone Engineering Co of Salford, Manchester, and was purchased by the present owner in 1975. At the time it had already been restored, fitted with a new

roof and resprayed in red. The only modification was the sensible addition of indicators.

Despite being complete and in good running order, the Buckland was jacked up, placed under a cover and put into storage near Arundel as part of a collection of 17 other British cars of the 1950s, where it was regularly inspected. In September 1987 the entire collection was put up for sale by tender 'as seen', but the AC was retained by the

vendor and made roadworthy again in order to be used for a family wedding.

After that it was once more put into storage, this time in a shed on the owner's farm near Goodwood, where it has remained untouched ever since.

The AC is complete and still has its original logbook. "The garage door fell down when we tried to get it open," says Vaughan.

"Although it is covered by a thick layer of dust, the AC appears to be remarkably sound and is still fitted with its original AC straight-six engine. I contacted the Buckland Registrar, Mike Smith, who was very excited that the car had been found. It's now looking for a new home where it can be sympathetically restored."



Clockwise from above: tourer has been in hiding for three decades; beneath the dust the AC looks sound; supplying dealer plate; straight-six motor



MG garden ornament revived

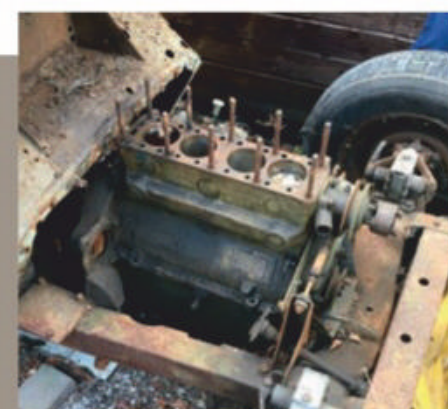
In a recent issue of the MG Car Club magazine, *Safety Fast!*, Paul Plummer appealed on behalf of his friend Mervyn Gillespie for a radiator for his recently discovered 'garden-find' 1955 MG TF-1500.

In April 2017, a neighbour of Gillespie's told him that there was "an old MG in bits" in her late father's garden in Knaresborough. He had started to restore the TF, but his daughter was under the impression that the car was only good for parts. "It was beneath a tarpaulin in the garden and turned out to be a complete rolling chassis with an engine in situ but a rotten body," says Gillespie. "It had been taken off the road and dismantled for restoration many years ago. Although everything was rusty-

looking, the chassis and most of the major parts were repairable."

The owner, a widower, had been storing some of the parts in a dry garage and some in his dining room. It is thought that the car came off the road 40 years earlier and was in a garage for a while before being moved outside. Gillespie wanted to save the car and told his friend Graham Beck about it. Beck bought the MG and has just completed the work in time for his wedding.

Clockwise from main: the limited remains of the MG as found in the garden; restoration completed in time for Beck's big day; part-stripped engine



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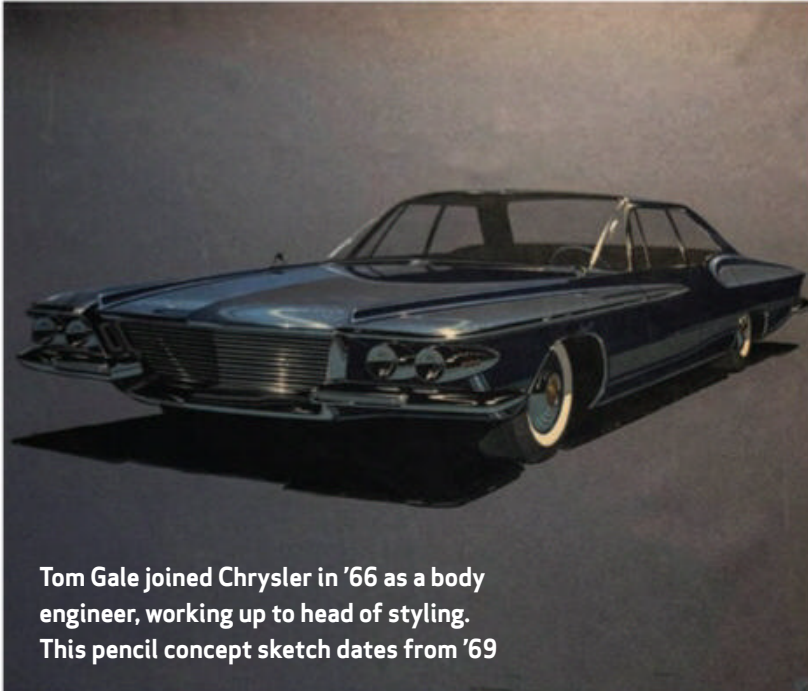
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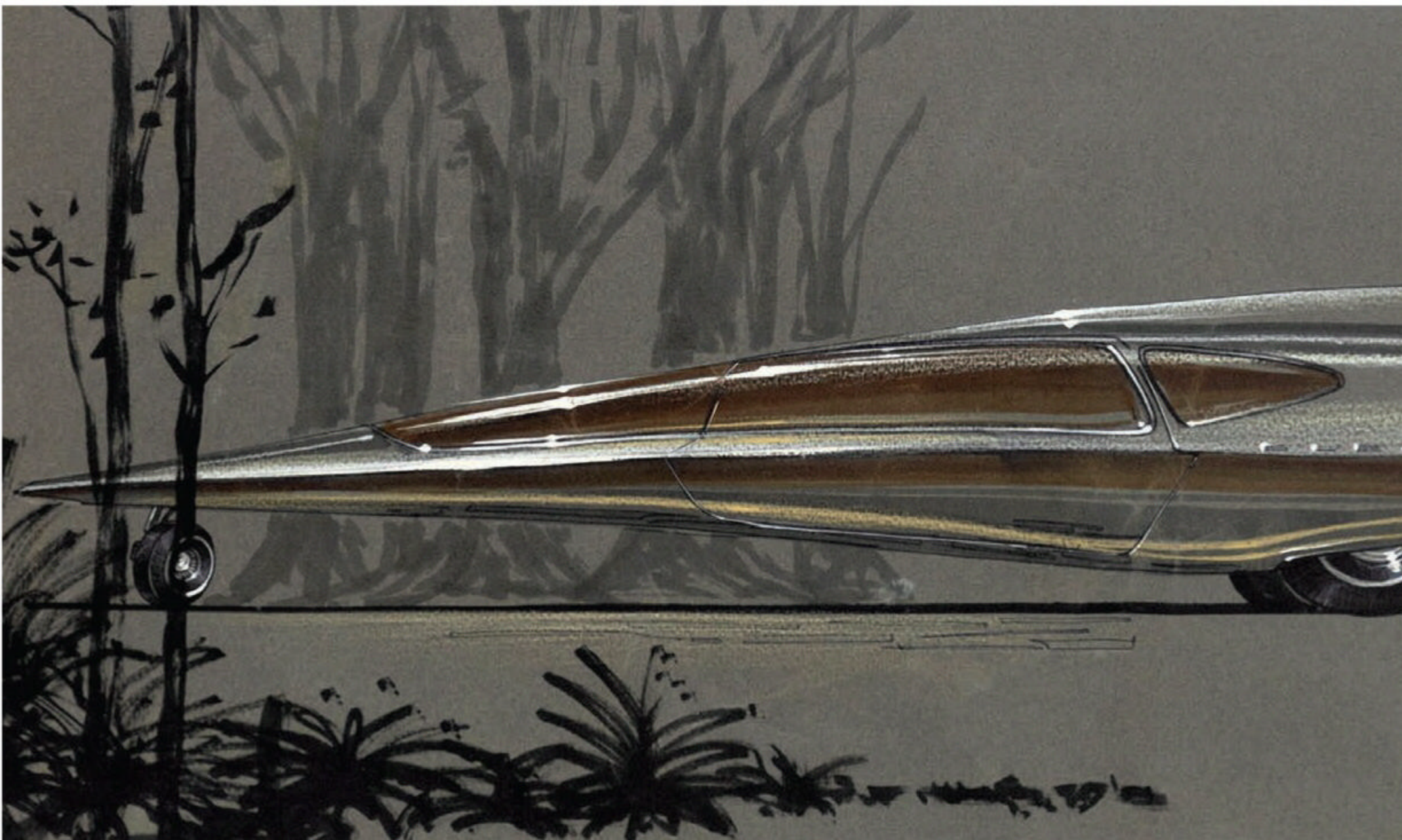
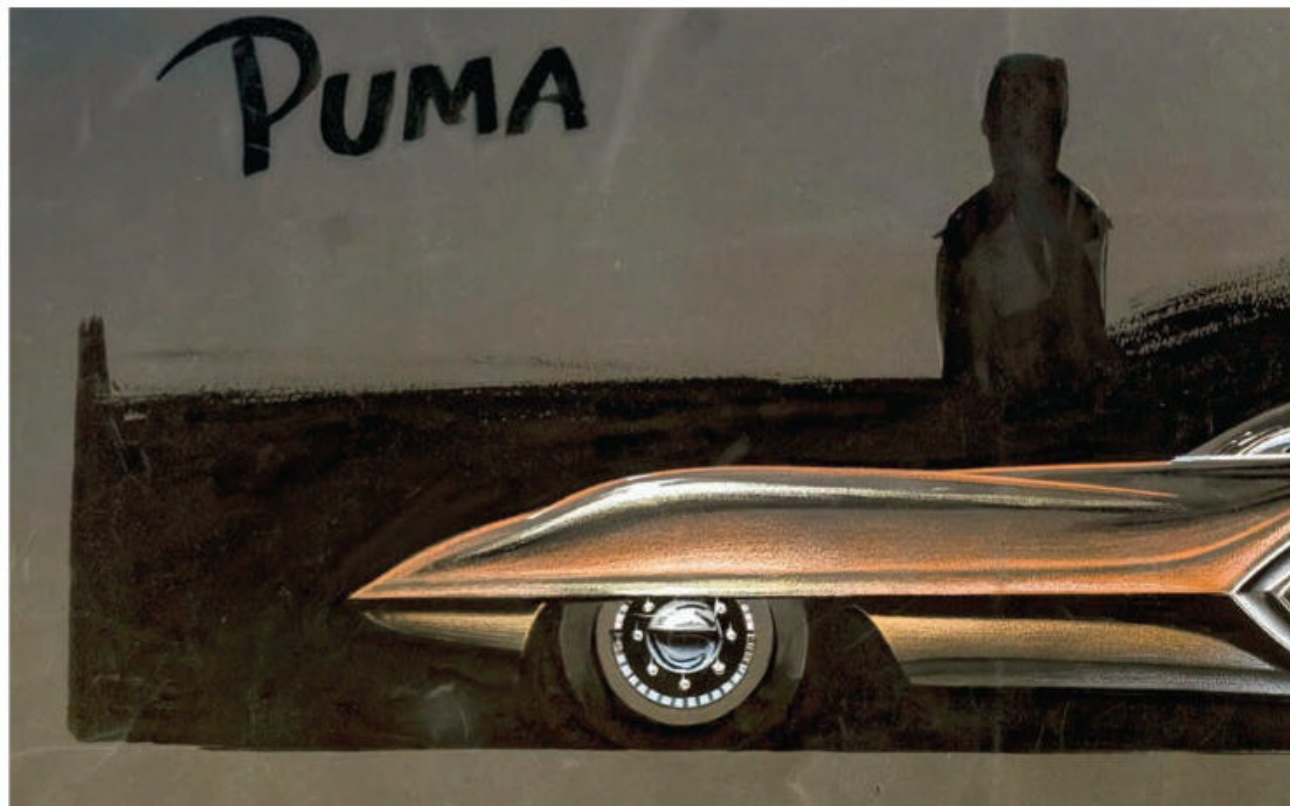
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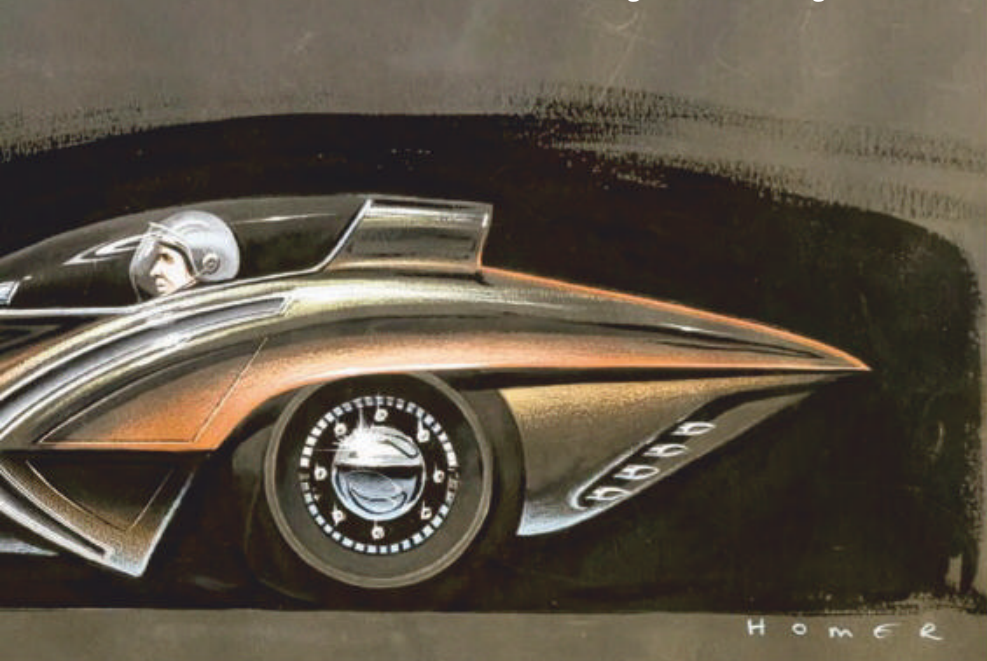
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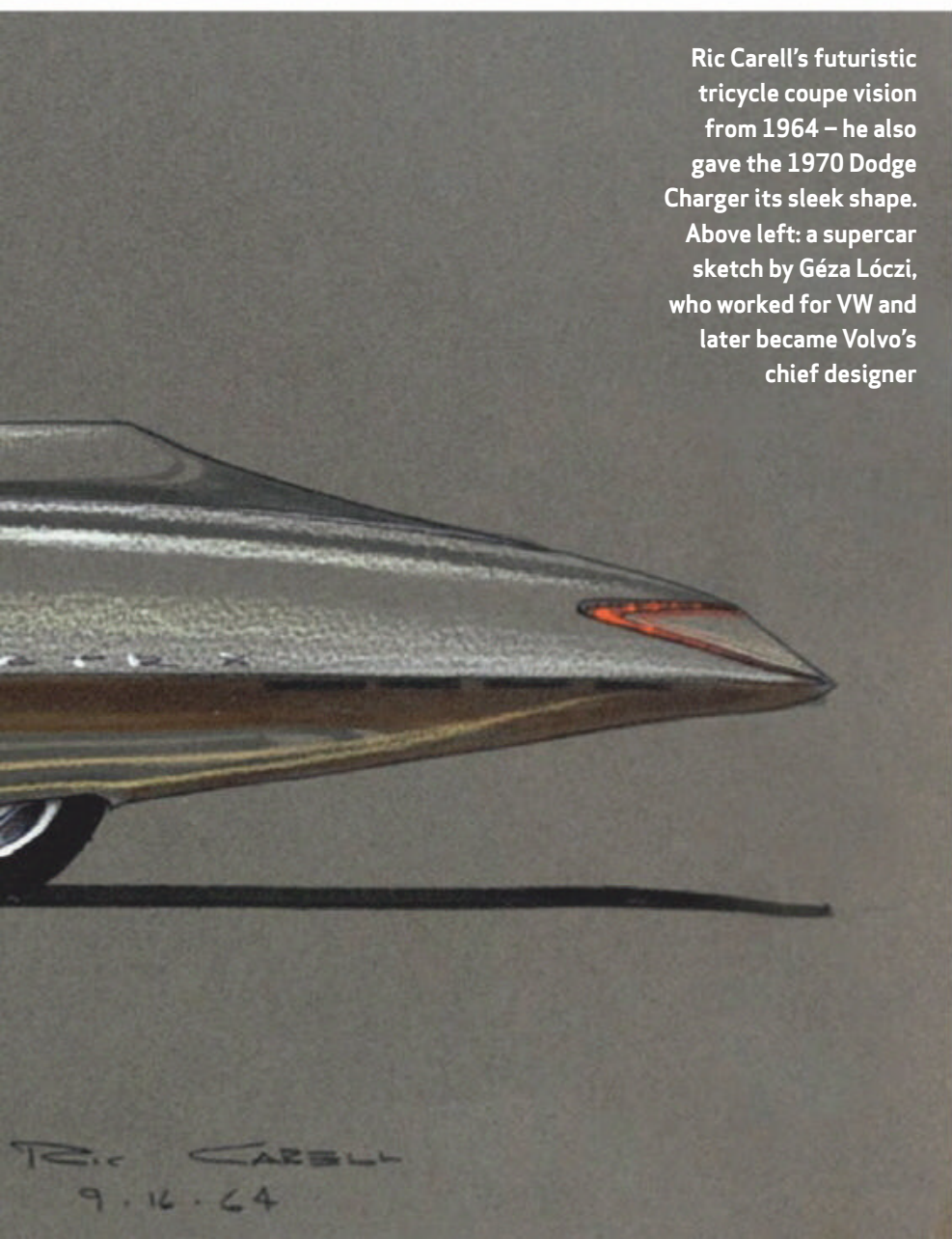
Tom Gale joined Chrysler in '66 as a body engineer, working up to head of styling. This pencil concept sketch dates from '69



Dramatic study by Homer LaGassey Jnr, one of the youngest stylists hired by GM; later at Ford he designed the Mustang and Falcon



Tony Miller sketched this compact people carrier in 1961 – he also worked for Douglas Aerospace, Frank Costin and Mattel



Ric Carell's futuristic tricycle coupe vision from 1964 – he also gave the 1970 Dodge Charger its sleek shape. Above left: a supercar sketch by Géza Lóczy, who worked for VW and later became Volvo's chief designer

MOTORING ART

PATRICK KELLY

There's nothing like this impressive collection, which reveals concepts that never made it to the road

Although enthusiasts have been collecting automotive art since the dawn of motoring, few have focused on styling and concept drawings. Over the years, the commercial design work of even the greatest coachbuilders and stylists has been lost with studio clear-outs or closures.

California-based Patrick Kelly has been a car nut since he was a child, and clearly remembers the first Jaguar E-type he saw. "It seemed totally out of character with anything else in the Fresno area," he recalls, "and that got me hooked on automobile design."

Fast-forward to 2005 and Kelly's quest for concept art began by chance when he was visiting a San Francisco Art Deco fair and spotted a few pre-war coachbuilder drawings. Chatting with the dealer fired the idea to build a collection celebrating the artwork of stylists. And after reading Michael Lamm's superb history of US car design, *A Century of Automotive Style*, Kelly decided to focus on the futuristic work created in the studios in and around Detroit. "I believe this is an American story that is now almost lost," he says. "This was a period when the automobile companies were kings of American industry, when imagination and creativity were driven and encouraged. Innovative artists were highly valued for their work."

Aided by pal Leo Brereton, the collection started to grow and visits to the Eyes on Design event at Grosse Pointe, Michigan, led to introductions to several retired stylists including George Camp, Joan Klatil Creamer, David McIntosh, John Perkins and Ken Vendley. Talking to these designers became the catalyst for first exhibitions and now a new book to highlight the talent from the golden era of American car styling. Much of the work Kelly discovered

was unsigned, but he hopes this publication may bring to light their artists' identities and stories.

The style, scale and media used by the studio artists varies dramatically, from white crayon on black paper to broad, 6ft-long gouache studies. Imagination in many of the works is boldly free, the 1950s drawings revealing the strong influence of the jet and space age. Some designers such as George Hildebrand bridged both worlds. After starting to work for coachbuilder LeBaron in the 1930s, designing bodies for Packard and Duesenberg, Hildebrand later switched to Republic Aviation where he designed the rocket-powered ejection seat for the F-105.

Robert Ackerman, who worked on the Dodge Challenger from 1969, went the reverse route, having started at North American Aviation on the X-15 project before winning a scholarship to the Arts Center through a *Motor Trend* magazine competition, which led to a long and successful career at General Motors.

From classic finned cruisers to jet cars and monorails, the diversity of dream designs is spectacular. "The work provides a fascinating view of what the artist thought the future of transportation was going to look like," says Kelly. **MW**




Imagine! by Patrick Kelly features 235 artworks and is published by Dalton Watson Fine Books, priced at \$90. See www.daltonwatson.com

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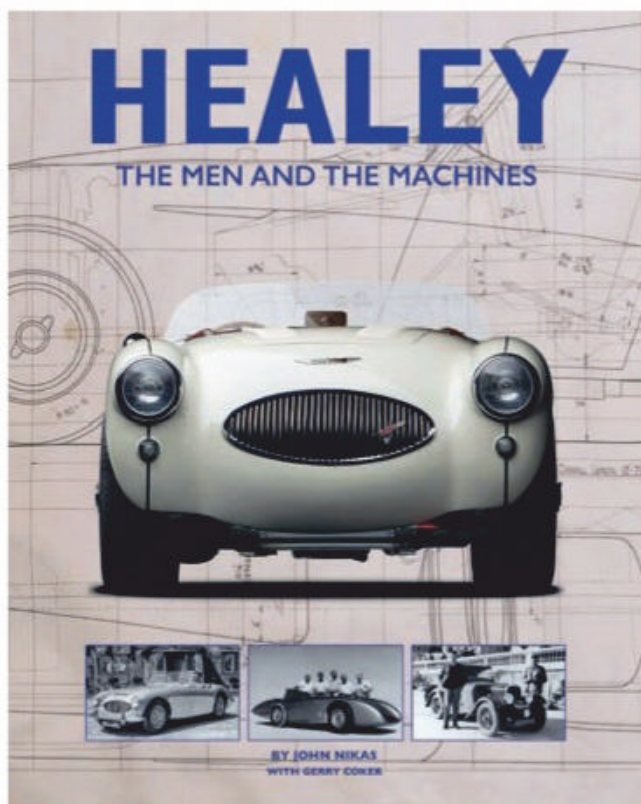
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Book of the month



'The photographs are as captivating as the words, including one of the streamliner in action taken from the chase plane'

HEALEY: THE MEN AND THE MACHINES

Many a book has been penned on the topic of Donald Healey and the vehicles he built, but few can match the breadth and depth of this 326-page epic.

Author John Nikas begins with a detailed background of Healey's early life, including a fascinating insight into his experience of WW1 – Healey received a medical discharge from the Royal Flying Corps following a crash that knocked him unconscious. This chapter is beautifully illustrated with interesting period photographs, such as that from the National WW1 Museum demonstrating the type of ambulance carriage that would have brought the wounded airman across the Channel. From there, Nikas charts Healey's ownership of Red House Garage in his home town of Perranporth, via a business set up with his brother building wireless receivers and speakers, and his later forays into motorsport.

Delving deep into the Donald Healey Collection's image library, the quality of photographs impresses. Highlights include Healey preparing for the 1931 Rallye Monte-Carlo by putting his Invicta S-type through its paces on the beach at Perranporth.

Also covered in some detail is Healey's time at Triumph and his leading role in the Dolomite project – the magnificent straight-eight roadster inspired by the all-conquering Alfa Romeo 8C. Again, Nikas leans heavily on the Healey Collection's archive material, with myriad images ranging from close-up

shots of the Dolomite's beautifully formed eight-branch exhaust manifold to a note congratulating Healey on his Monte success, featuring a brilliant caricature and the signatures of Super Seven designer Arthur Sykes and Dolomite stylist Frank Warner, among others. The top-quality imagery continues with a shot of the Duncan Drone on two wheels at an airfield circuit, its nonplussed driver sporting a button-up shirt, tie and trilby, while the photo of Healey posing by a sign spotted on a fact-finding mission to the States in '48 – 'Bald Knob' – couldn't help but raise a smile.

The 100 receives a 30-page chapter outlining everything from the earliest sketches (sourced from the James and Gail Smalley Collection) to the model's debut at the 1955 London Motor Show. The other Big Healeys and the 'Frogeye' Sprite and its later variants both get 30 pages, too, all covered to the same level of detail and well illustrated.

One of the most enticing chapters deals with Healey's pursuit of speed, charting early outings at Jabbeke for the Elliott and the 100 at Bonneville in 1953, and the out-of-this-world 1954 streamliner penned by Gerry Coker. Again, the photographs are as captivating as the words, including one of the streamliner in action taken from the twin-engined chase plane (the first aircraft couldn't keep up!).

Thorough appendices cover Healey's competition record and results, SCCA National Championships, speed and distance records, production figures and vehicle specifications, with five pages dedicated to Healey's requirements for performance and its withdrawal from European motor races in 1954.

This stands among the best-researched and most accurate accounts of Healey's life and machines – all the more remarkable given its ability to engage the reader. The images could have been given a bit more room to breathe, perhaps. The opposite is true of the text, which takes its time and is very thorough. An indulgent history of the best type. **GM £50** John Nikas with Gerry Coker, Herridge & Sons. ISBN 9781906133825



Buick Riviera

Veloce's *Those were the days...* books follow a familiar formula: picture-heavy, square-format paperbacks that give

an overview of a particular model rather than an exhaustive reference. This latest edition, covering the 1963-'73 classic-era Rivas, is no exception, but is a welcome arrival for a model that is little-covered in the UK. Quality photography is backed up by plenty of intriguing archive, and there's a useful history lesson before model year changes are explained, as well as a look at custom models. **AC £15.99** Norm Mort, Veloce. ISBN 9781787113565



Jaguar

From the thick paper to the lavish production, *The Art of the Automobile* is clearly a coffee-table tome. 'The definitive history', however, might be a stretch.

The text is light, with errors and omissions – such as a full-page shot of a Mk2 illustrating the chapter on the Mk1. The images are mainly from the press office, yet some are used large and superbly reproduced. Not perfect, but £40 doesn't look expensive. **AC £40** Zef Enault and Nicolas Heidet, Mitchell Beazley. ISBN 9781784726171



The Sound of Supercars

The acid test of *The Sound of Supercars*: a 10-month-old baby –

though it's aimed at three-years-plus. It did the trick, bringing smiles with every press of a button. The board pages are hard-wearing, the buttons perhaps less so. There's a variety of cars, from Morgan 3 Wheeler to Tesla, via Aston DB5 and modern sports and supercars. The words might not sink in for a few years yet, but this is a great way to give the next generation of enthusiasts a nudge in the right direction. **JP £12.99** AC Pinnington and CS Buckingham, Cobalt Fortress. ISBN 9781908489432



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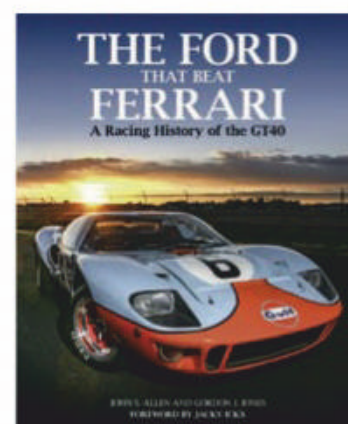
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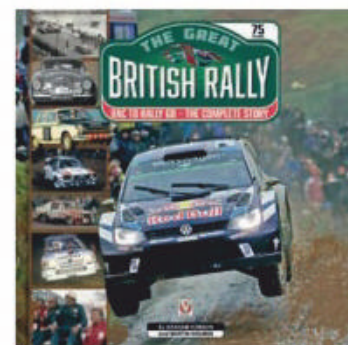
The Ford that beat Ferrari

Updated and expanded, this 496-page ode to Ford's Le Mans steamroller remains the benchmark text on the GT40. First published in 1985, and reprinted in 2005, *The Ford that beat Ferrari* is exhaustively researched and detail-orientated – even if the narrative isn't always linear. Some enthusiasts

have previously complained that it's too biased towards the UK's involvement in the GT40 project, but it's hard to see why. Here you get a real flavour for who did what, which is a welcome counterpoint to the umpteen offerings that insist it was all down to Carroll Shelby. It is particularly interesting to read about eponymous team boss Alan Mann's contribution, as well as the stories of the many various privateer owner/drivers. There are some corking images, too.

If you love Ford GT40s, or are merely a fan of 1960s motor racing, you will want to get yourself a copy. **RH**

£90 John S Allen and Gordon J Jones, Evro. ISBN 9281910505472



The Great British Rally

This book is perhaps a little overdue. Few motorsport events have the same strange appeal for so many people as the RAC Rally, as it is still affectionately known regardless of whose name is across the trophy. Prime-time television coverage thrust the rally in front of the public whether they liked it or not,

which should make *The Great British Rally* a success.

It is a genuine life history of the event, back to the largely forgotten pre-war days and up to the modern iteration of the sport. There's context without getting bogged down in the minutiae. Yet it's when Robson and Holmes delve into their personal memory banks that this is at its most enjoyable; the latter's account of his late and unexpected call-up with Renault to sit beside Jean Ragnotti is fascinating, describing his wonder at both Jeannot and the car brilliantly. It was quite a final appearance co-driving the RAC for Holmes.

As with any rally book, there is joy to be found in the photos. They are not restricted to the big boys, with class-winning and surprising cars captured, too. One for the last-minute Christmas list. **JP**

£35 Graham Robson and Martin Holmes, Veloce. ISBN 9781787113688



The Tricycle Book

If you like early tricycles, this is, naturally, the book for you. Michael Edwards – who has previous, having written about De Dion-Bouton's four-wheeled variants – has now turned his attention to its earliest three-wheelers

and contemporary rivals. Edwards charts the genesis and development of the concept in Europe between the years 1895-1902, covering the products of De Dion-Bouton, Gladiator, Phebus, Marot-Gardon, Clement, Peugeot and Rochet, and the role each played in early motorsport and as a means of transportation.

The De Dion-Bouton variants are the main focus of Edwards' attention, chapter four outlining the various changes made across the seven-year period covered by the book, no doubt proving invaluable for would-be restorers. But this volume is so much more, offering comparative reviews of rival manufacturers, various other engines and even notable engineers and distributors.

Edwards undoubtedly owes a debt of gratitude to his daughter, Natasha, who is responsible for the book's design and illustration. It's packed with full-page colour photographs, while the lovely orange cover is inspired by a period advertisement. Not one to be tucked away; it would look at home on any coffee table. **GM**

£80 Michael Edwards, Surrenden Press (order at surrendenpress.co.uk)

I AHH	2 CY	I FAW	5 GRJ	JTT I	I LLG	PDL I	RJP I	TP I
6 APN	I DHP	54 FB	I GTP	60 JU	I LVB	I PFM	I RKR	8 TRP
ATB I	DL I2	6 FCS	HAB I	I KBC	4 LWH	4 PFR	RWG I	I TWB
8 BJN	I DLP	FD 3	3 HAP	6 KCD	MEK 8	9 PGM	RWK I	I VCS
BLS 5	I DSE	FH I	I HCD	KCG I	MFP 4	6 PHS	RWR I	I VEM
BME 6	I EBW	82 FJ	I HCT	I KDB	MO I	5 PKW	I SBW	I VEW
BR 6	3 ECF	3 FMW	3 HDW	I KEK	I NDH	I PLA	6 SCE	5 VJA
BRS I	I EEB	FN I	I HE	3 KGS	I NGC	PMT I	I SDO	I VMP
BW 2	5 EEP	9 GAD	59 HG	KNS I	NJA I	87 PN	9 SDT	90 VR
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7 CTL	I FAC	GRF I	I JTK	LGS I	7 PBD	7 RGF	I TJM	I YR



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Model of the month



1988 ASTON MARTIN VIRAGE

Cult, 1:18, £176.99

Dutch model manufacturer Cult has produced an impressive range of 1:18 classic Aston Martins in recent years, with the 160mph Virage the latest. Available in two colours, dark green and light blue, the high-quality resin body moulding authentically captures the brutish styling by John Heffernan and Ken Greenley. The model features photo-etched parts and a fully detailed interior (the original car used GRP moulds for the interior panels, a first for Aston). Only 400 Virages were built from its 1988 launch at the NEC to 1993. Future Cult Aston models include the DB6, but be warned: limited production means releases sell out very quickly.

1:18

- 1** Minichamps' Jochen Mass 1975 McLaren M23, £199.99
- 2** Norev's 1975 Opel Manta GT/E 'Black Magic', £74.99
- 3** Minichamps' 1971 Alfa Romeo GTA 1300, £109.99
- 4** Norev's 1969 Chevrolet Corvette convertible, £74.99
- 5** Norev's 1976 Volkswagen Golf GTI, £79.99
- 6** IXO's Markku Alén 1978 Rallye de Portugal-winning Fiat 131 Abarth, £72.99

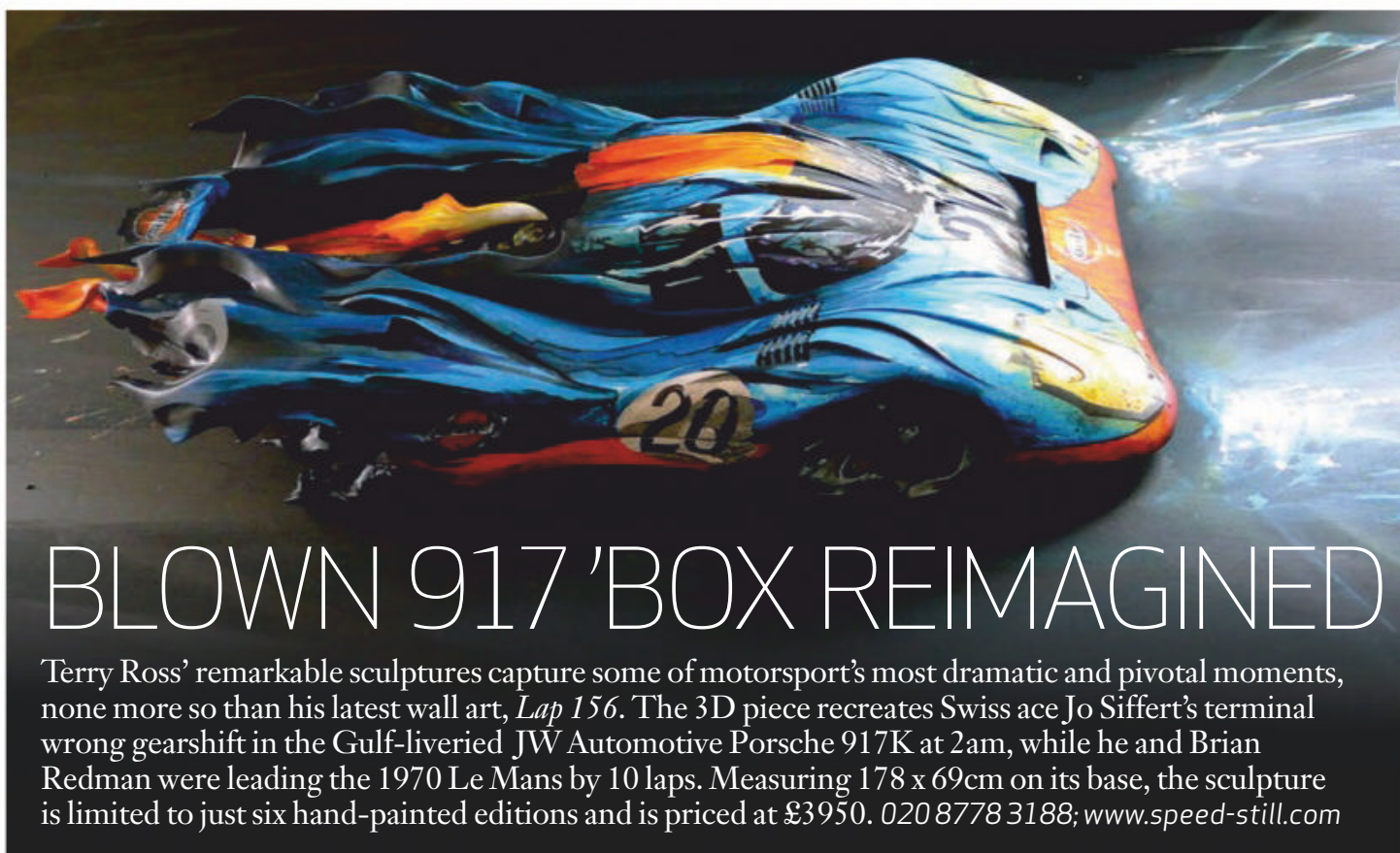


1:43

- 7** Matrix's 1968 Rover P6 Graber Coupé, £87.99
- 8** IXO's Juha Kankkunen 1985 Toyota Celica TCT, £37.99
- 9** Neo's 1959 Chevrolet Corvette XP-700, £99.99
- 10** Neo's 1957 Ford Fairlane 500 Hardtop, £84.99
- 11** Norev's 1970 Mitsubishi Galant GTO, £39.99
- 12** IXO's 1990 BMW M3 Sport Evo, £24.99



Edited by Mick Walsh. Unless stated, all items are available from Diecast Legends (08448 878888; www.diecastlegends.com); 10% discount for orders from C&SC readers quoting 'CS0120'



BLOWN 917 'BOX REIMAGINED

Terry Ross' remarkable sculptures capture some of motorsport's most dramatic and pivotal moments, none more so than his latest wall art, *Lap 156*. The 3D piece recreates Swiss ace Jo Siffert's terminal wrong gearshift in the Gulf-liveried JW Automotive Porsche 917K at 2am, while he and Brian Redman were leading the 1970 Le Mans by 10 laps. Measuring 178 x 69cm on its base, the sculpture is limited to just six hand-painted editions and is priced at £3950. 020 8778 3188; www.speed-still.com



Bang for BMWs

BMW's M10 engine powered everything from the smaller *Neue Klasse* through to E21 and E30 316s, but also racers such as Chevron B8s and Elvas. Specialist Webcon has released a new intake manifold for 1.6- and 1.8-litre versions of the engine, allowing the fitment of Weber 40DCOE or 45DCOE carbs. The manifold alone is priced at £294, while kits that include the manifold and a pair of either type of carburetors are available for £1422. www.webcon.co.uk

Sound sifter

Design Engineering has launched Boom Mat Flex, an update to its popular insulation. It shares the same 2.5mm butyl rubber layer as the original, but with a polymer top coating rather than aluminium so it can be shaped to most surfaces. Ideal for reducing vibration and noise, it can also line inner arches because it is rot-proof. Packs of four 12x12in sheets cost £33.30. www.demon-tweeks.com



The Morris Minor for minors

The Minor Junior is back in production, 19 years after it was first created in 1991. Beautifully made by the Morris Minor Centre Limited, this pedal-powered, 5ft-long toy is available in three colours: Old English White, British Racing Green or Oxford Blue. Impressive details include working lights, a dummy A-Series engine, facsimile instruments and padded seats. An optional Matchbox-style gift box is also available. 01580 200203; www.minorjunior.com



Fine prints

McKlein Publishing's calendar of classic motorsport images is a feast of monochrome nostalgia. For its 20th anniversary, the German team has excelled with a spectacular 24-image set ranging from Jochen Rindt drifting his Lotus 72 at the 1970 French GP to Timo Mäkinen gunning his Mini Cooper 'S' up the Col de Turini. The 67x48cm production costs £35.99. www.mcklein-calendars.com

Tested this month

KÄRCHER K7 COMPACT

Kärcher has reimagined its top-of-the-range K7 model in miniature. Some features are gone, such as the digital lance and slot for detergent cartridges, but the important bits are all still there: the powerful, water-cooled 2.8kW motor can put out 550 litres of water per hour. This £395 unit is the best of both worlds: small and easy to manoeuvre, while packing the same punch as bigger, more cumbersome models. We didn't miss the bells and whistles of the Premier, and enjoyed the simplicity of the Compact. There's 10m of kink-free hose, a pick-up line for cleaning solution and that's it: plug into a power and water source and go. The K7 Compact's ease of use, high performance and practicality make it one of the best pressure washers we've tested. **GM** www.kaercher.com/uk



BILT HAMBER AUTO-WASH

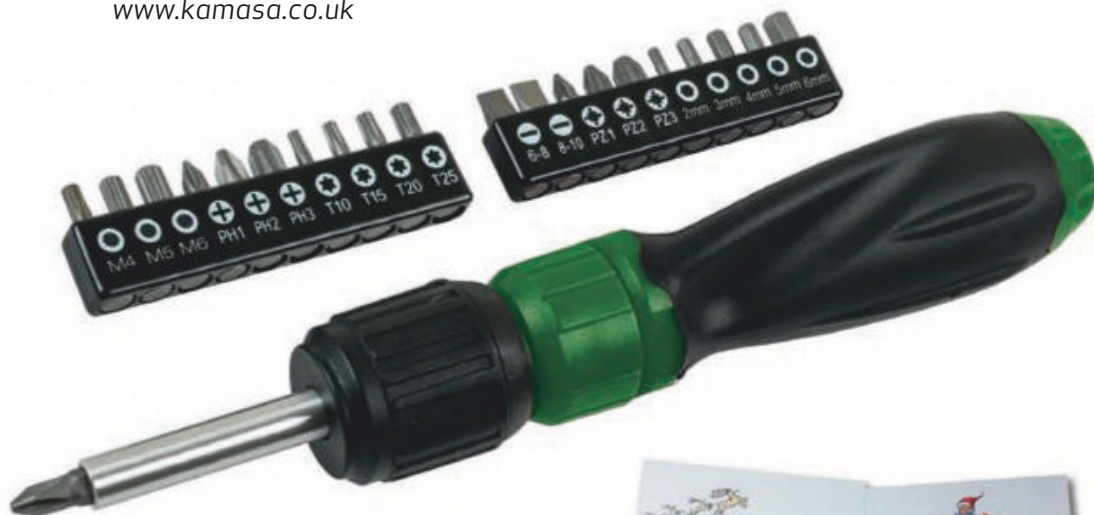
This often tops car shampoo group tests – with good reason. Just 5ml (one teaspoon) is required for 10 litres of water, producing a good amount of foam that's fantastic at shifting dirt and grime. It leaves a slick finish, aiding rinsing and drying, and is anti-corrosive. Performance is difficult to beat, as is value for money at £9.99 for 300ml. **GM** www.bilthamber.com



Speedy driver 'boxes clever

Kamasa's latest screwdriver should make short work of repetitive tasks thanks to its innovative gearbox – simply grip the ratchet, twist the handle and the head turns at four times the speed. An impressive array of bits is included in the 22-piece set, ranging from five conventional Phillips and flathead pieces to Pozidriv, hex, star and spline versions. There are two handy 10-bit holders, while the driver itself has both a left- and right-handed ratchet mechanism. The set is priced at £48.31.

www.kamasa.co.uk



Gas case

If you're looking for a cool display cabinet to brighten up your garage or office, then Custom Gas

Pumps has the answer. The Hertfordshire-based firm is able to produce classic-style petrol pumps to order, tailoring them to individual requirements with custom globes, optional cabinet specification, unique design details and special colours. Prices start from £3000.

01763 284071;

www.customgaspumps.co.uk



Rapid Santa

As well as his sleek sculptures, automotive artist Robin Dark also designs prints and cards. For the festive post, he's created a set of Christmas cards featuring Santa at the wheel of classic cars and racers. The 15 different designs range from Alfa Romeo Tipo B to Bentley R-type Continental. The cards are available as a mix-and-match group of four priced at £11, or 15 different designs for £27.

07767824633;

www.robinbark-motorart.com

ALCOSENSE LITE 2

An entry-level digital breathalyser, this will tell you whether you are above or below the legal drink-drive limit – and by how much. Alcosense claims an accuracy of +/- 0.2%, but it presents the information in increments of 0.1mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood – 0.8 being the limit in England. To test the unit we duly sank two pints of lager and a couple of whiskies, which produced a BAC reading of 1.1 – roughly in line with what you would expect. The following morning it displayed 'LO'.

At just £44.99 this breathalyser is fantastic value and it performs well, but it does lack some of the useful features of Alcosense's more expensive Pro and Elite models; it's only programmed with UK drink-drive limits and the sensor doesn't self-clean, meaning you need to wait approximately 60 secs between tests. **GM**

www.alcosense.co.uk



7/10

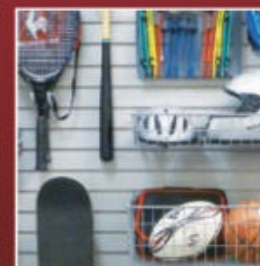


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Mick WALSH

While driving the fabulous Bugatti T55 up Goodwood hill last month (see p130), I couldn't help thinking about its previous owner, the hugely respected Molsheim enthusiast Geoffrey St John, who died on 26 February.

Over the years, St John helped out with some spectacular features for *Classic & Sports Car*. When we had the idea of recreating the 1930s Grand Prix Bugatti match races against aircraft, he was keen to get involved and his chum Vic Norman agreed to fly his aerobatic Stamp SV4. For numerous runs along Colerne's runway, St John patiently tried to line up with Norman as the biplane swooped down for photography. Later, both gamely took us for rides. That day was one of the most memorable of my years with *C&SC*, and his generosity was never forgotten.

St John later returned to Colerne for another feature shoot in 1987, a timed performance match with his friend Rodney Felton's Alfa Monza. Both were highly competitive, but St John's Type 51 outgunned its old rival. When the Monza's engine dropped a cylinder, St John jokingly ribbed his pal about the reliability of the "7C". Both were heroes of mine, and working with these great enthusiasts was always special.

A successful engineering career with Smiths Industries gave St John an appreciation for Bugatti designs, but his motoring life began with an Austin Seven; in later years he tracked down the Chummy and rebuilt it. Other cars before his Bugatti introduction included an AC-engined Frazer Nash and a rare Triumph Dolomite DMH1. Needing something reliable to tow the Nash, he spied the Dolomite for sale in *Autosport* with its exotic straight-eight replaced by an Austin Sheerline motor. St John fitted a 3½-litre SS100 unit for more power and towed the Nash to VSCC meets. The Triumph was also driven around Europe with Rita, the love of his life. The pair met in 1951 at Smiths – Rita, a former Miss Cheltenham, worked in reception.

St John discovered Bugattis through mentor and friend Hugh Conway, and never looked back. During the '60s he made several trips to the factory and saved many spares from scrap. When he heard rumours of a parts hoard in a junkyard next to an abattoir in Nice, he headed south and discovered a gold mine. Over the years he rebuilt and raced many of the fastest Grand Prix Bugattis, both Type 35 and Type 51, against

"I once dumped a Thruxton with him in boxes, thinking it would take months; he called three days later to say it was ready"

From top: chasing Neil Corner's Type 59 in the Trebor event at VSCC Silverstone, St John's final race; Geoffrey and Rita with their beloved Type 55



such colourful exponents as Hamish Moffatt and Bernard Kain, who prepared their own cars.

St John's final race was the all-Bugatti Trebor event at VSCC Silverstone in 1986. Aboard his T51, he chased Neil Corner's ex-Lord Howe T59 with great verve, using 8000rpm in the heat of battle to finish second behind his great friend.

As well as his vast Bugatti experience, St John also collected racing motorcycles, the highlight being the famous 1929 supercharged AJS 1000 record-breaker that he discovered in Tasmania and rebuilt to his exacting standards. Although he didn't race 'bikes himself, St John prepared them for others to compete on, including his treasured ex-works AJS 7Rs.

Velocettes were his choice for the road, a passion he shared with pal Norman. "Geoffrey was a fantastic spannerman," he recalled. "I once dumped a dismantled Thruxton with him in boxes, expecting the project to take months; he called three days later to say it was ready!"

Any beautiful design appealed, including steam. He enjoyed playing with his 1892 Samuel & Co launch *Janet* on Lake Windermere, and later sold it to Corner. After retirement, St John became an enthusiastic supporter of The Bugatti Trust. From its inception in 1990 to his final weeks he regularly attended meetings, patiently shared his knowledge as a museum guide, and loaned parts to other owners to study and copy. Prescott will never be the same without him.

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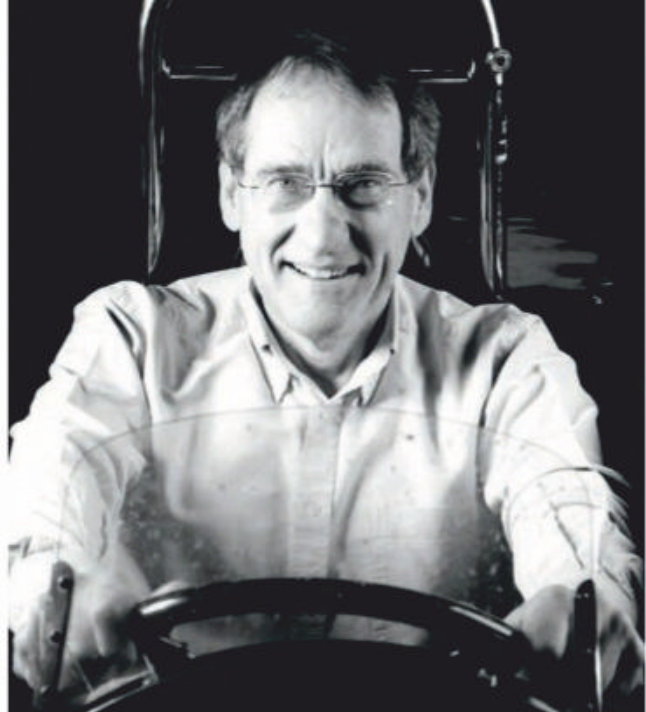
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Simon TAYLOR

I'm a sucker for the Classic Motor Show. Each November it's two long days for me, and I love it. On the Friday the C&SC team has to judge our Club Awards: so each of us, ruthlessly drilled by Wing Commander Clements, trawls the show's eight halls. We examine every single club stand – some 300 of them – before reconvening to argue through our shortlists and decide on the winners in each category. It all has to be done in time for the presentations at the C&SC party that evening at the Hilton next door, and it's always an almost impossible task, because so many clubs put their creative heart and soul into their stands.

Saturday is quite different. I have no schedule, no pencil or pad. I just wander happily, stopping to stare at cars that intrigue me, smiling with pleasure at old favourites. I love to visualise a driver's-eye view, so I poke my nose into cockpits to see what confronts the driver of the Can-Am Porsche 917, the barking GN-JAP V8 and even the Bristol 401, whose lovely wood and white-knobbed layout I remember from childhood journeys in the left-hand seat of my father's 401.

I chat to club members manning their stands and marvel at their knowledge and commitment. At almost every turn I bump into friends or acquaintances, or amiable strangers who confide that they are C&SC readers, which is very nice.

The show's layout tries to place marques that are mutually appropriate next to one another, and in one fascinating part of Hall 4 I found 27 – yes, 27 – different club stands devoted to the products of Austin, Morris, Nuffield and BMC, from the Austin 10 Drivers' Club and the Morris Commercial Club to the Leyland Princess Enthusiasts' Club and, erm, Allegro Club International. Remember the 1950s Morris J-type van with its sliding doors and rubber wings? The J-type Register's stand had five, three in original British Railways, Royal Mail and Post Office Telephones livery.

Inevitably I am lured into the enormous autojumble section. I'm not in the market for a new door-seal rubber for a P4 Rover, nor for a lewd tin sign to stick up in my garage that shows a voluptuous, scantily clad girl saying 'If it's got tyres or testicles, it's trouble'. But the pre-war race posters, the overflowing boxes of old photographs to riffle through, and most of all the book dealers: however hard I try to walk past, my feet ignore their orders. Steve Tappin always has some rare books that I suddenly decide I need, as well as wall-sized blow-ups of evocative

'The pre-war race posters, the boxes of old photos, the book dealers: I try to walk past, but my feet ignore their orders'

Clockwise from below:
autojumble overflows with
obscure objects; Morris
J-type vans warm the
heart; show fills eight halls



black-and-white photographs he took himself as a lad at European races in the 1960s. His opportune shot of a BRM being driven down a busy street in Reims over the French Grand Prix weekend is a strong seller.

Another book dealer I love to swap anecdotes with is former West Country hillclimber Spencer Elton: "Remember old Chris Summers? Big burly bloke, wouldn't wear seatbelts or racing overalls, always raced in short sleeves with a spotted scarf around his neck. Loved big V8s, put them in old single-seaters before Formula 5000 was thought of. He drank strong cider, always had a big barrel on the go in the back of his truck. When the cars were going out for their warm-up lap we'd have to say to him: 'Come on, Chris, put your glass down, you've got to go racing now.' He was quick, mind. Usually won, always set fastest lap." One August day when Summers was racing at Snetterton

a tyre began to go soft. Typically, he decided to press on. Flat-out on the Norwich Straight his big Lola-Chevy went out of control, cartwheeled and flung him out. He died later in hospital.

Most of the stories we swap are more cheerful, and finally I tear myself away with my credit cards unscathed – but not before Spencer nearly manages to sell me a 1958 Austin Metropolitan that he just happens to have in his shed. You have to watch your step at the Classic Motor Show.



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Martin BUCKLEY

I went to Browns Lane before it became a housing estate, and Newport Pagnell when it still made production cars, but until a few weeks ago I had never made it to Pym's Lane in Crewe, once home of Rolls-Royce and Bentley, and now just the latter. It was barely half an hour from where I used to live, yet it never occurred to me to even drive past – probably because it seemed like a world so separate from my own it was mentally out of bounds; or maybe because I didn't want to be disappointed by what I saw.

I was intensely interested in what went on inside, and I had half-formed a dream of one day being a Rolls-Royce stylist. While mates played football, I'd sit in my bedroom doing elevation views on big sheets of draft paper of futuristic Royces with rectangular headlights. Weirdly, the 1980 Spirit looked quite close to what I had conceived, but I ruled out industrial espionage. The plan was to send my designs to Crewe, but I somehow forgot the idea in my teens as attentions turned to the contents of my trousers.

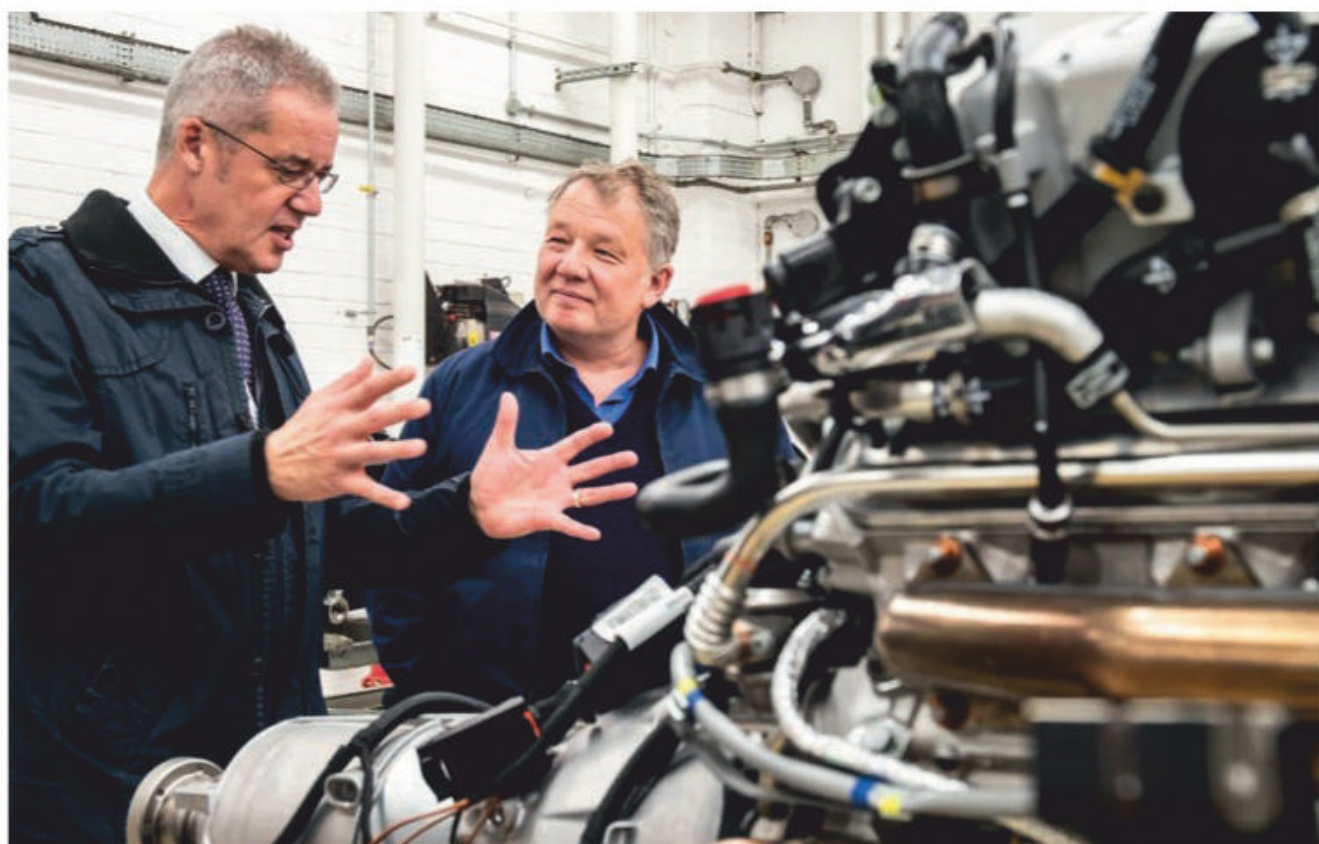
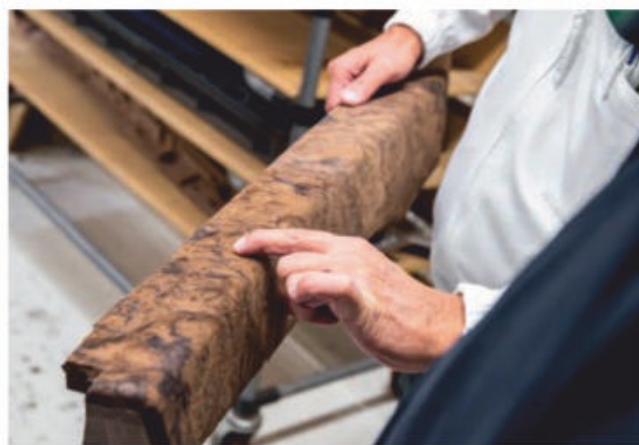
Meanwhile I'd become a brochure collector, having realised that if you rang the numbers in magazine adverts manufacturers would send you a glossy pamphlet. I managed to extract literature out of Maserati, Lotus and even Aston, but didn't expect to get much from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. The man on the phone had a local accent (I expected somebody posh) and was hesitant, the implication being that they could not be expected to dish out brochures to every kid that rang. But two days later I got back from school to discover a fat envelope stuffed with every bit of literature the man on the phone could get his hands on: Shadow II, Corniche, Wraith II and a rather sad single-sheet effort on the Bentley offerings, which shows just how far the make had slipped down the pecking order at the time.

The overall impression I took from my 2019 visit is that the VW takeover, and the split from Rolls-Royce, has not killed the essential spirit of Pym's Lane, which started life as a Merlin engine factory and still has its original frontage. It is a lot tidier, and they don't make so many of their own components, but it feels like a tight-knit place full of people who have worked there a long time and are interested in what they do.

The leather and wood shops are fascinating. Did you know, for instance, that the wood for the veneers comes from the root ball of a walnut tree because it gives the most interesting shapes? Some of the lurid hides were an indication that 'taste' is at the discretion of the customer now –

'The plan was to send my designs to Crewe, but it got forgotten in my teens as attentions turned to the contents of my trousers'

From top: intricately patterned burr walnut door capping uses wood from the tree root; Tim Seipel shows our man around the engine plant



I'm pretty sure you wouldn't have been allowed to order pink or highlighter-pen green for your Shadow II, no matter how much you could pay – but the work is done to the highest standards, the human touch assisted where appropriate by the latest machinery for doing the boring bits.

As well as the tour, the point of my mission was to see the 6750cc V8s being handbuilt. Recognisably the all-alloy unit that appeared 60 years ago, it was brought out of retirement when it was found that customers wouldn't accept the BMW V12 because it didn't 'feel' big enough. These turbocharged 540bhp V8s, fully electronically managed but still with pushrods operating their valves, go into the handmade, full-size Mulsannes built in low volumes quite separate from the GT. It's comforting to see that Crewe still makes a car that owners of S- and T-series Bentleys – or indeed my brochure-collecting 12-year-old self – would recognise.

The tour came out of a meeting with boss Adrian Hallmark at the Bentley Drivers Club Concours in September at Blenheim Palace, for which I was loaned a new GT to take part in the '1001 Bentleys'. Whatever you think of these cars, their shattering power impresses as much as the number of functions bewilders. I've never been in anything so big that moves so quickly, and my wife revelled in it. "Driving this car," said Mia, "actually turns me on." Go on Bentley, I dare you to use that in your next brochure...



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Powering – and empowering – disabled military veterans

Reading Martin Buckley's *Backfire* on three-wheelers in the August issue, when he touched on machines given to disabled drivers, brought back memories of the disabled fortunate enough to be granted four wheels. In 1949, the Minister for Pensions announced that he had placed orders with Morris and Ford for 1500 cars with hand controls for seriously disabled war pensioners. My dad, having completed RAF training on Tiger Moths, Ansons and Harvards, promptly contracted polio and qualified for an early Morris Minor.

Cars were converted by Reselco Ltd in Hammersmith. Levers to the right of the wheel were connected to the accelerator and clutch, while a pushrod to the left of the column operated the foot dipswitch. Brakes were controlled by a lever between the seats (a steel tube with a white 'billiard ball' top): no doubt he quickly learned never to change gear while going round a bend. Early conversions had no servo-assisted clutch, and I marvel at the strength of Dad's three fingers (thumb hooked over the wheel, little finger working the accelerator). The brakes were also non-servo and needed a hefty shove.

The Minor was a life-changer. Dad could be independent thanks to a well-practised sequence of transferring from wheelchair to passenger seat, shuffling to the driver's side, hauling the chair behind the seats and posting the brake lever on to its peg. He was quite slick at it, except once when he drove off forgetting to slot in the brake lever.

Almost as important as being independent was that behind the wheel he didn't look disabled, and could take on the world on his own terms. The first 'lowlight' 918cc sidevalve wasn't quick even by 1950s standards, especially when loaded with a family. When frustrated by its meagre 27bhp he used to urge on the poor beast with, "Come on, Bluebird!"

He never lost that seat-of-your-pants flying skill and would put it into a slide in the snow, to the delight of us kids and the consternation of my mum. We three siblings would squeeze into the back with the wheelchair – the phrase 'health and safety' wouldn't be common parlance for another few decades.

As his business flourished, Dad bought his own cars, the zenith being a new 1963 Humber Super Snipe. He



Snipe under a Lancaster at Biggin Hill in 1966. Below: Minor in 1953 at Stevenson Snr's watch-making business. Inset: ad for converter Reselco

loved its 130bhp and acres of leather and chrome, even if someone had to put the chair in the boot for him.

The last of the war-pension Minors was a 1098cc car, in which Dad set his personal best time from Devon to Surrey. Pre-dating the M3, the route along the A30 and A31 went through Yeovil, Salisbury, Winchester and Guildford. I can only imagine that, without the weight of family or any deference to passenger comfort, he was approaching ten-tenths. I got the impression it was the drive of his life.

Pete Stevenson
Auvergne, France



Write to alastair.clements@haymarket.com. Letter of the month wins a personalised Carvolution sketch; see www.carvolutioncompany.com



Pickel's mighty and much-missed 5 Turbo 2

Crazy commuter

At first I just wanted to write as a pedant, telling you that the Renault 5 Turbo engine bay pictured in your article about the little power-boxes (*C&SC*, November) is wrong – it is not from the road version. The standard 5 Turbo – though 'standard' sounds a bit strange with such a vehicle – has the exhaust on the left-hand side; rally cars had it on the right, with the air cleaner on the left rear of the engine.

That aside, the article brought back great memories because I had

a Turbo 2 from new, as my everyday car. It really was fun and every drive made you feel as if you were tackling a special stage or a round of the Eurocup – especially after I modified it with the red accents, wheels and Dunlop Racing tyres from the Cup car! It's unbelievable today, but I could buy all of that with German TÜV approval, so everything was road-legal... At least for a while, because when the series ended there were no more Dunlops in the correct size, so all the 13in Gotti users went to Michelin rain tyres from the then-current F3 series, which fitted perfectly with one snag – they were not road-legal.

The other mandatory modification was a Devil Cup exhaust pipe, eliminating the small silencer box with about a foot of curved pipe ending in a wonderful megaphone outlet. This made for great sound and even louder whining from the turbo – and, finally, flames as a

turbo had to have! That scared quite a few road users at night, when I passed them and shifted up, holding the revs for a second on the limiter, resulting in a big flame.

Occasionally I also removed the engine covers – then it really felt like sitting in a Group C car with all that noise and heat. I had a great time with that machine – I still regret selling it eight years later.

Ralf Pickel
Schwabach, Germany

Underdog's day

Firstly, let me say that I agree with Charles Skinner (*Letters*, November) regarding how special Bentley R-types are to drive. However, I am also lucky enough to own a Citroën Traction Avant, and as a driver's car the Citroën is a better proposition.

The Traction's cornering and roadholding are far superior to the

Bentley – and to very many cars of the '50s and even the '60s – especially bearing in mind that it was designed 20 years earlier.

I do agree that the Bentley has huge torque, but my Traction has had an engine and four-speed gearbox transplant from an ID19, which makes an enormous difference to its usability. Indeed, on the country lanes in Somerset it can still easily keep up and better some moderns, although my wife claims I drive it as if the Gestapo is chasing me!

Dante Mansi
Montacute, Somerset



The Mansi fleet of sweet-handling saloons

Pedant of the month

Pedant of the month wins a C&SC baseball cap. Send your observations to alastair.clements@haymarket.com



Perkins spied Bentley's lack of rams

Regarding your article on the Corniche in the September issue, I should point out that Martin Buckley claims the height-control rams have been refurbished, but this car does not have front rams – as is clearly shown in the underbonnet photograph.

Solid top mountings and long-stroke shock absorbers have been fitted instead, doing away with the front levelling system. This excellent modification greatly improves comfort and noise. Furthermore, in the spec you say the car has self-levelling front and rear... it doesn't. That's it, back to counting rivets!

Kate Perkins

Comments & clarifications

Further to September's article on the Buick Riviera, the model also makes an appearance in the 1985 Chevy Chase comedy *Fletch*. A rear view of the car can also be seen in the cover artwork for British heavy-metal band Girlschool's album *Hit And Run*. Incidentally, the title track makes a great driving song.

Dave Boothman

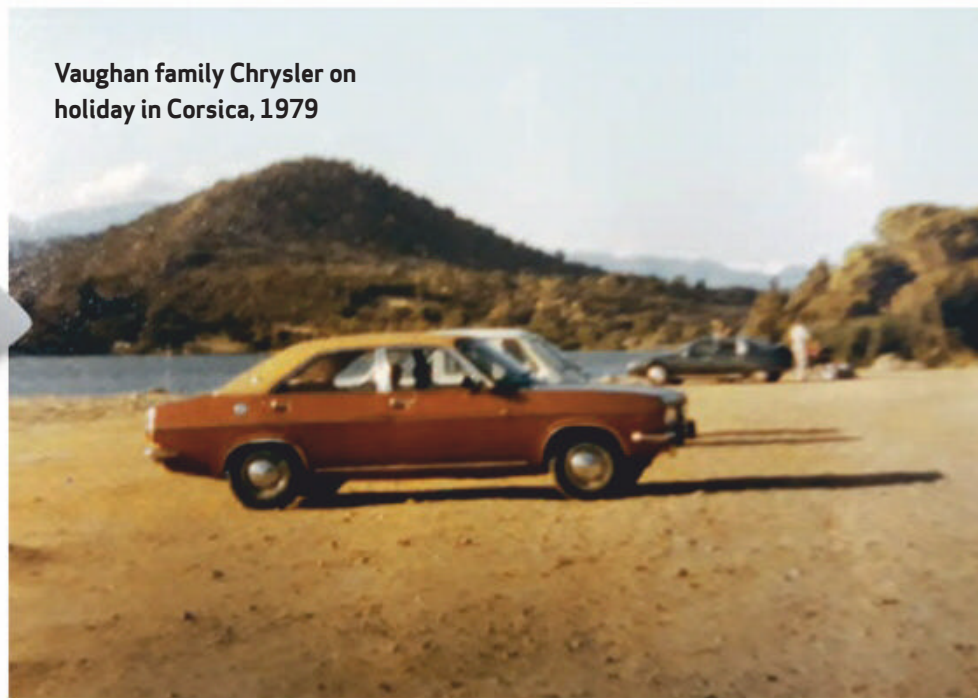
Tim Schofield's *My money's on... Jaguar XJ-S* (The marketplace, July) confuses his Saints. It was Ian Ogilvy who drove the Jag; Roger Moore had a Volvo 1800S.

Tim Cherrett

In November's *Books* the write-up of *Ciao, Stirling* by Valerie Pirie states: 'The cover design is excellent.' I wonder if Jack Phillips did not notice that, below the portrait of Sir Stirling, the publisher mistakenly used a photo of his 1955 teammate Fangio in the Mercedes W196.

Chris Martin

Vaughan family Chrysler on holiday in Corsica, 1979



Fun for the family

Much of the appeal of your excellent magazine is nostalgia, but the October issue struck a very personal chord. I never really expected to see the unloved and long-forgotten Chrysler 180/2 Litre in your pages alongside Bugattis and the like, but this car is symbolic of my childhood.

As a director of Rowecars (South Croydon's Rootes Group dealership), my late father had one of the very first 180s (in metallic blue) in the country, as a replacement for a Humber Sceptre. He soon became a big fan and we had 13 of the 180/2 Litre series, mostly the latter, in pretty much every colour available throughout the '70s – Copper Beech with a beige roof was one of Dad's favourites. The Solaras and Alpines that followed were seen as a retrograde step, despite their trip computers, sunroofs and 'leccie windows, and Dad found it easy to sell the 2 Litre as soon as you got a customer out on a test run. The biggest hindrance was the Chrysler badge – it should have been a Humber here, just as later cars in France had a Simca logo.

Another unlikely candidate for C&SC was surely the Fiat Fiesta campervan in Buckley's *Backfire*, but this was our family's first camper when I was about 12. Built by Motor Caravan Conversions of Stanbridge, Beds (rather than as stated), then later Motorhomes International with showrooms in Berkhamsted, this little Fiat became Britain's best-selling motorcaravan in later Amigo form. For me, they led to a new motoring interest that blossomed into a career in motorhome journalism that's about to reach four decades.

If you'd had a Bertone 105-series Alfa in the October issue, it would have completed my childhood set!

Peter Vaughan

Via email



The view of the M6 from Davage's Morris

Cross-country epic

The big picture in your November issue brought back memories, and I dug out a photo I took through the 'screen of my father's Morris Minor after the opening of the first motorway, the M6 Preston Bypass.

We were on our way to Scotland from Frome in Somerset, and Dad didn't sleep well the night before worrying about driving on this, as he called it, "Fancy new road."

Brian Davage

Via email

Grounded gullwing

It was good to read in September's *Lost & found* about Chris Parnham's ongoing efforts to bring a right-hand-drive De Lorean back to life.

However, you failed to mention the right-hooker built from scratch by the late Peter Milner and his small team of technicians during the '82 receivership – one of four cars made to meet European homologation standards. The right-hand-drive DMC-12 was to be exhibited at the October 1982 Motor Show. Despite booking space, the receiver, Sir Kenneth Cork, pulled out at the last minute.

The opening press day of the show coincided with the date of John DeLorean's arrest in the FBI's cocaine sting (of which he was later found not guilty due to entrapment) and the resultant decision to liquidate the Northern Irish firm.

Barrie Wills

Warwick

Motoring therapy

Can a motor car be a source of therapy, to help with a serious illness? In my case, most certainly yes.

About 18 months ago, I was diagnosed with a treatable but incurable cancer. The default medical treatment for this illness is a regime of chemo drugs, which I am delighted to report are doing their job and forcing the cancer towards some form of remission.

Unfortunately, the chemo also creates many side effects, among the more serious of them being depression, which is challenging to treat. However, I discovered a non-medical approach that works for me: my classic Jaguar XJ!

Conceived and developed during Ford's ownership of Jaguar in the mid-'90s, this particular XJ, the X350, has been described by some marque aficionados as the most stylish ever produced. So how does it help me with my depression? It's very simple: I either gloat over its looks or enjoy the driving experience it provides.

The body is devoid of any awkward vista and simply a joy to behold. The interior doesn't disappoint, either. It wraps me in beautiful wood and rich leather, punctuated by an intelligent blend of technology and thoughtful ergonomics. Each outing in the car results in a unique and soothing experience, whether I wish to toddle along or make use of its blistering performance, with zero to 60mph in around 6 secs and a limited maximum of 155mph.

Ray Ganderton

Jaguar Drivers' Club



Ray Ganderton's beloved Jaguar XJ (X350)

All good, no aggro

At last, redemption for the Austin Allegro (*Buyer's guide*, September)! I had a Vanden Plas with the AP auto transmission, which failed to change gear in winter unless filled with the least-viscous oil available.

The sumptuous trim and more than adequate performance from the 1500cc E-Series mill compensated for the dumpy styling, itself exacerbated by a most infelicitous iteration of the traditional VdP grille. A taller grille with flanking quarter-bumpers would have been

more successful. The refinement, ride and braking were quite excellent for a small saloon of its vintage.

Out of interest, why is Vanden Plas pronounced *Vanden Plar*, as if it were of French origin? It is of Flemish origin, so the 's' is stressed. Incidentally, when my granddaughter was christened Allegra, I offered an alternative more compatible with her 'Austin' grandfather!

Austin Peter Fawcett
Via email

Shear genius

I was interested to note Simon Shaylor's letter in the October 2019 edition. He refers to George Begg, the Manx GP rider, builder of a number of successful racing cars and inventor of the sheep inverter, asking 'why?'. Paul Fearnley only partially answers that question.

The real reason was that the local sheep suffered from foot rot, a disease requiring that they be twice a year manhandled upside down in order to cut away and treat the afflicted areas. George was an agricultural engineer and realised that an efficient device within which a sheep could be clamped and rotated, with their feet up, without a struggle would be a best-seller. He devised and built the prototype inverter in the space of a couple of days, then built up enough orders to justify a small factory producing more than 700 in the first year and 4000 in all.

Unfortunately for George, after a few years some clever person discovered a vaccine for foot rot. By that time, however, his business had diversified and was successful despite the demise of the inverter – which allowed George to dabble in the all-important activity of building racing cars.

Begg led an interesting life, starting out as a motorcycle rider in the early 1950s, through builder and entrant of his own racing cars, and

ending as a restorer of classic and vintage cars and motorcycles. His story would justify an article in *C&SC*, but until then I can recommend his book, *A Classic World & When The Engine Roars*, published in 2000 by Begg & Allen.

Peter Purcell
Chiseldon, Swindon

Long-distance GT

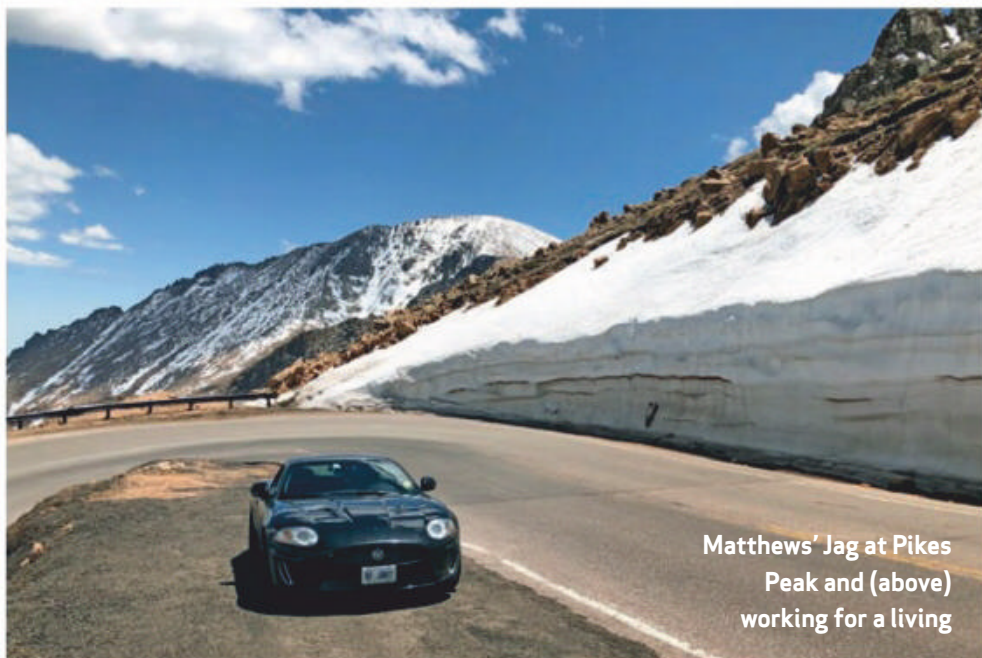
I have taken *Classic & Sports Car* virtually since issue 1 and it's one of the highlights of my month. As an ex-Brit who has lived in Canada since 1981 and runs a company importing beautiful clay roof tiles from Europe, my travels involve moving quantities of samples to job sites. I know my Jaguar XKR is not in quite the same league as the Aston Martin DB4 Convertible (*Letters*, June), but it's in much better condition, and probably has to work just as hard.



This summer, because my wife was in England for five weeks visiting family, I took the opportunity to escape and take a road trip. I had to attend a site meeting near Washington DC and another in Denver, so I thought this would be the perfect excuse to stretch the Jag's legs and enjoy the open road.

On the Friday, I left Emporia in western Kansas before dawn, heading for Pikes Peak, Colorado. We drove up the famous hill and then south to Pueblo for the night: all in all about 750 miles that day, testament to the grand touring capabilities of this wonderful car.

Stuart Matthews
Wilmington, DE, USA



Matthews' Jag at Pikes Peak and (above) working for a living



IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE*

Small but mighty

Tiny roadsters do battle: Fiat 850 Spider, MG Midget & Honda S800



PLUS DS reloaded: designer Gérard Godfroy's gorgeous Grand Palais

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1971 FERRARI 365 GTB/4 'DAYTONA'

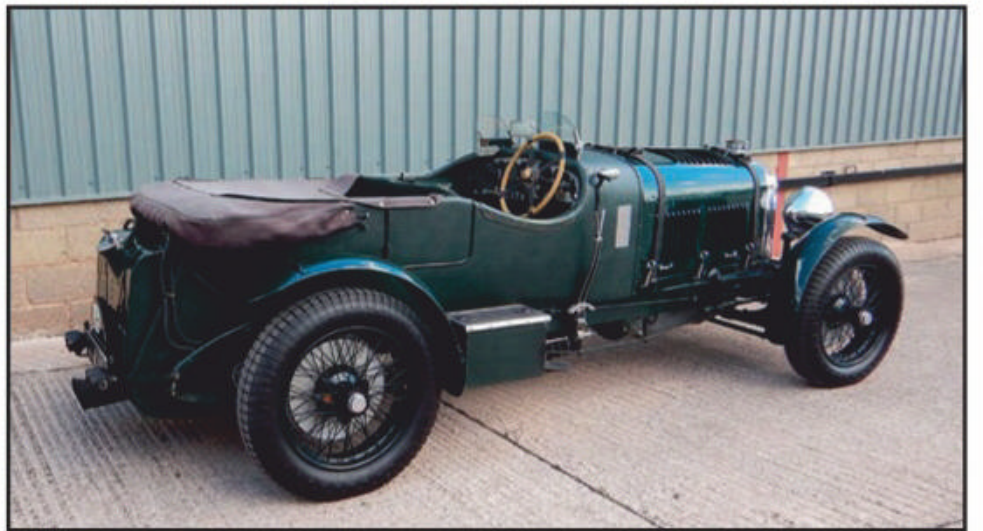
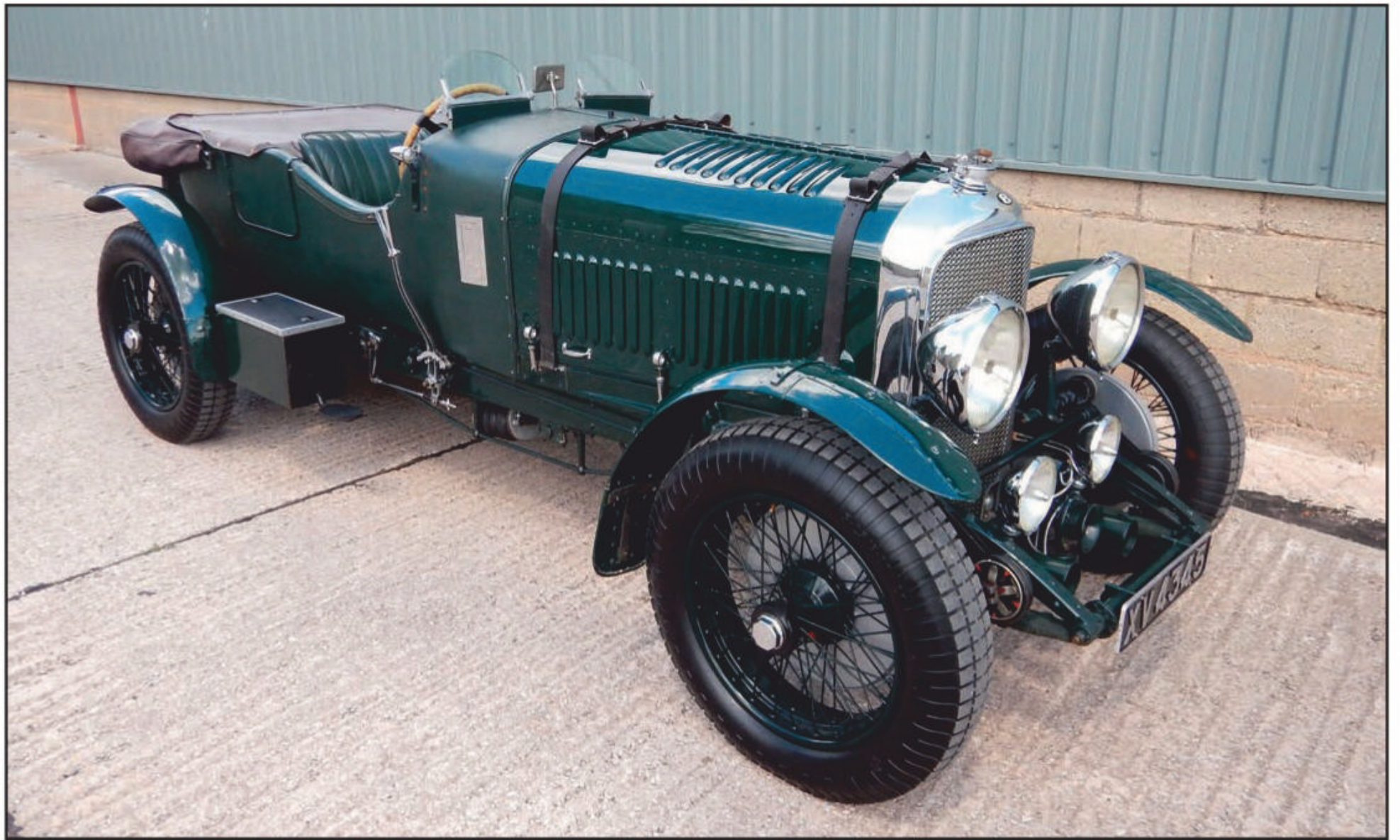
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See website for more details

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The history of the 250 GTE 2+2 is arguably one of the richest in Ferrari's extensive history. This car was designed specifically to appeal to the sector of the car market which was largely dominated by brands such as Aston Martin & Maserati throughout the late 50's and early 60's. The 250 GTE saw its debut at the 1960 Le Mans 24-Hour race where it served, in prototype form, as the race director's car and saw its official unveiling at the Paris Salon later that same year.

Of course there had been four seater Ferraris before the 250 GTE, the Ghia, Touring and Vignale all boasted four seats as early as the 50's; however the fact that they were based on a chassis that wasn't conceived with passenger carrying in mind meant that they were somewhat compromised.

The car makes use of independent front suspension, a live rear axle and a four speed manual/overdrive gearbox to complete the basic chassis specification. These were coupled with a compact Colombo designed Tipo 128E V12 engine producing 240bhp to ensure that the larger car did not suffer from any undue decreases in performance.

The car we are pleased to offer was delivered new in 1963 and has since been totally restored and sits today in the stunning colour scheme of Dark Blue over Tan Leather. The car is a matching numbers example and retains superb historical documents, including the original license of the car, original maintenance book, and the November 2018 issue of "Epocaauto" magazine, containing an article on the car. This 250 GTE would make a brilliant addition to any Ferrari collection and presents itself as a genuine investment opportunity being one of the last truly undervalued 250 series Ferraris! Contact us now to find out more about this wonderful car.



Car of The Month

1955 Aston Martin DB2/4

This stunning DB2 is 1 of 448 built with matching engine and chassis numbers. 500 miles since sympathetic restoration and Mille Miglia eligible.

£219,950



2007 DB7 Vantage Volante

A stunning example. Complete Aston Martin main dealer service history with a total of 19 stamps to date.

£36,490



1967 Aston Martin DB6 MKI RHD

In Autumn Gold / Black. Full restoration recently completed by Aston Workshop.

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1992 Aston Martin Virage LHD

A very rare LHD model one of only 37 built, with only 17,000 Miles from new.

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2005 Vanquish S

Beautifully finished in Toro Red metallic with Iron Ore interior. Only 23,353 Miles.

£99,990



2007 Aston Martin V8 Vantage

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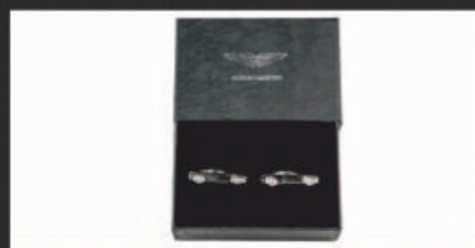
Finding the right Christmas present for the Aston Martin lover in your life can be stressful in the run up to the big day. Luckily our team of helpful elves here at Aston Workshop have put together a wide range of cracking Christmas gifts for the car enthusiast.

Starting with our flagship item, the 'Portfolio of Dreams' which is a must have for any Aston Martin enthusiast, details the photographic history of Aston's with beautiful photography by Tim Wallace and even a forward by the great Sir Sterling Moss! Other great Christmas gift ideas also include clothing, keyrings, silverware and mugs!

To see our full range Aston Workshop Christmas gift range please take a look at our dedicated gift store – www.astonparts.com and you will find our Gifts section on the category menu.



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Great North Classic Car Show T-Shirt £11.25





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**1989
 Aston Martin V8 Vantage X-Pack Volante (RHD)**
 1 of just 79 manual V8 X-Pack Volantes built worldwide.
£339,950



**1982
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£27,950



**2010
 Ferrari 599 GTO (RHD)**
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£459,950



**1954
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POA



**2002
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est. 1966



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- 14,427 Miles
- Nero Daytona with Nero Leather
- 1 of just 499 Cars - RHD

£299,990



2011 Ferrari 458 Challenge

- 9,047 Miles
- Rosso Corsa
- FF Corse Aero Kit

£129,990



1973 Ferrari Dino 246 GT

- 10,708 Miles
- Rosso Dino with Electric Blue Interior
- Ferrari Classiche Certified

£349,990



2017 Ferrari 488 Spider

- 3,525 Miles
- Bianco Italia with Blu Sterling Leather
- Signed by Vettel and Raikkonen

£209,990



2009 Ferrari 599 HGTE

- 16,135 Miles
- Grigio Silverstone with Nero Interior
- Handling GTE Package

£124,990



2018 Ferrari 812 Superfast

- 275 Miles
- Rosso 70 with Nero / Rosso Interior
- Extensive Carbon Fibre Options

£299,990



2009 Alfa Romeo 8C

- 7,445 Miles
- Rosso 8C with Nero Leather
- UK Supplied Car

£229,990



2017 Ferrari GTC4Lusso

- 4,587 Miles
- Nero Daytona with Nero Leather
- Extensive Carbon Fibre Options

£194,990



2016 Maserati GranCabrio

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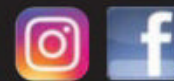


1955 JAGUAR XK140 SE OTS

1 of just 36 right-hand drive Special Equipment examples, formerly owned by Western star George Montgomery. Complete with Heritage Certificate confirming matching numbers, this XK140 is in stunning condition and is fabulous to drive

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1973 Porsche 911 E 2.4 Targa - restored, orig. Sepia Brown, Tartan trim



1971 Porsche 911 T - orig. RHD, restored, Signal Orange, full history



1993 Porsche 968 Clubsport - 1 of only 19 AUS delivered cars, Rivera Blue



1972 Ferrari 365 GTC/4 - bare metal restoration, Rosso Cordoba with Tan



1954 Austin Healey BN1 - AUS del., match. numbers, 100/4 Le Mans



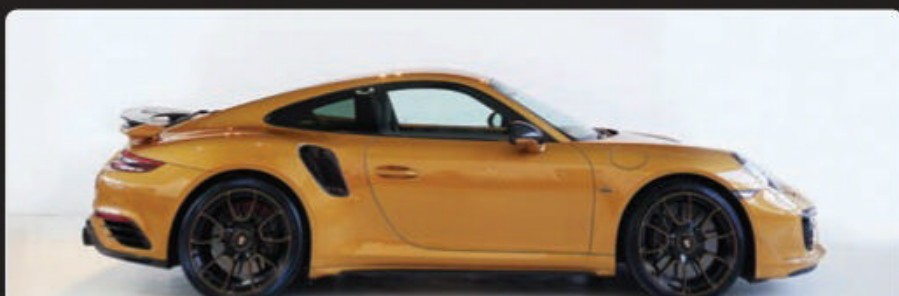
1966 Aston Martin DB6 Mk1 Vantage - match. numbers, fully restored



2004 Koenigsegg - 1 of 14 cars built, only AUS delivered example



2019 McLaren Senna - 88 kms, 789 HP, 1 of 16 Australian cars



2018 Porsche 911 Turbo S Exclusive Series - 1 of only 500 cars, RHD



2019 Porsche 911 GT3 Touring - PTS Meissenblau, 400 kms only



2011 Ferrari 599 GTO - 1 of 599 cars built, Rosso Formula 1



2018 Renault Alpine A110 - 1 of the 60 Premiere Edition cars for Australia

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1964 Jaguar E-type 3.8 – CKL002 POA

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1969 Triumph TR6 £20,000

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1950 Jaguar XK120 'Alloy' Competition Roadster POA

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Alfa Romeo 2600 Spider

1962 grigio argento/nero

Ferrari 212 Export Vignale Berlinetta

1951 blu chiaro/beige

Ferrari 250 GT Pininfarina Coupé

1960 rosso/nero

Ferrari 250 GT Cabriolet Serie II

1960 argento/rosso

Ferrari 250 GT Cabriolet Serie II

1960 grigio conchiglia/beige

Ferrari 330 GT America

1964 blu scuro/blu scuro

Ferrari 275 GTB/2 Longnose

1965 celeste/rosso scuro

Ferrari 275 GTS

1966 argento/nero

Ferrari 275 GTB/2

1966 nero/beige

Ferrari 275 GTB/4

1967 grigio argento/nero

Ferrari 330 GTC

1967 azzurro/nero

Ferrari 330 GTC

1967 azzurro/beige

Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona Plexi

1970 giallo/nero

Ferrari 365 GTS/4 Daytona Spyder

1971 rosso/beige

Ferrari 246 GT Dino

1972 azzurro/nero

Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona

1972 celeste/nero

Ferrari 365 GTC/4

1972 marrone colorado/beige

Ferrari 430 GT3

2007 rosso/blu

Ferrari LaFerrari

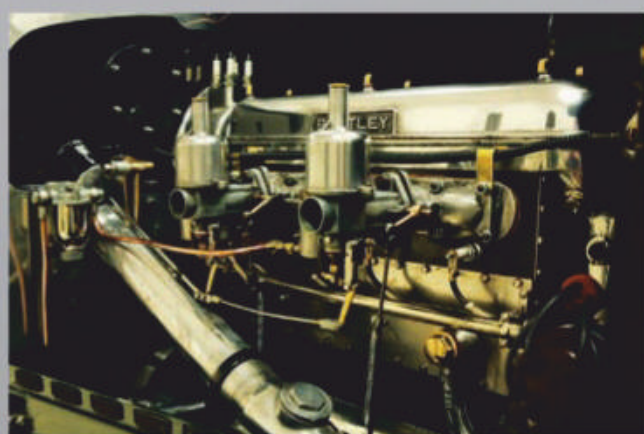
2016 bianco italia/mandarina

Lamborghini Miura P 400

1968 blu met./beige

Lamborghini 400 GT 2+2

1966 argento/nero



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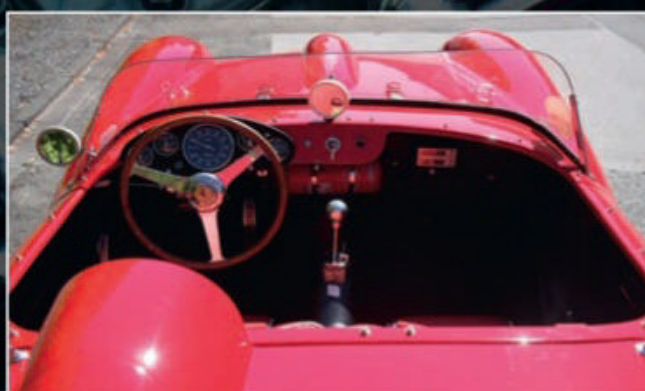
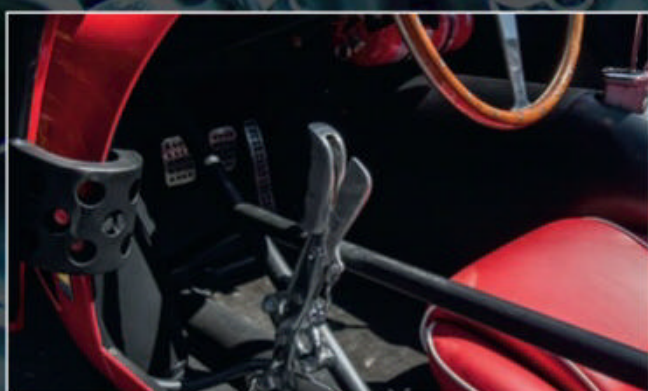
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Second row: 1937 Jaguar SS100, 1922 Bentley 3 Litre, 1928 Bentley 4.5 Litre, 1937 Delehay 135

Third row: 1930 Bentley Speed Six, 1937 Horch 853, 1930 Rolls Royce Phantom II by Hooper, 1938 Lagonda V12 Rapide

Fourth Row: 1963 Chevrolet Corvette Z06 "Tanker", 1965 Citroen DS Concorde, 1988 Lamborghini LM002, 1956 Mercedes-Benz 300 SC

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FERRARI 308 GTB QV, 1983, silver / black



FERRARI 308 GTS, 1984, black / black



FERRARI 308 GTB/M, white / red, Trackday car



FERRARI 365 GT 2+2, 1969, blue / black



FERRARI 365 GT 2+2, 1969, blue / tabacco



FERRARI 365 GT 2+2, 1969, silver / black



FERRARI TESTAROSSA 512 TR, 1991, red / black



FERRARI 643, 1991, Grand Prix Car



DINO 246 GT, 1972, silver / black



PORSCHE 964 TARGA, 1990, blue / tabacco



PORSCHE 996 TURBO, 2001, sealgrey metallic / grey



ALPINA B12 5.0 COUPÉ, 1992, dark green metallic / brown



FERRARI 365 GT/4 BB, 1974, silver / black

COMING SOON:

FERRARI 330 GTC, 1967, fully restored
FERRARI 308 GTS, 1980, silver / black, one owner
FERRARI 308 GT4, 1977, black / sky, 26.000 km



FERRARI 512 BB, 1981, black / red

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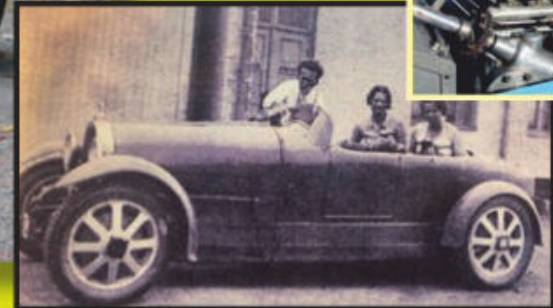
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Jaguar XK120SE DHC LHD – 1953

Matching numbers and colours, bare metal respray and retrim in 2011. Price: 135.000 Euro



Aston Martin DB2/4 MkI 3 Litre Saloon LHD – 1955

Nut & bolt restored in our world renowned workshop, regardless of cost. Price: ASK



Aston Martin DB4 Series 3 LHD – 1961

Belgian-delivered, one family ownership, matching numbers & colours, ... Simply impressive! Price: ASK

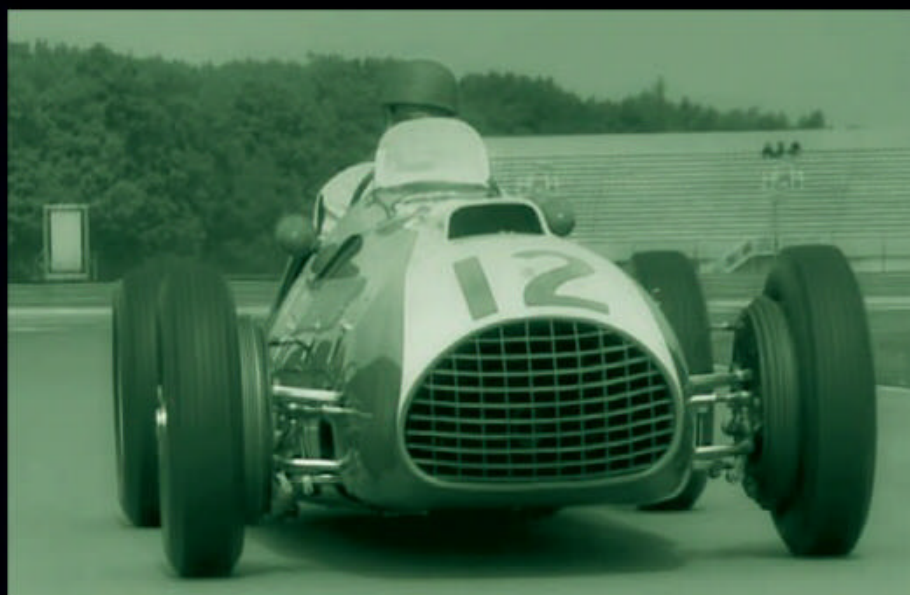


Lancia Flaminia Convertibile by Touring – 1961

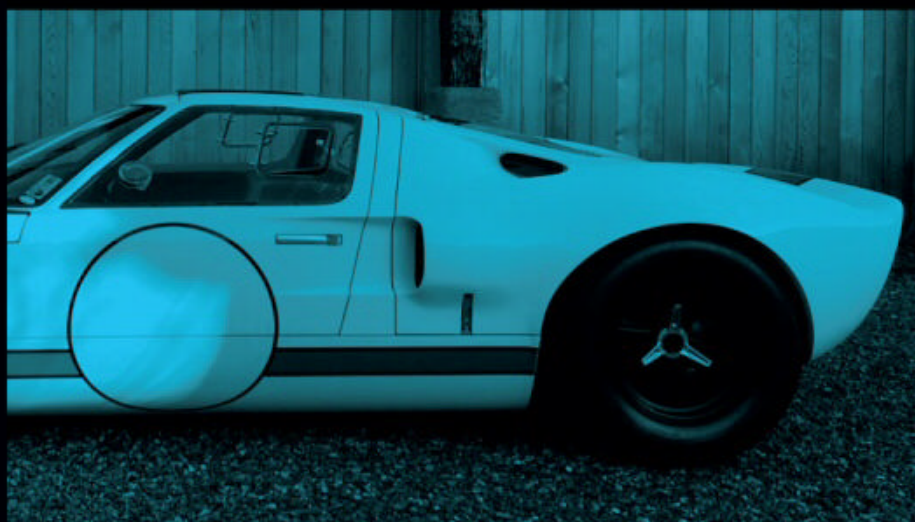
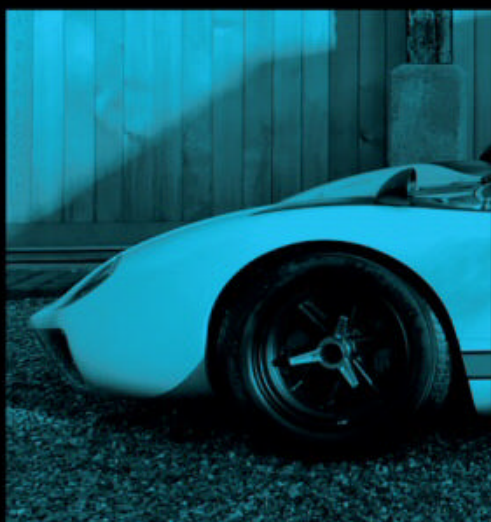
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1969 JAGUAR E TYPE SII 2+2 COUPE AUTO LHD
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1972 JENSEN INTERCEPTOR III LHD
Blue, black leather, 61k miles recent U.S. import, NOVA cleared, all duties paid, requires restoration. **£14,995**



1989 MERCEDES 560SL AUTO CONVERTIBLE LHD
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Grey, black leather. 98k miles, U.S. import, UK reg'd, MOT Nov 2020, useable restoration project. **£10,500**



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Alpine white, black Recaro trim, 104k miles, requires light recommissioning. **£8,995**



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Grey, diesel automatic, 350 hours, ideal for golf club or country estate. **£8,995 plus VAT**



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1968 CHRYSLER NEWPORT CONVERTIBLE
Red, red leather, 25k miles, recent U.S import, NOVA cleared, all duties paid, very solid, requires restoration. **£7,995**



1982 (Y) TVR TASMIN 2.0 MANUAL COUPE
Red, black leather, 58k miles, requires recommissioning. **£5,995**



1979 MERCEDES 450SL AUTO CONVERTIBLE LHD
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XK

When one of Italy's finest coachbuilders redefined the Jaguar with a style born out of aviation, it landed upon the XK120 Supersonic by Ghia

WORDS **MICK WALSH** PHOTOGRAPHY **JAMES MANN**



Although many Italians are enthusiastic Anglophiles, it's hard to imagine anyone going to great expense to combine an English body with a Latin chassis. But the reverse union makes sense, as the spectacular 1954 Jaguar XK120 Supersonic proves. On one of the hottest days of the year it's difficult to look chic in this burgundy GT, but cruising around Paris 60 years ago it must have been the coolest of cats. With shapely, sleek Italian skin wrapped tightly around the tuned XK120 chassis, and few vents to free the hot air from the 3.4-litre 'six', you're guaranteed to cook inside the stylish but cramped cabin.

Even for my short build it's a tight squeeze, with legs bent around the broad, wood-rimmed three-spoke steering wheel and the shell-like XK pointed boss targeting my chest. If the driver is baking, the dashboard is ice-cool, its two-tone paint matching the plush trim. The neat binnacle groups five gauges, including a 6000rpm rev counter and 240kph speedo.

There's no mistaking the origins once on the move. The Burman steering is low-geared and light, the Moss gearbox action slow and methodical, and the drum brakes uninspiring. With around 200bhp, the rorty XK straight-six delivers torque and pace with a howl, but through the bends its hefty forward weight results in understeer when

hurried. Narrow wheels and a pronounced overhang create an ungainly lean through turns, but its launch out of corners is impressive. As with all XKs the ride is good, and this Ghia rebody has a quality creak- and groan-free feel.

On the flat Dutch landscape, the Supersonic looks dazzling in the high sun and everyone stops to admire it. In a country where wind energy has a long tradition, it seems appropriate that the car arrives into a towering turbine farm: this sleek, low GT shape evolved from wind-tunnel tests carried out by Giovanni Savonuzzi, a freelance design engineer who combined aviation theory with his automotive dreams.

The Supersonic originated from a one-off design by Virgilio Conrero, commissioned by wealthy Swiss enthusiast Robert Fehlmann to compete in the 1953 Mille Miglia. The basis was an Alfa Romeo 1900 engine but with a special tubular chassis featuring Fiat 1400 front axle and Lancia Aurelia transaxle and rear suspension.

For the bodywork Conrero enlisted his close friend Savonuzzi, who had just left Cisitalia. Several scale models were made and, as with many of his previous GT and speed record projects, Savonuzzi tested the shape in the wind tunnel at the Politecnico di Torino.

The body was made by Ghia in its Turin workshops and featured many of the signature details carried through the Supersonic line, such as the elongated nose and tail enhanced by the low roofline and long side moulding. The tail-light design clearly shows the jet-age influence that was fashionable at the time on both sides of the Atlantic, while novel features included flush-fitting pushbutton doorhandles and a Perspex top that followed the roof profile.

Painted white, the prototype Conrero Supersonic made its debut at the 1953 Turin Salon. With hubcaps removed and Geneva registration plates fitted, the coupé was entered into the 2-litre Sport class of the Mille Miglia and roared up on to the Brescia start ramp in darkness for its 4:53am start on 26 April, giving it the race number 453.

On the event, few outside Brescia saw the sensational Supersonic because it never reached Rome – Fehlmann and co-driver G Vuille had a major accident that resulted in a devastating fire. While the burnt-out aluminium body was beyond salvation, the chassis survived. Fehlmann



Main: Jaguar XK120 interior was retrimmed in beige leather by Ghia, rather than replaced. **Inset:** similar De Soto Adventurer II was created for Chrysler by Ghia



Clockwise from main:
long nose and rounded
rump are characteristic
of the Supersonic style;
jet-thruster tail-lights;
slender quad exhausts;
Jaguar badge sits proud
on the nose; sublime
XK straight-six engine

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commissioned Conrero to rebuild the car, but with a new Giovanni Michelotti design and a removable Perspex hardtop. With a hot twin-plug head fitted, it was unsuccessful on the 1954 Mille Miglia. Later, with the top removed, the Conrero Alfa became a successful hillclimb car and is a now regular on the modern Mille Miglia.

Because of the excitement the Conrero Supersonic had created, Ghia decided the body style should continue with a series of bespoke coupés based on the Fiat 8V. In October at the Paris Salon, the second Supersonic was voted the most beautiful car. Savonuzzi started his career in the aeronautical division of Fiat, and as Ghia's new technical director he no doubt played a key role instigating the Otto Vu for the new series.

The first car, chassis 106.000035, was ordered by Paul Farago and was exported to America, where it created a similar stir and featured extensively in the automotive press. Chrysler had already established links with Ghia through Virgil Exner, its design chief who had been impressed by pictures of the Supersonic. Once Exner had heard of the burgundy 8V's arrival Stateside, he arranged for the Italian exotic to be loaned to Chrysler, where it inspired a series of Ghia-built show cars including the Savonuzzi-styled De Soto Adventurer II.

Later owned by Paul Lazaros, an engineer and machinist, the first 8V Supersonic was stored for more than 55 years before the amazingly original beauty – with just 17,000 miles on the clock and still on its original Pirelli Cinturato tyres – appeared on the concours scene in 2010.

Two Fiat Supersonics were also ordered by

Lou Fageol, director of the Twin Coach Company and a champion hydroplane racer. Fageol entered his two Supersonics into the 1955 Pebble Beach Concours, one of which was later bizarrely customised with prominent fins (rumoured to be made of plywood), triple-deck bumpers, a Continental kit and a two-tone paint scheme. The sexagenarian later used this car as his daily transport, but with the Fiat 8V engine replaced by a fuel-injected Corvette motor.

Ghia had hopes of building 50 Supersonics on the 8V chassis, but the costly 2-litre had limited

‘Only the XK doorhandles, vertical bars within the grille and unique badging give clues to this Italian’s Coventry connection’

appeal and final production numbers vary between seven and 15, depending who you ask.

Outside Italy the Fiat Otto Vu was little known, which may have led to other marques being selected as the basis for the sensational Supersonic styling. In France, wealthy Lyon-based millinery and lingerie manufacturer Joseph Malpelli had been smitten by an 8V Supersonic at the Grand Palais. A Jaguar enthusiast, Malpelli already owned an XK120 coupé bought new from the Paris Jaguar dealer, Charles Delecroix at Royal Elysées. Because the

factory wouldn't supply XKs in chassis form for coachbuilding, custom projects had to originate from complete car orders, so Malpelli decided to have his XK transformed into a Supersonic and even put a deposit on a second Ghia conversion order through Delecroix. As well as the body rework, the engine was tuned in Italy, with Conrero enlisted to fit triple Webers in place of the standard SU carburettors.

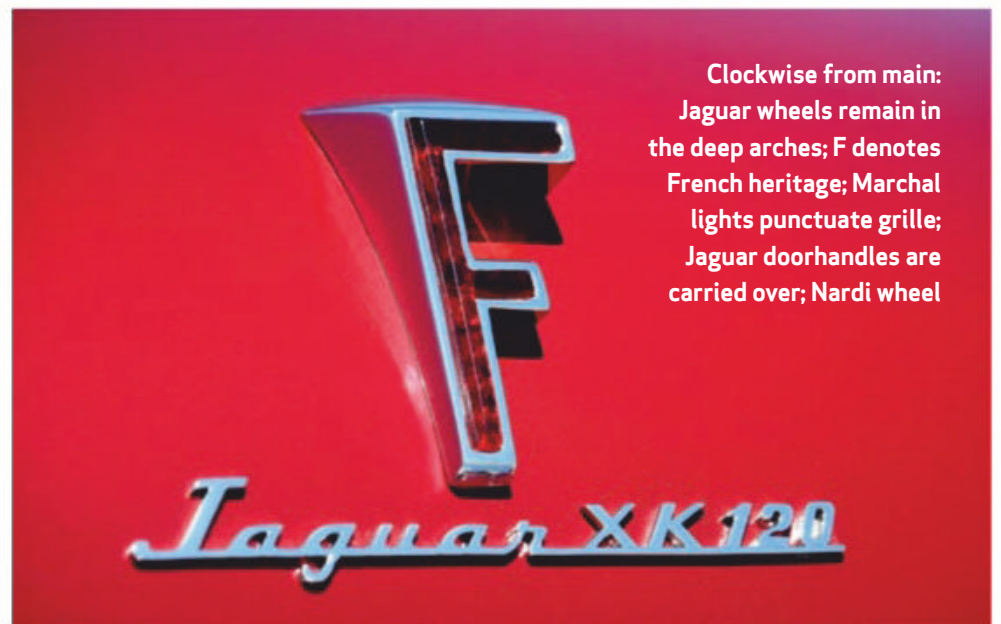
Chassis 679768 was completed in 1954 and shown in both Paris and London, as well as at several major concours d'élégance competitions including Montreux and Cannes. The second Jaguar XK120 Supersonic, chassis 675090, was eventually completed and differed in styling details with a Ferrari-type eggcrate-style grille, a prominent bonnet bulge and a two-tone paint scheme of silver roof over metallic blue main body with no side vents.

A third XK Supersonic was built and sold to Switzerland but has since vanished. For many years, historians believed four Jaguar-based Supersonics were built, but French automotive historian Christian Descombes discovered that Malpelli had switched the registration of his first car from 69 BJ 75 to 66 BJ 75 simply by turning over the second number to avoid the smutty jokes from concours spectators.

Malpelli's fashion business took a dive in the mid-'50s and he left France without fully paying his bill with the Paris dealer. The first Supersonic remained with Royal Elysées through the '60s, but when Jaguar set up a factory dealership and started importing its own stock to France, Delecroix's firm was hit hard and closed its doors



The Supersonic produces lots of roll through the corners, and the steering loads up for an involving driving experience – and plenty of understeer



Clockwise from main:
Jaguar wheels remain in
the deep arches; F denotes
French heritage; Marchal
lights punctuate grille;
Jaguar doorhandles are
carried over; Nardi wheel



in '69. The stock, including this low-mileage Supersonic, was acquired by Philippe Renault, a well-known Jaguar enthusiast. He sold the car to Roland Urban, who displayed it in his special-bodied Jaguar collection at Monthéry.

In 1994, with just 9400km on the clock, the Supersonic was bought by Jean-Claude Ferchaud and renovated by French Jaguar specialist Atelier Sontrop. The car was resprayed, but its original Ghia upholstery from 1953 was retained, and in the 1995 Concours Automobiles Classiques et Louis Vuitton at the Parc de Bagatelle in Paris it was again a winner as six Supersonics were united in a special class.

In 2015 the Supersonic XK left France for the first time in six decades to be auctioned by RM Sotheby's during Monterey Car Week. It sold for \$2.1million to a Thai collector.

Although the car was in sound original condition, its new owner had aspirations of Pebble Beach glory and experienced Fiat Supersonic rebuilder Strada e Corsa in The Netherlands was enlisted. Despite the car being cosmetically tidy, a total stripdown was required and the bare metal body was sent back to Italy to Carrozzeria Quality Cars near to Padua.

When the owner changed his plans to reveal the Supersonic three months earlier, in May 2019 at Villa d'Este, Lennart and Jurriaan Schouwenburg's team pulled out all the stops to complete the car.

Once the body was finished, the car was transferred to Strada e Corsa for assembly and detailing. The interior was intact, but it was decided to copy it for a full retrim and set the original aside. "This was the most complete Supersonic we've rebuilt and so was relatively straightforward," recalls Lennart Schouwenburg. "But the time was very tight."

While the cabin features many differences from the earlier Fiat 8V Supersonics, the bodywork is essentially the same, hammered out by Ghia's talented artisans using the same body buck. "Ghia workmanship is among the best of the classic coachbuilders," adds Schouwenburg. Only the XK doorhandles, triple vertical bars within the grille and unique badging give clues to this Italian's Coventry connection.

At Villa d'Este the Supersonic was pipped to the class win by another Ghia creation, the wild Abarth 205 Sport 1100 that coincidentally took its bow at the same 1953 Turin show as the original Conrero prototype. What Sir William Lyons made of the coachbuilt XK wonder isn't recorded, but of all the attempts to restyle the brilliant production original, none matched the spectacular Supersonic. While others quickly looked dated and contrived, Savonuzzi's 1953 design was fitted 10 years later on to a Cobra 427 – chassis CSX3055 – after a Supersonic 8V was discovered in a scrapyard. No doubt its talented designer would have been amused by this 7-litre, 160mph rocket.

Thanks to Strada e Corsa (stradaecorsa.com)



Above: Conrero 1900 Coupé prototype, the forebear of every Supersonic produced, fulfilling its *raison d'être* by contesting the Mille Miglia in '53. Rushed to be ready, it crashed out early

FATHER OF THE SUPERSONIC



Born in Ferrara in the Emilia-Romagna region in 1911, the talented Giovanni Savonuzzi designed some of the most advanced GTs to contest the Mille Miglia, an event he would no doubt have witnessed during his 20s because the route regularly ran through his home town. After studying engineering in Turin, he had a diverse career split between aviation and automotive

employment. In 1940 he joined Fiat's aircraft engine division but, almost as a hobby, he made car styling models in his spare time. Although an engineer first, Savonuzzi had a strong aesthetic eye and many of his designs, as with Jaguar's Malcolm Sayer, evolved from wind-tunnel tests.

Savonuzzi switched from aviation to cars in 1945 when he replaced Dante Giacosa as technical manager at Cisitalia. As well as completing the unfinished D46 *monoposto*, Savonuzzi designed and developed Cisitalia's first sports car, the 202. From the first 1947 spider raced by the great Tazio Nuvolari to a remarkable second on the Mille Miglia, through to the finned coupé streamliners built by Alfredo Vignale, Savonuzzi's designs clearly showed the influence of aerodynamics.

The versatile engineer also produced styling sketches for Pinin Farina that look very close to the final 202 road car, regarded as one of the most beautiful cars in the world and featured in the New York Museum of Modern Art as 'sculpture in motion'. The ever-dapper Savonuzzi, who always wore a tie, was also a highly regarded driver and regularly tested his designs, which earned the respect of fellow engineers and mechanics.

When Cisitalia founder Piero Dusio announced ambitious plans to build a Grand Prix challenger, Savonuzzi lost faith and set up his own company, SVA, in Turin. Working as a freelance designer he developed the Supersonic style together with his own stillborn racing car project, but in 1954 he joined Ghia full-time as technical director. Among his first projects was an Alfa Romeo 1900 Super Sprint that featured many Savonuzzi details, such as floating headlights with chrome turbine-like nozzles, and a roof style that carried through to the Volkswagen Karmann Ghia. With the Turin-based *carrozzeria* he worked with Luigi 'Gigi' Segre, who had started a collaboration with American manufacturers that led to such innovative designs as the Ford Futura, Ghia Gilda and Ghia Ferrari 210 Supersonic. Savonuzzi was also involved with Count 'Johnny' Lurani's Nibbio II record car, which was developed in the Politecnico di Torino's wind tunnel.

Savonuzzi relocated to America in '57 to join Chrysler as chief engineer for turbine research. He was closely involved with car and truck applications that climaxed in the brilliant but ultimately fruitless 1963 Turbine Car.

In 1969 Savonuzzi returned to Italy and rejoined Fiat as director of the Orbassano Research Centre and as a consultant for Fiat Aviation. He became a professor at the Politecnico di Torino in retirement and died in '87.

Yet few know of his connection with the Supersonic. A tribute at a concours or in the Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile is long overdue. Just imagine the line-up, from Cisitalia Aerodinamica to Ghia Gilda concepts.

HEART OF THE MATTING

Glassfibre made its first forays into the mainstream motoring world seven decades ago; here's how it gained a foothold

WORDS GILES CHAPMAN PHOTOGRAPHY GILES CHAPMAN ARCHIVE/RM SOTHEY'S

Chevrolet has what it calls a 'lightweighting' and 'smart mixed-materials' strategy for its all-new, mid-engined Corvette out later this year, the eighth generation of America's sports car legend.

The jargon is certainly up-to-the-minute, as are the carbonfibre, aluminium and composite components to be found tucked inside the 49in-tall two-seater C8.

But a broadly plastic sports car it still is, keeping alive a tradition going back to a sepia-drenched 1953 and the very first Corvette, complete with its bodywork in 'Glass-Fiber-Reinforced Plastic' (General Motors is thought to have invented the GRP tag specially).

What made the world's most successful creator of large, steel consumer products take such a radical detour in car manufacture? The thinking certainly didn't sprout within the company; GM's ideas for combatting the increasingly popular imported MGs and Jaguars were the imposing land yachts typified by its styling chief Harley Earl's Le Sabre and Buick XP-300 show cars. A pre-war Lincoln Continental was viewed, by him, as a 'roadster'. Until, that is, he got wind of Bill Tritt.

Tritt's Glasspar Boats was among the first US businesses to perfect glassfibre structures for the hulls of its nautical craft.

The basics of the technology stretch way back to 1893, according to London's Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers, when Edward Drummond Libbey produced dress fabric using glass fibres in place of silk thread. By the 1930s, the material had found its métier as an insulator – you'll probably know its heat-conserving, if itchy, application in your loft. Once combined with a polymer resin, it resulted in a lightweight reinforced plastic material whose uses (at least 40,000 of them)

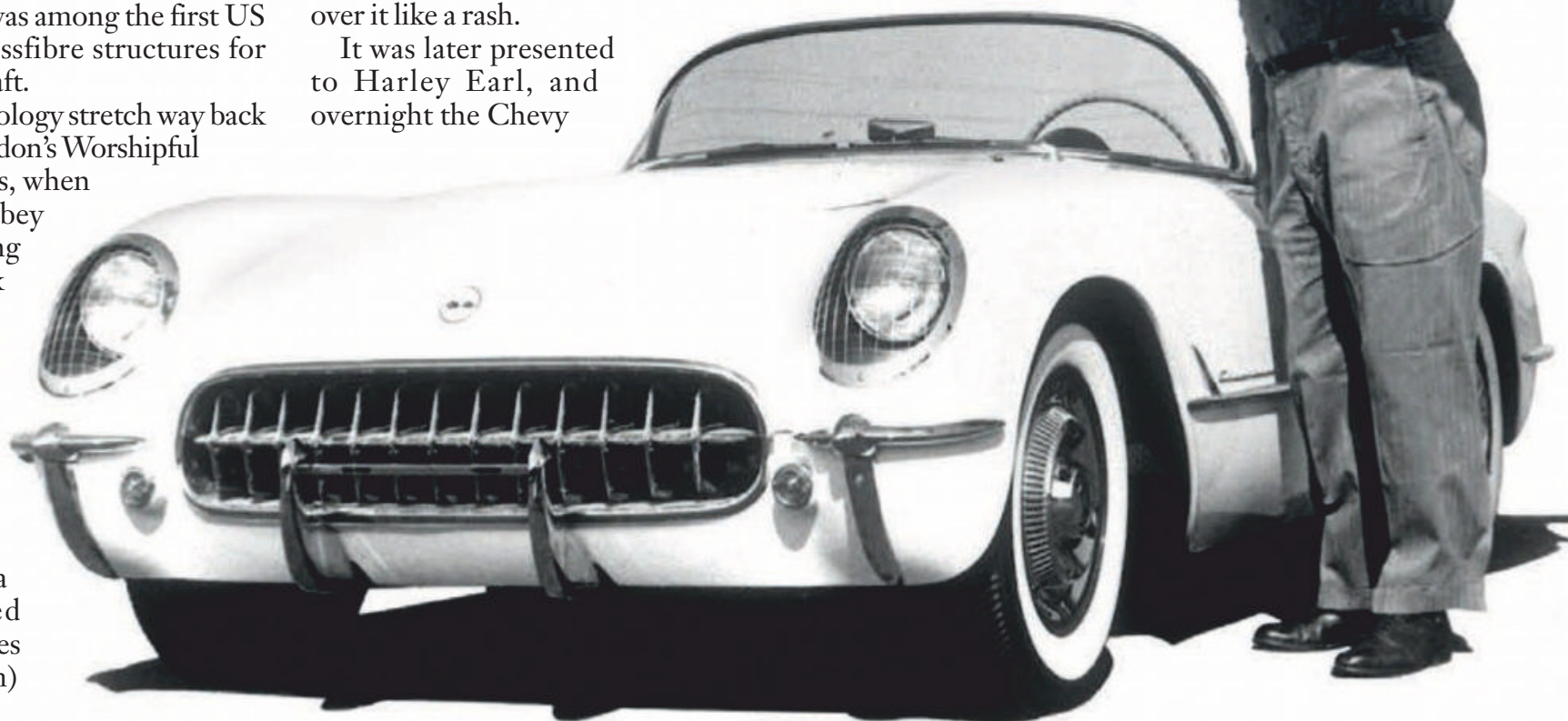
opened up a tantalising new era in product manufacturing. The lightness of glassfibre and the ease with which it could be bent to complex moulded shapes were revelatory.

Tritt was asked in 1949 by a US Air Force officer called Kenneth Brooks if he felt able to fashion a sports car body on the frame of an old Jeep he'd bought, because his wife refused to travel in it as it stood. Rising to the challenge, Tritt created a passable facsimile of an XK120 that he called the Glasspar G2 and his sponsor renamed the Brooks Boxer. It caused such a stir that the car was acquired by the Naugatuck Chemical Division of US Rubber, and displayed at the 1952 National Plastics Exposition in Philadelphia, helping to promote the company's drive to interest the automotive industry in glassfibre-based components. According to historian Karl Ludvigsen, Chevrolet's engineers were all over it like a rash.

It was later presented to Harley Earl, and overnight the Chevy



Period press shot provides a graphic demonstration of the Corvette's lightweight glassfibre floorpan



design team abandoned its blousy freeway cruisers and adopted GRP for the bodywork; costs saved from tooling a steel body were redeployed to give the Corvette its own dedicated sports car chassis layout, built on optimum weight distribution and a low centre of gravity. Once a V8 engine had been added to the recipe, the Corvette never looked back.

There had been another 'plastic' car revolution 12 years earlier, when Henry Ford unveiled his controversial 'Soybean Car' prototype, whose panels were supposedly of processed plant matter to save weight and put an end to steel-buying. He also had a plastic bootlid fitted to his own 1941 Ford Sedan that he was fond of smiting with an axe to show how strong it was; the axe would bounce out of his hands as he stood there grinning triumphantly. Some say the Soybean car was nothing of the sort, having a body made from a Bakelite-style plastic, but Ford's lofty ideas of mixing his twin passions of agriculture and automotive to, in effect, 'grow' his own cars, proved a sideshow.

Instead, while Chevrolet romped away with its 'Vette, other firms began cautiously using GRP as a way to trim costs.

One of the very first motoring applications in Europe was by Birmingham-based bicycle and motorised delivery tricycle maker Pashley. As early as 1950, it offered its Pelican powered passenger rickshaw with a glassfibre shroud

around the rear passenger seat.

Four years later, cash-strapped Singer offered its Hunter with a GRP bonnet, and showed a prototype Roadster with a completely plastic body. Just like the similarly bodied Jowett Jupiter R4, the bold move couldn't save the enterprise. Citroën, however, used the new wonder substance for the long, tapering roof of its sensational DS19 saloon, and glassfibre replacement bodies to hep up tired old chassis triggered a marvellously diverse DiY kit-car boom on both sides of the Atlantic.

Jensen *did* make a quality go of GRP from 1953 on its 541, the excellent sound-deadening qualities of the moulded panels perhaps helping to muffle the none-too-melodic voice of its 4-litre Austin lorry engine. The success of this car as a luxury machine that appeared to sell for a profit made Britain, and to a lesser extent France, the new plastic ideas lab. Microcar company Berkeley pioneered the first glassfibre monocoque in 1956, immediately followed by the Lotus Elite and Rochdale Olympic. By the early 1960s, Britain was awash with placcy hopefuls – everything from the Daimler SP250 to the Citroën Bijou. It was a case of 'have shed, will mould', while the UK's exploding racing car industry took GRP to its high-tensile limits.



Left: Henry Ford rather dramatically demonstrates the resilience of his 1941 Ford's plastic bootlid. Below: the Glasspar G2 – the first true glassfibre sports car



Winchester even tried marketing a taxi with a glassfibre body, boasting of how easily a ding could be patched up to get the cab back on the road and earning money again.

In 1975, Reliant claimed to be the biggest company in Europe making glassfibre cars, with 430 people turning out 20,000 bodies a year, mostly laid up by hand. The 'pig' first saw the 'plastic' in 1955 on the hardtop that turned an open Reliant Regal MkII into a saloon. By 1956 the whole body was glassfibre, helping to make the three-wheeler more car-like while keeping inside the 8cwt (406kg) weight limit that allowed it be classed as a motorcycle. Reliant liked to say that, because each strand was 0.0003in in diameter, its panels had a higher strength:weight ratio than 'the finest quality steels'. Hmm.



Glassfibre Jowett Jupiter R4 sadly couldn't save its maker

Besides the wide spectrum of small-scale sports car makers such as Lotus, Matra and TVR, glassfibre did cross into the mainstream, at least for a while. Among 1970s supercars, the Ferrari 308, BMW M1 and Lancia Stratos all came to life because of it, and in the mid-1980s it encouraged a biodiversity of cars that normal mortals could buy in a showroom, such as the MPV trailblazer 1984 Renault Espace in Europe and the affordable, mid-engined 1983 Pontiac Fiero in the USA. Perhaps more telling was the sneaky incorporation of non-load-bearing GRP panels into the mix on steel cars, such as the Citroën BX bonnet and Fiat Uno Turbo tailgate – subtle substitutes that nonetheless signified the mainstream industry's deep-seated antipathy to anything a magnet can't cling to.



Light GRP body contributed to Lancia Stratos' stellar pace



THE GLASS MENAGERIE

From history lesson to practical exam: 10 C&SC staffers and contributors pick their favourite plastic sports cars

WORDS C&SC TEAM PHOTOGRAPHY OLGUN KORDAL/MAX EDLESTON/JAMES MANN



53P

301 UY0

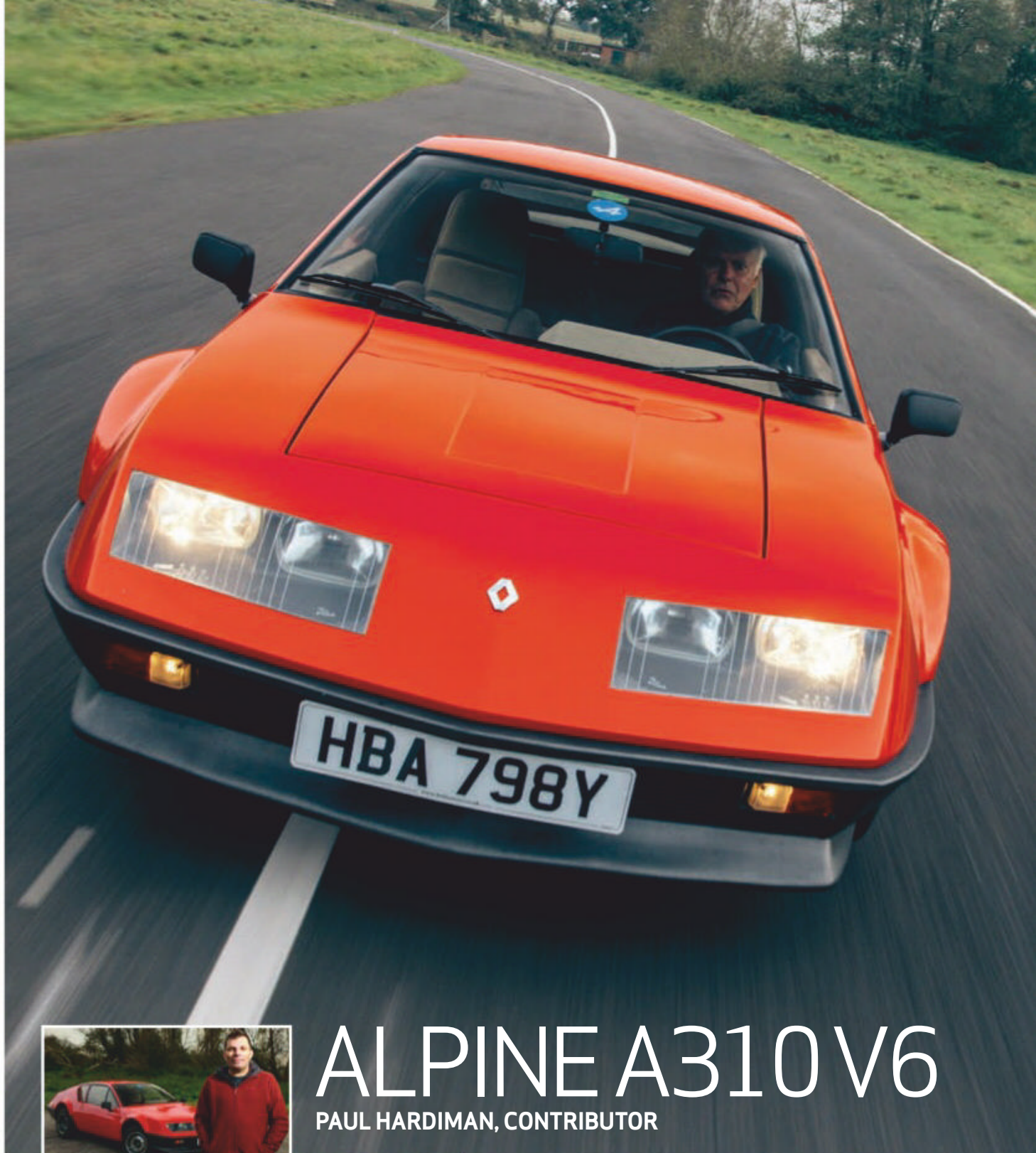
From its Droop Snoot-style nose to its Monteverdi Hai midriff, the wedge Alpine looks as out of place here as a starship looking for its lost troopers. As time goes by, its futuristic visage falls further out of step with the rest of the world – especially when planted in the middle of this eclectic, but conventionally styled bunch.

Yet, for all its occasionally infuriating Frenchness – such as spacesaver spares in different sizes taking up room at each end of the car – this is a package that really works.

Replacing the A110, the 1971 A310's wild wedge styling was originally fronted by a bank of six headlights, impossibly sophisticated in those *UFO* days. Though it retained the A110's four-pot power while being larger and heavier, the glassfibre body, moulded in one piece by Alpine of Dieppe, was an unconventional success from almost all angles – good and straight, with no ripples, though viewing from the side exposes its Stratos-short wheelbase. Like its forebears and successors, it sits on a backbone chassis.

In '76 the A310 was lightly restyled by Robert Opron, losing a pair of headlights and gaining larger wheelarch lips and bumpers, plus chin and tail spoilers... and the newly developed 90° V6 PRV engine for much-needed grunt. For 1981 it was updated into the S2, with four-stud wheels.

Even though Guy Fréquelin won the 1977 French rally championship in a Group 4 example the A310 was never a big seller: 781 cars were sold in its home market in its best year, 1979, and only 663 were produced in 1984, when the plug was finally pulled. Some elements survived, though, such as the rear suspension transplanted into the barking R5 Turbo, and the whole plot



ALPINE A310 V6

PAUL HARDIMAN, CONTRIBUTOR



Crushed velour cabin feels marvellously 1970s, with deep-dish steering wheel and cramped pedalbox giving a suitably rally feel. Above: wedge style has aged well

was updated into the GTA as Alpine came fully under the ownership of Renault.

This sorted 1982 S2 has appeared in *C&SC* before, where owner John Evans spotted it four years ago. It was nice then, but he's since spent thousands sorting it, rebuilding the gearbox and brakes and fitting new Michelin TRXs, which have improved the already impressive ride.

A custom exhaust gives the V6 an off-kilter bark reminiscent of a Citroën SM, and a change

to a Holley four-barrel carb from the weird two-plus-one Solex set-up has woken up the asthmatic lump – shared with the De Lorean, like the chassis layout – to the tune of an extra 10bhp. There's plenty of smooth torque, which means it can easily pull its tall gearing, though there's little point in revving it beyond 5000; its modest power is offset by lightness.

There are obvious comparisons to be made with similar-era Porsches. The gearchange is

Sold/no built 1976-'84/9276

Engine all-alloy, ohc 2664cc 90° V6, twin Solexes; 148bhp @ 6000rpm; 150lb ft @ 3500rpm **Transmission** five-speed manual, RWD **Weight** 2293lb (1040kg) **0-60mph** 8 secs **Top speed** 137mph **Mpg** 26 **Price new** FF£139k **Now** £20-35k

less vague than a 915 'box, but it's easy to clip reverse when you're downchanging to second. The real surprise is the composure of the chassis, especially when looking at the disparity in the size – and pressures – of the rubber. The rears are 220s at 2bar, and the fronts are skinny little 190s running just 1.5bar.

If that makes you expect a tail-heavy monster, think again: the Alpine does not constantly flex its shoulders behind you as a 911 does, and even an experimental lift in a sharp corner provokes only a tightening of line. The steering isn't quite as communicative, but it's beautifully weighted and tells you what you need to know while being less exhausting. The brakes must have been ace because I can't remember a thing about them.

This car is for sale somewhere south of £30k, for which you'd struggle to get an air-cooled 911 with an MoT. Best of all, due to its low-volume production – made possible by composite body construction – almost nobody knows what it is.

Thanks to The Market (www.themarket.co.uk), where this car is currently for sale

Lovely John Frayling shape conceals real innovation. Below, left to right: Matty car boasts most desirable spec, with twin-Weber Climax motor and ZF 'box; snug cockpit is noisy



LOTUS ELITE SE

GREG MACLEMAN, FEATURES EDITOR

When it comes to glassfibre motor cars, none – bar perhaps the earliest pioneers – can lay claim to being as significant as the Lotus Type 14. Take the Elite's looks into account and it sits in a league of its own.

What makes the little Lotus so special is not so much the material from which it was constructed, but the way in which it was used. Instead of employing glassfibre to augment a separate chassis with lightweight panels, the Elite became one of the first road cars to utilise a monocoque made entirely from the material. For the first time, a glassfibre shell became a stressed, load-bearing component in a production car – technology that wouldn't hit Formula One until 1962. Certain areas still required the use of steel, such as the minimalist front subframe – which helped spread the engine's load through the body – the window surrounds, door hinges and jacking points, but the heavy lifting was predominantly carried out by glassfibre, endowing the Elite with a scarcely believable kerbweight of a whisker over 650kg and an organic shape so aerodynamic that it recorded a drag coefficient of just 0.29Cd. "There's barely any wind noise because it's so slippery," says Paul Matty of the Peter Kirwan-Taylor, John Frayling and Frank Costin-styled body. "You have to use the quarterlight to get any airflow into the car, even at speed."

Few people know their way around the Elite better than the Midlands-based specialist, who has spent a lifetime maintaining and selling Lotus cars, and counts the model among founder Colin Chapman's finest achievements. This silver-over-green example comes from Matty's



personal collection: "My wife says we ought to sell it because we've had it for so long, but I don't want to. It's a fantastic car. The shape is like a work of art, really. We once restored a red car for a chap in London who put it in his lounge behind a glass panel with spotlights!"

Tempting as it would be to keep the Elite purely as an *objet d'art*, it's not something I could do – partly so as not to deny others the chance to fall for its delicate shape, but also because it's an absolute marvel on the road. Matty's car left Hethel in 1962 as an SE (Special Equipment) model, with a number of improvements over the car that wowed showgoers at Earls Court in 1957, chief among them the transition from an MGA-derived gearbox to a silky four-speed



ZF – as denoted by the exquisite branded gearknob – plus the addition of twin SU carbs and a fabricated exhaust manifold. Clements sang the transmission's praises all the way to Curborough Sprint Circuit and it doesn't disappoint, swapping cogs with all the precision of a Swiss watch. The Coventry Climax engine is also a jewel, producing just 83bhp but delivering it so sweetly – with the exception of a resonance that reverberates around the shell at around 4000rpm. "It's not a car that tears off the line, it's all about delicacy and light weight – everything that Chapman believed in," enthuses Matty.

And as a car to own? "You have to put effort in," he explains, "but they're much better today than they were originally: they were notoriously unreliable in period. There were problems with overheating and gearbox faults. Rear wheel bearings were also an issue, but you can get sealed-for-life units now. Most of the problems have been ironed out, though not completely. It wouldn't be an Elite if everything was perfect!"

Thanks to Paul Matty Sports Cars
(www.paulmattysportscars.co.uk)

Sold/no built 1958-'63/1030

Engine all-alloy, ohc 1216cc 'four', twin Weber carbs; 83bhp @ 6250rpm; 75lb ft @ 3750rpm **Transmission** four-speed manual, RWD **Weight** 1450lb (656kg) **0-60mph** 11 secs **Top speed** 118mph **Mpg** 35 **Price new** £1662 **Now** £60-100k



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Corvette handles tidily, but is outpointed by the nimbler cars here. Below, left to right: plush cabin; rumbling L82 smallblock



CHEVROLET CORVETTE C3

JULIAN BALME, SENIOR CONTRIBUTOR

I'll be honest right away: I personally would only ever *really* be happy with a 1963-'67 Sting Ray. These days, though, they command silly prices and for the same money there are much better cars, whereas the chromeless later C3s are arguably the best-value glassfibre would-be sports cars you can buy. With a huge spread in prices, there is a '70s 'Vette for all budgets, from £5000 for a floppy, well-worn dog to something as sweet and taut as Phil Otley's car here at £20k-plus.

The American car industry isn't renowned for glassfibre, yet by the time this 350 auto rolled off the St Louis production line Chevrolet had garnered 25 years' manufacturing experience with the material. Nor was it only producing a handful of cars: in the 'Vette's silver-anniversary year Chevy turned out more than 46,000 of them – probably more than the total production of all the other models assembled here.

Although hardly spoilt for choice where domestic sports cars were concerned, the US buyer was more demanding than his European counterpart and owner-driven product development was never going to be tolerated. Consequently they were built to withstand a rhino charge – which, with all the added weight, crippled performance. On the plus side, it usually meant surviving a collision with a not-so-flexible object. Just shutting the door on the Corvette is an education: the reassuring 'clunk' sounds more like a high-end '60s British saloon, and among its Curborough company the US icon wins hands-down on build quality.

Okay, so the engineering wasn't exactly cutting-edge on the Chevy, but who needed a nimble chassis mated to a multi-valve gem of an engine when you had to be in New York by daybreak? Or, as many were, had to be driven to



the kerb outside a disco by gents going through their first mid-life crisis. The frame was basic to say the least, with rails down either side connected by a crossmember fore and aft, and two further members shoring it up amidships. Much like the previous generation of Corvette, it featured double wishbones with coilovers up front, a transverse leaf to the rear, with its body placed on top rather than blended in. Apart from the big disc brakes all round, from underneath it resembled an over-engined Bond Equipe.

Nevertheless, the handling of what became known as the C3 was hardly terrible – you certainly didn't need to be as brave as the NASA astronauts who were so fond of them to get behind the wheel. Due to its weight and, by that

time, smog equipment it's no monster, despite being powered by one of the greatest engines of all time. An engine that Chevrolet built for 47 years, and was so robust that even I could rebuild one and it would still run.

The L82 version was the 1978 incarnation's most powerful, at 220bhp, but it's possible to double that figure, such are the tuning goodies available for the smallblock V8 today. Otley has been canny in removing the items that strangled performance during his restoration of the car and, although it's not known whether it left the factory as an L82, it easily matches that designation's performance.

Under duress, owners will confess that the T-top roof isn't as watertight as maybe it could be, and the length of the bonnet does make it vulnerable to short-sighted 4x4 drivers in metropolitan parking situations. Those issues aside, however, as a bulletproof everyday classic you could do a lot worse. If we had all been asked to drive our chosen plastic cars to Le Mans, just imagine how warm and smug I would have felt.

Thanks to Phil Otley, whose Corvette is for sale: call 07766 328999 for details

Sold/no built 1968-'82/46,776 (1978 only) **Engine** all-iron, ohv 5736cc V8, Rochester carb; 220bhp @ 5200rpm; 260lb ft @ 3600rpm **Transmission** three-speed auto, RWD **Weight** 3624lb (1644kg) **Mpg** 13 **0-60mph** 8.5 secs **Top speed** 129mph **Price new** \$9876.89 **Now** £5-25,000

16in alloys replace the standard 14s on this car. Below, left to right: quad-cam engine is a screamer; attractive cabin



FERRARI 308GTB

ALASTAIR CLEMENTS, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Think of Ferrari manufacture and the image that springs to mind is one of Italian artisans with hammers, painstakingly teasing out exquisite panel shapes in aluminium over wooden bucks – not brushes of sticky resin being daubed on to prickly glass matting in moulds. And that’s a big part of why I find the *Vetroresina* 308 so intriguing.

Once derided as the ‘plastic Ferrari’, today these early glassfibre-bodied 308s are the most desirable of all. Which is not entirely surprising when you consider that fewer than a thousand of them were produced by the Scaglietti works between the car’s Paris Salon launch in 1975 and the switch to steel bodies in June 1977.

If you’re expecting some sort of racy 308 lightweight you’re out of luck, though they are thought to be a bit lighter (by around 250lb) than their all-metal counterparts. What you do get is the purest interpretation of the gorgeous Pininfarina shape, which paid homage to the classical curves of its V6 Dino inspiration after the controversial Bertone-styled GT4.

This 1976 car, currently for sale with Slade’s Garage, has a touch of aggression courtesy of period optional 16in wheels and quad ANSA exhausts in place of the factory pea-shooters. It’s an intriguing car, being an Australian-supplied right-hooker with a wet-sump version of the 2926cc quad-cam V8 rather than the dry sump of European cars, along with twin distributors. From the outside you can easily spot a GRP car for its flat rear panel – steel cars got a recess for the numberplate – and reversing lights in the bumper rather than in the centre of the indicators. Lift the engine cover and you’ll spot the distinctive weave of the matting and screws securing the panels to the tubular steel chassis.



Bought and imported by QV London five years ago, the 308 has since undergone a superb restoration with the Windsor-based specialist. “As with all glassfibre cars, getting the finish right was the biggest challenge,” says QV’s Mike Lester, “but it’s thick and good quality – you don’t get any trouble with cracking or crazing. Finding some trim parts for the early cars can be a problem: so many bits were missing that we ended up buying another for spares that I’ve since turned into my rally car.”

The door shuts with the familiar flat thud of glassfibre, but inside the GTB feels every inch the Dino successor, and a world away from Ferrari’s digital revolution. In the compact instrument binnacle there’s a 280kph speedo and



the yellow line for the 10,000rpm rev counter starts at 7000, with the redline 1000rpm later. Today we’re heavily restricted by the need to protect a fresh engine, but fortunately the V8 is far more flexible than a Dino’s V6, if not quite as tuneful. Lumpy at low revs, with a delicious gurgling from the intake by your right ear for the quad Webers, it soon smooths out as the revs rise and past experience tells me that the scream of four cams and eight cylinders in perfect harmony is fabulous past 5000rpm.

The positive gearbox feels less notchy than most and the initially dead rack-and-pinion steering comes to life with speed, loading up swiftly in bends and communicating the nuances of the road surface. Add in supple double-wishbone suspension and delicious balance, and the GTB makes light work of our short track.

For so long a Maranello bargain, the 308 is finally being recognised as the true heir to the Dino – a Ferrari as significant in the firm’s transition from niche manufacturer to modern megabrand as it is wonderful to look at.

Thanks to Slade’s Garage (slades-garage.co.uk) and QV London (www.qvlondon.co.uk)

Sold/number built 1975-’77/808
Engine all-alloy, quad-cam 2926cc
 90° V8, four Weber carbs; 255bhp
 @ 7700rpm; 210lb ft @ 5000rpm
Transmission five-speed manual, RWD
Weight 2425lb (1100kg) **Mpg** 19.2
0-60mph 6.5 secs **Top speed** 154mph
Price new £10,501 **Now** £130,000

Formed in 1948 in the town of the same name, Rochdale was the brainchild of Frank Butterworth and Harry Smith. Although the company became synonymous with glassfibre-bodied vehicles, its origins lay in the supply of aluminium – it would be a full six years before the first glassfibre option, the MkIV shell, which was created to sit atop an Austin Seven chassis. The introduction of the Rochdale GT in 1957, however, led to the Greater Manchester outfit scoring its best-selling vehicle yet.

The open-topped ST concept was launched two years earlier and criticised for its lack of stiffness – something the GT swiftly addressed with the addition of a roof. Initially intended to utilise the underpinnings of a Ford Popular, like so many other post-war alternatives, it was eventually offered with Rochdale's own chassis – as found under this example built in 1959-'60. In fact, Peter Campbell's GT makes use of a tubular chassis that, unlike the Ford Pop option, is bonded to the shell itself, further increasing the stiffness so lacking in the ST.

Campbell found his GT on eBay after a previous purchase proved uneconomical to repair. "The shape just said 'buy me'," he explains. "Although it still needed work, it was by no means as bad as the first one and had the better chassis too." As well as the round-tube framework, Campbell's GT boasts its original 1172cc Ford E93A sidevalve engine, although attempts to tune the 36bhp unit were only met with a degree of success: "We balanced the flywheel, gas-flowed the Aquaplane head, fitted a different camshaft and larger pistons and valves... but still only recorded 44bhp!"



ROCHDALE GT

MARTIN PORT, CONTRIBUTOR



Simple dashboard in Campbell's beautifully restored GT. Above right: Rochdale is light and lively

Sold/no built 1957-'60/c135

Engine iron-block, aluminium head, sidevalve 1172cc 'four', twin SU carbs; 36bhp @ 5000rpm; 50lb ft @ 3000rpm

Transmission three-speed manual, RWD

Weight 1367lb (620kg) **Mpg** 30

0-60mph 12 secs **Top speed** 80mph

Price new £140 (body only) **Now** £12,000

almost always assembled to individual styles and requirements, so further fettling or subtle modification shouldn't be frowned upon.

Campbell's aspirations were simple. "I set out to end up with something that pleases me," he smiles. "I am a child of the 1950s and this offers a sense of history as well as a pleasing quirkiness – I like the fact that it's different."

Although slightly challenging to get into thanks to the drop-sided roofline, the GT doesn't feel cramped once you're in the period bucket seats. You could probably fit kids in the back – there are dish bases on either side of the transmission tunnel – but leave them behind and there's a reasonable amount of luggage space, boosted further by the spare-wheel cubby under the sloping tail and accessed from the interior.

Mention Rochdale and the long-serving Olympic will spring to mind for most, but the GT is in many ways a more interesting choice. Park it beside an Elite and the £50k saving looks tempting for a car that offers a rewarding driving experience but with added novelty appeal.

That said, in percentage terms it's a useful improvement and on the road the Rochdale delivers impressive torque through the Ford three-speed close-ratio gearbox. The saving grace here, of course, is the glassfibre body and the resulting overall weight: the GT feels far from slow, and even accounting for a spot of double-declutching between gearchanges you rarely find yourself yearning for more power. That's good news for the cable-operated drums, which provide just enough stopping power.

Fitted with Ballamy lightweight five-stud wheels shod with 5.50-15 Excelsior crossply tyres, the Rochdale's steering is beautifully weighted and, like any good sports car, inspires you to turn in to corners faster and later as familiarity grows. Perhaps the only criticism from a driver's point of view is the ridiculously tight pedal arrangement: a sock-clad left foot proves a necessity in order to avoid pressing both brake and clutch at once, but the beauty of these early post-war homebuilds is that they were

I must start by taking issue with the proclamation that: 'No woman in her right mind would put up with such a car.' So said *Motor Sport* in its 1969 road test of the Ginetta G15 that, quite rightly, described it as 'a car for the enthusiast'.

Maybe – okay, definitely – I'm biased. When asked to choose a glassfibre sports car, it was always going to be a Ginetta, having grown up just a few miles from the marque's Essex headquarters – and the offer of Miles Hewitt's brilliantly hued G15, the firm's first volume seller, was too good to resist.

I say 'volume', but it's thought that at most about 800 were made, of which around 100 remain on the road. And that means 100 very lucky owners because, as single-minded pursuits of motoring pleasure go, the G15 is surely up there with the best. There are few concessions to comfort or practicality, but who needs a boot, anyway? Stuff what little you need in a soft bag and stow it behind the seats. That said, on our chilly shoot I'm grateful for the optional (£16 10s) heater fitted to chassis 0154, an early MkIII that was sold on 15 January 1971 as a kit.

You fold and lower yourself down into the compact, driver-focused cabin – if you're planning a long drive, it helps to be on good terms with your passenger. And thankfully the driver's door opens wide, so, once you've had your fun, egress will not be particularly ladylike



GINETTA G15

LIZZIE POPE, ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Tuned Imp motor was derived from the Coventry Climax unit and thrives on revs. Above right: quirky but purposeful looks

Sold/no built 1968-'74/c800

Engine all-aluminium, ohc 875cc 'four', twin Stromberg carbs; 50bhp @ 5800rpm; 49lb ft @ 4500rpm **Transmission** four-speed manual, RWD **Weight** 1105lb (501kg) **0-60mph** 13 secs **Top speed** 98mph **Mpg** 34 **Price new** £963 s10 **Now** £10,000

its only nod to practicality, but handy in the real world nevertheless. Once on the move, its Imp underpinnings serve the Ginetta well and it oozes chuckability, with an engine that simply loves to be revved, the rasping soundtrack encouraging you to go ever faster, to dig deeper into its talents. Light, direct and responsive, the steering is a joy. The suspension is rather on the uncompromising side, so you'll certainly know about potholes, but what do you expect from a proper sports car, with your backside mere inches from the ground? The brakes require a firm jab but never cause alarm, and the little G15 grips tenaciously, egging me on to corner far more quickly than I have the nerve to, especially on our first encounter.

It's a proper no-frills, high-fun sports car that, despite – or perhaps because of – its simplicity, charms all who sample it. This Tangerine treat with its fetching Cosmic alloys has just enough of everything you need, and I'd challenge any of the others here to deliver more smiles.

Thanks to Ginetta Owners' Club (ginetta.org)

but at least it isn't human origami. It seems appropriate now to get my – and the owner's – only gripe out the way: the seats. Standard items, they move fore and aft but there's no adjustment in the backrest, hindering access to that storage space in the rear and forcing the driver into a position more reclined than I can handle. Not that this detracts from your enjoyment.

From the moment you turn the dash-mounted ignition key, you know you're going to

have fun. There might be a unit with a mere 875cc behind you, but with just 501kg (plus driver) to move, it's never found wanting. The tightly spaced pedals sit slightly to the left and slender feet are an advantage, but it's not uncomfortable, with the delightfully small steering wheel perfectly placed.

The initial revelation is perhaps not the first thing you look for in a sports car: the G15 has a fantastically tight turning circle. That's possibly



JENSEN 541R

MARTIN BUCKLEY, SENIOR CONTRIBUTOR

The 541 style is distinctive with its hooded wheelarches and tight-fitting roof. Below, left to right: comfortable cabin seats four; lever opens nose panel for cooling

These big Austin-engined Jensens have always appealed to me. They have an allure that sits somewhere between the high-gear luxury of a Bentley R-type Continental and the suave, sporty aura of a contemporary Aston Martin, but with less finicky mechanicals. Handbuilt in small numbers, the 541s were far cheaper than either; Jensen kept costs down by using a variety of Austin suspension components on a simple but effective fabricated chassis of welded tubular and rectangular sections. As well as being ideal for low-volume construction methods, this established the principles around which the subsequent V8 Jensens were constructed.

The well-balanced, futuristically elegant shape showed that the Italians had by no means cornered the market in Grand Touring chic. And if owners of Astons or 2-litre Bristols sneered at the 4-litre straight-six from the Sheerline limousine – which was heavy, low-revving and not especially attractive to look at – in this 3200lb close-coupled, leather-swaddled four-seater, it gave effortless urge well past 100mph, which in the end was all that mattered.

The 541 was, in fact, one of the fastest British production cars of the 1950s, its glassfibre body (apart from the aluminium doors and bootlid) being slippery – with a drag coefficient of 0.36Cd – as well as corrosion-resistant.

Launched in 1953, it was probably the first performance-orientated European car to have a glassfibre body and the Jensen name would soon become synonymous with ahead-of-the-curve safety developments as well: the 1957 541 De Luxe was the first British production car with four-wheel disc brakes, the wide-bodied 1960 541S the first with seatbelts as standard.



The 1958-'60 541R, such as this example owned by Shane Griffin, is possibly the pick of the 541s in that it has the 150bhp Princess DS7 engine (at least at first), much more precise rack-and-pinion steering and a stiffer chassis than the 541 and 541 De Luxe, yet retained the original iteration of Eric Neale's pretty body.

The Autocar extracted 127mph from its test example, fitted with the Jaguar-type Moss gearbox and overdrive, making the 541R the fastest British four-seater then on offer.

All 541s are also much rarer than you might imagine – total production, of all types, was not much more than 500 cars. In modern parlance it was essentially a 'halo' product for a company that made its real money building bodies for



other people. In the past they have tended to be overshadowed by the V8 Jensens of the 1960s and '70s, although 541 prices are now well up with early Interceptors.

The Jensen is cosy and wonderfully aromatic inside, with semi-bucket front seats and a man-sized steering wheel to ease low-speed manoeuvring. There is solid grunt in all the gears, in a 'box that requires slow, positive handling as it romps up to speed in a long, smooth surge that is more urgent than the ponderous hisses under the bonnet suggest. It feels secure and steady in fast curves, and less unhappy than you expect in tighter bends.

Griffin confirms that his 1959 R is very usable, and often deployed on shopping trips. "You just need to keep on top of the oil and water levels," he says, "and for anything more involved my local garage is quite happy to look after it." The retired lawyer, who also has a Triumph TR4A, has owned the 541R for seven years, having bought it on a whim simply because he liked the look of it – which is as good a reason as any.

Thanks to Jensen Owners' Club (www.joc.org.uk)

Sold/no built 1958-'60/193 **Engine** all-iron, ohv 3993cc straight-six, twin SU carbs; 152bhp @ 4100rpm; 227lb ft @ 2400rpm **Transmission** four-speed manual o/d, RWD **Weight** 3262lb (1480kg) **0-60mph** 10.6 secs **Top speed** 127mph **Mpg** 18 **Price new** £2866 **Now** £25-50k

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MINTEX

Model wearing: Meistersinger Abingdon - MG watch | MG-branded sweatshirt



MARCOS 1600GT

JAMES MANN, PHOTOGRAPHER

Agile chassis and light weight make the Marcos a hoot on track.

Below, from top: streamlined shape ends in an abrupt Kamm tail; compact crossflow motor

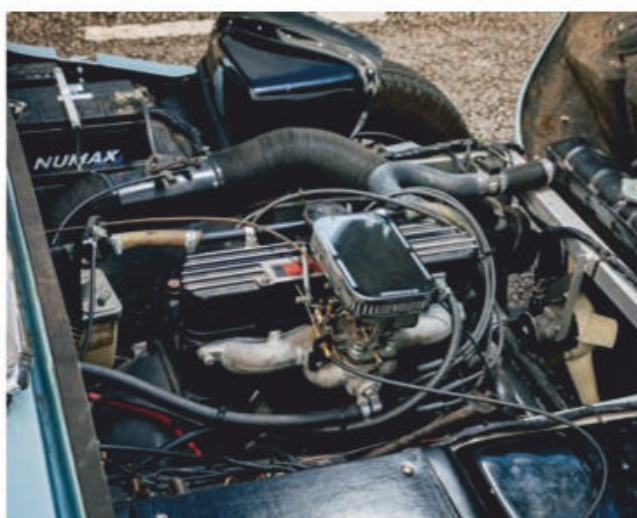
Marcos, the brand that combines the names of founder Jem Marsh and engineer Frank Costin, was born into the richly innovative engineering environment of the late 1950s and inspired by Marsh's love of club motorsport.

Using a chassis made from resin-bonded plywood, glued together with Aerolite as pioneered by De Havilland aircraft, Marcos scored some early successes with its rather odd-looking GTs in the hands of such legends as Derek Bell and Jackies Stewart and Oliver.

With the arrival of Formula Junior, most of the hotshoe drivers began to move away from GT racing so the company started to build a roadgoing sports car designed by brothers Dennis and Peter Adams. At just 43in high, with a long bonnet and a chopped off Kamm tail, the new car from Bradford-on-Avon was a hit at the 1964 London Racing Car Show, hinting at the lines of the Ferrari 250GT 'Breadvan' at a fraction of the price.

Initially launched with an 1800cc Volvo engine and a de Dion back end, the Marcos GT evolved with various engines including the Ford 1600 crossflow fitted to 'our' 1966 model, complete with a single downdraught Weber.

"I tried it with twin Webers but there isn't really enough space to fit the proper air cleaners and I couldn't get it to run well, so switched back to the single carburettor," says serial Marcos owner Richard Falconer, who bought the car in pieces about 15 years ago. "I was building a 1500cc car and needed an interior, then I got a call from Rory MacMath at Marcos Heritage to tell me of a good one stored in a barn. It came with a complete body in three pieces, so I decided to rebuild it. Halfway through



Sold/no built 1964-'69/c400

Engine all-iron, ohv 1599cc 'four', Weber carb; 84bhp @ 5000rpm; 105lb ft @ 3600rpm **Transmission** four-speed manual, RWD **Weight** 1631lb (740kg) **0-60mph** 10 secs **Top speed** 109mph **Mpg** 22 (est) **Price new** £2135 7s 6d **Now** £18-25k

the restoration I realised it was the very car that my first girlfriend and I had been given a lift in 50 years ago, so I sold the finished 1500 without even driving it and kept this one."

The cockpit is snug, with the wide centre console topped by a short-throw gearlever and the prone driving position leaving you peering out of the curved 'screen down a long, swooping bonnet. Unusually, the driver's seat is fixed to the floor and the pedals can be adjusted forwards and backwards to suit the individual using a knob on the dash behind the steering wheel.

Straight out of the blocks the 1600GT feels like a roadgoing racing car to drive, enhanced by how low down you sit with the road rushing past right next to you. There's only 84bhp on tap, yet acceleration is vivid because it weighs in at less than 750kg, and there's none of the vibration or rattling that some glassfibre-bodied cars of the era can suffer from.

The rigidity of the plywood chassis really comes into play through the corners, which it takes almost completely flat, and even when pushed the responsive and predictable handling is a delight despite the relatively conventional live-axle rear set-up. The Triumph Herald rack is controlled by a small steering wheel that reacts instantly to your inputs, while the disc front, drum rear braking is well up to the task.

Falconer is more than 6ft tall yet he fits comfortably into the cockpit, and he has owned multiple Marcos models since acquiring his first after qualifying as an architect in 1973. "I bought a 3-litre initially, then an 1800, but had to sell it when I got married," he says, with a parting top tip for refined Marcos motoring: "The Webasto roof makes a tremendous difference for draught-free ventilation on longer journeys, because opening a window tends to be a bit noisy."

The Griffith's muscular curves have dated well, and it's a car that looks as good as it sounds. Below, left to right: curvaceous theme continues inside; long-serving Rover V8



TVR GRIFFITH 500

JACK PHILLIPS, DEPUTY EDITOR

Having been told a definitive “no” and given a warning about my future conduct after suggesting a Talbot-Matra Rancho for a plastic sports car shoot, thoughts quickly turned to Noble and TVR. And since we couldn't have a GRP special without inviting Trevor, my choice was all but made for me.

If we're having a TVR, we should probably have the best. Which is why Martin Buckley collected a Griffith 500 – in lilac, naturally – from his neighbour, Cotswold Classic Car Restorations, and roared up to Staffordshire. And what a sound it produces, the venerable Rover V8 rumbling perhaps at its best here beneath the roll-down-and-lift-up bonnet, making its entrance loudly as Buckley can't resist arriving via a lap of the sprint course.

At 5 litres, the V8 is at its biggest, too, three decades since the initial 3.5-litre Buick-derived unit first caught Rover's eye. The Blackpool marque claimed an output of 340bhp at launch, and 350lb ft of torque, but it was exactly that: a claim. South of 300bhp, north of 250bhp is roughly where you can expect it, apparently.

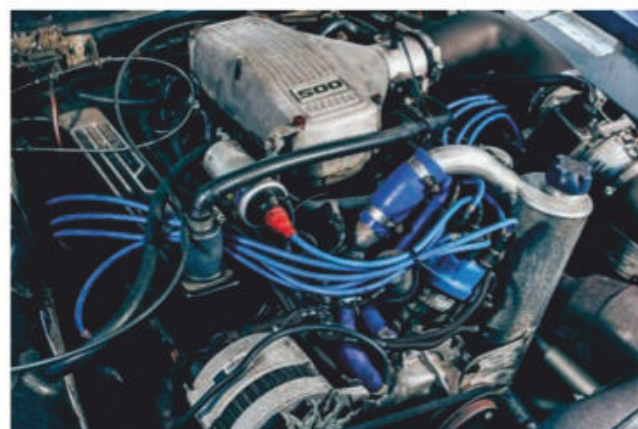
What's indisputable, however, is the punch in the back when pressing down on the thin throttle pedal. It requires an assertive but respectful foot, and an attentive mind because the nose lifts and the car lightens the harder you accelerate. It does exactly what you ask of it, though: the brakes are sharp, the easy five-speed gearbox is crisp and on turn-in the 500 simply grips, with super-light steering courtesy of the aftermarket electric power assistance fitted to this car (it was unassisted out of Blackpool). Exit a corner, keeping the back end in check and the car pointing in a straight line, and your attention is instantly taken by that noise once more. It really



is that good. At low speed the car is not so good, mind, but trundling isn't the point of a TVR.

Oddly for such an absorbing machine, it feels as if it would be well suited to long-distance touring. Torquey enough to pull from nothing and slip past all comers, it's also surprisingly plush and easy to get comfortable in, with a big boot. And any driver would relish long stretches of doing little but taking in that sound.

That said, the cabin is a mental challenge when you need to actually do something – turn on the lights, say. Myriad buttons, dials and knobs – a riddle of them, more like – line the machined aluminium dash, each looking identical and with no cause for explanation.



When you know, you know, I suppose. It's also worth investigating in advance where the door release is (it's on the transmission tunnel). The stalks behind the racy Personal steering wheel, which is pinched ever so slightly halfway down each side, are no less confusing, and the inverted dials counter-push their needles clockwise from the top. The overriding feeling, not least when those buttons creak and crack into their slots, is one of the 500 being handmade, yet the leather finish is rich, the dark brown soft-touch dash top contrasting with the tan seats.

Just as important as its brilliance is the reformatory role the Griffith played for TVR. This was the car that smoothed the company into the future, away from the M-Series and the wedges and a big design step forward from the S – the Griff even took the Tuscan racer's chassis. It still looks modern, with a bullet-shaped body that has aged far better than many of its contemporaries. Had this design appeared in the 2000s, I'm not sure many would raise an eyebrow. But that's exactly what this car does.

Sold/no built 1991-2002/2265

Engine all-alloy, ohv 3950/4280/4495/4997cc V8, multi-point fuel-injection; 340bhp @ 5500rpm (500); 350lb ft @ 4000rpm (500) **Transmission** five-speed manual, RWD **Weight** 2363lb (1072kg)

0-60mph 4.2 secs **Top speed** 161mph

Mpg 26 **Price new** £27,495

Price now £20-35,000

Thanks to Cotswold Classic Car Restorations (www.cotswoldclassiccarrestorations.co.uk)

Not a lot of people know this, but the first glassfibre-bodied cars on our roads were homebuilt Ford Ten Specials. During the 1950s, many an impecunious enthusiast dreamed of building their own sports car – a ‘Special’ – and the arrival of glassfibre bodysells brought the dream within reach.

The RGS shell was first advertised in early 1953, beating Chevrolet’s original Corvette by some months, and within a few years a score of firms had sprung up to make shells for the growing specials market. Most used as their basis pre-war Austin Sevens and Ford Eights and Tens, which could easily be found in scrapyards. Some of the completed cars looked quite good if the car was assembled by a reasonably able engineer, but some looked decidedly odd, especially when the builder’s enthusiasm was not matched by their mechanical talents.

John Plant’s Martin is a classic Ford Special. The body, made by Martin Plastics of Maidstone, dates from 1957, but it seems the car was not finished until 1962. The chassis is the humble Ford Ten ladder frame, with strips welded along the channel-section side members to restore some of the stiffness lost by removing the saloon body. The transverse-leaf front suspension has been converted to independent by splitting the axle, while 15in wheels improve the handling over the standard Ford 17-inches. The engine is a post-war 100E version of the trusty 1172cc sidevalve unit, with a shaved head to raise the compression ratio, twin SU carburettors replacing the wheezy Zenith, and a smart four-branch tubular exhaust manifold.

The more expensive glassfibre bodies came



MARTIN-FORD

SIMON TAYLOR, EDITOR AT LARGE

From top: Taylor revels in the firm Martin’s direct handling; ridge helps stiffen the shell; tuned sidevalve ‘four’ is the heart of the special



with subframes bonded in: they were stiffer and easier to mount on the Ford chassis. The Martin shell, which cost just £100, has no subframe and is simply bolted to the chassis. The quirky styling, with central ridge ending in a peak over the grille and another ridge over the tail, is intended to impart a bit of stiffness. There are lofty estimates of how many Martin bodies were originally produced, but only five exist today – and Plant has two of them.

He bought this car five years ago as a near-wreck but it’s now very nicely turned out, with smart green paint and neat interior trim. Because the body sits on the high Ford chassis the driver



Sold/number built n/a

Engine all-iron, sidevalve 1172cc ‘four’, twin SU carbs; 36bhp @ 5000rpm; 46lb ft @ 3000rpm **Transmission** three-speed manual, RWD **Weight** 1230lb (558kg) **0-60mph** 21 secs **Top speed** 76mph **Mpg** 32 **Price new** £250 **Now** £2-5000

seems to sit on rather than in the car, with only a pair of aeroscreens for protection. There is no weather equipment. The dashboard uses the original Ford instruments plus a modern combined oil/water gauge, and the seats are from a Triumph TR2. The neat little steering wheel comes from a Fordson tractor.

The real surprise is how brisk it feels. Without the heavy steel saloon body it is very light, and helped by aftermarket close-ratio gears it steps off smartly, although it runs out of puff quite soon. The Ford Ten rod-operated brakes are well up to the task, and handling around Curborough’s sharp corners is quite friendly, although too much enthusiasm produces abrupt roll oversteer.

You have to put this little sports car into its context. In the mid-1950s most affordable cars were dull and slow, and around £250 and a lot of hard work could produce something that both looked sporty and was fun to drive. Sixty-plus years later these eccentric cars are fascinating period pieces, and it’s great that enthusiasts such as Plant preserve them.

A BUG'S LIFE

The story of Bugatti's great all-rounder, the Figoni-bodied Type 55: mighty racer, concours winner and beloved road car

WORDS **MICK WALSH** PHOTOGRAPHY **WILL WILLIAMS**





Few beautiful pre-war sports cars have lived such rich and dramatic lives as this unique Figoni-bodied Bugatti Type 55. Originally built to challenge Alfa Romeo at Le Mans, it was later rebodied by one of the greatest French coachbuilders, and wowed all at concours events through the 1930s.

Hidden away during WW2, it was discovered in the early '60s and saved by Geoffrey Stuart St John, one of the most respected English Bugatti connoisseurs. Once rebuilt, the seductive 110mph roadster was driven all over Europe covering thousands of miles each year, more than any other of the 38 twin-cam exotics built.

Until his passing in February, aged 88, St John enjoyed 56 years of rewarding ownership with the two-tone beauty. After a horrific crash in France, St John rebuilt the car and again it claimed concours glory. He was a hands-on Bugatti owner in the old-school style, delighting in maintaining, restoring, driving and racing his machines, as well as guiding others in matters Molsheim right up to his last months. On sunny days in his final years, the Figoni Type 55 was regularly seen parked at The Bugatti Trust, of which he was a dedicated supporter.

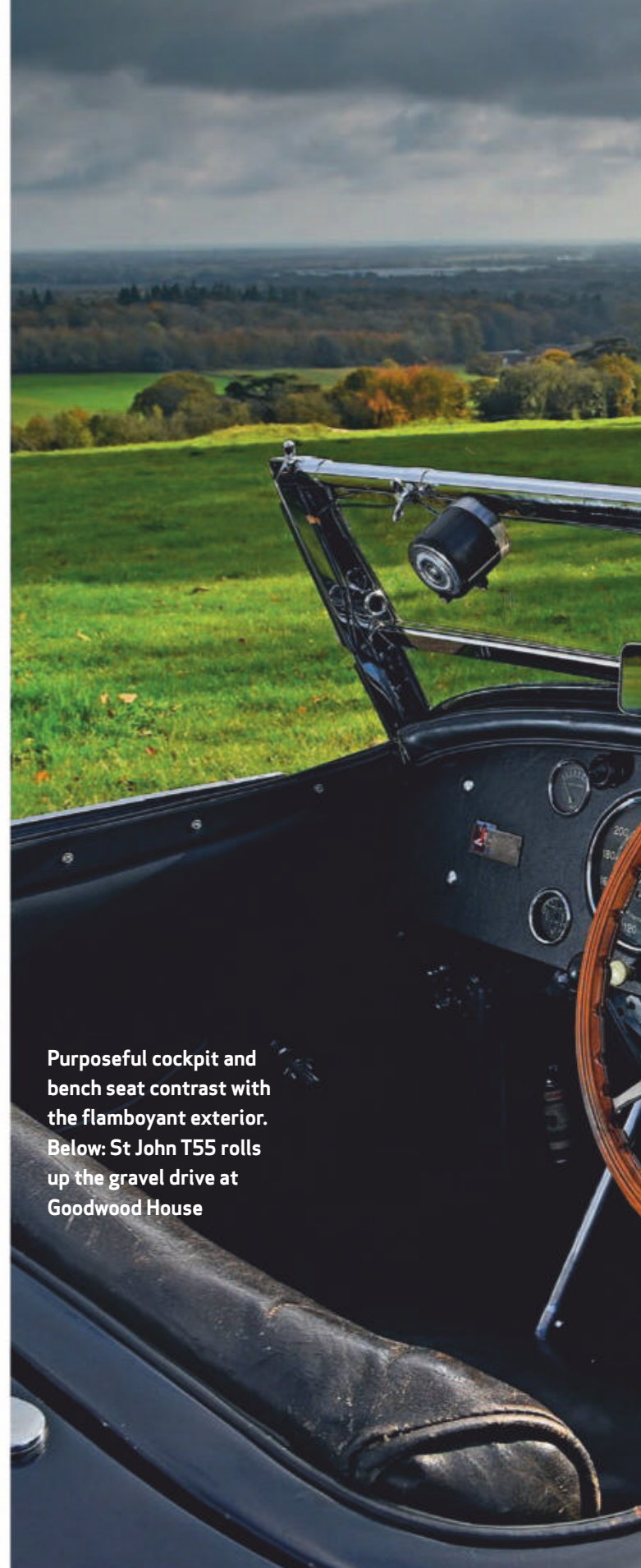
He has been one of my heroes as a vintage racer since I was a lad visiting Prescott, and his much-driven Type 55 remains one of my favourite Bugattis. But when it was first built this rakish machine looked very different, because it was conceived as a long-distance sports-racing car. After Bugatti's disastrous

1931 Le Mans attempt with the pair of mighty Type 50 works cars, Ettore entered two new Type 55 racers for the 1932 event. To avoid any adverse publicity, however, the new cars were registered to the private teams of Count Guy Bouriat and the wealthy Polish aristocrat Stanislaus Czaykowski. Only if they were successful would *Le Patron* claim involvement.

The functional-looking tourers couldn't be further removed from the glamorous coachbuilt T55 road cars. Clearly prepared by the factory, they followed the style of the T50 – fabric-covered rear body, cycle wings, side-mounted spare and the petrol tank slung under the back with toolbox mounted above. An extra spotlight, aeroscreens and additional wing stays were added for the 24-hour enduro. For the fast straights, the cars were fitted with long 3.86:1 rear-axle ratios, and extra fuel-tank straps.

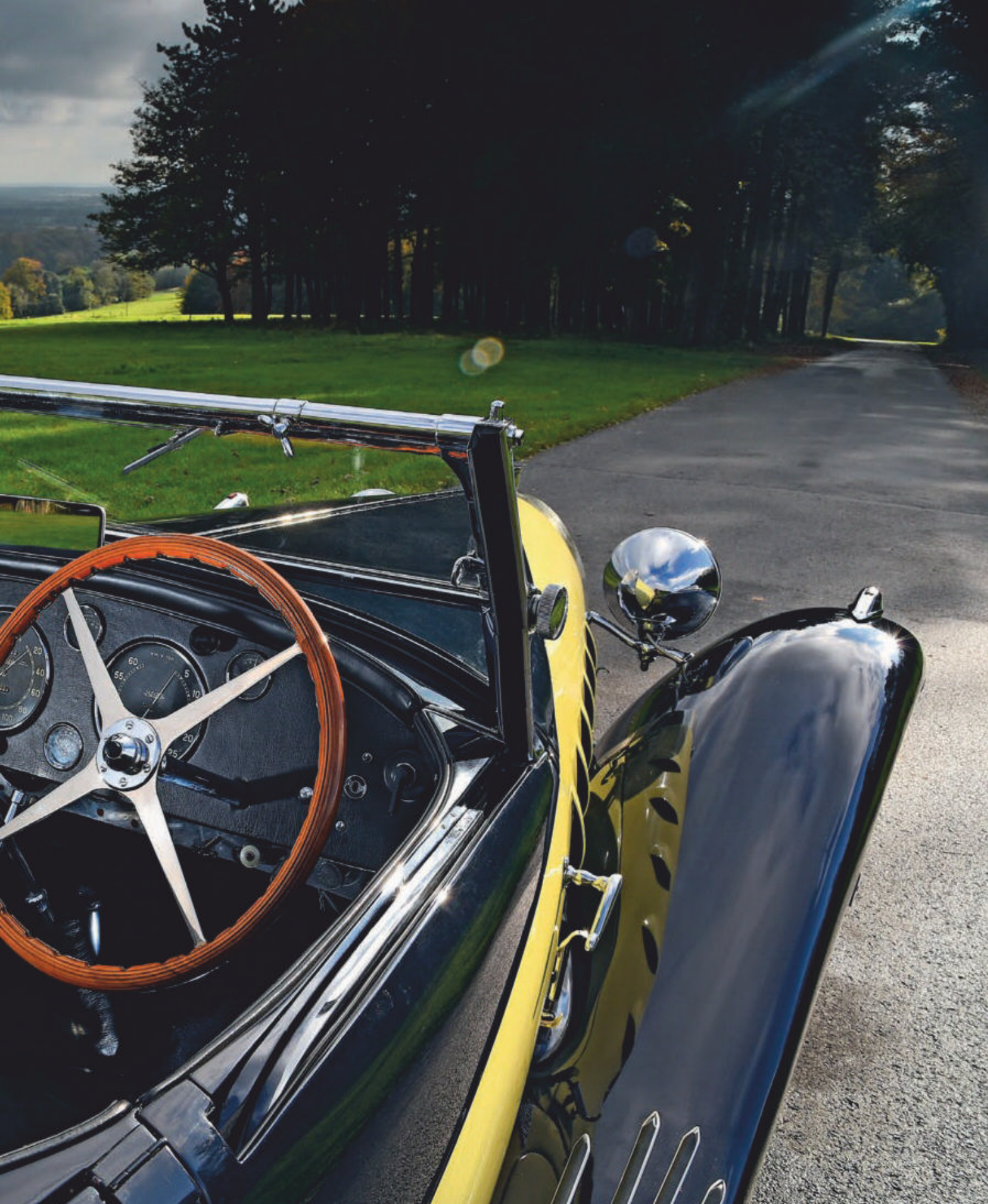
The favourite of the two cars was chassis 55221, driven by Bouriat teamed with works ace Louis Chiron, the fast and dashing Monégasque. From practice the Type 55s were no match for the dominant Alfa Romeo 8Cs, however, and at the start the two experienced racers set a steady pace, with first driver Chiron lying seventh and the veteran Ernest Friderich in ninth.

When three Alfas crashed, the Bugattis moved up the leaderboard but on lap 23, while running fourth, Bouriat suddenly failed to appear. Through the woods at Tertre Rouge the quickest Type 55 spluttered to a halt with an empty fuel tank. A mystified Bouriat climbed out as a crowd gathered around the Gallic hopeful, who swiftly discovered the cause: a stone had wedged up



Purposeful cockpit and bench seat contrast with the flamboyant exterior. Below: St John T55 rolls up the gravel drive at Goodwood House





Below, from top:
supercharged straight-
eight derived from the
T51 GP car; chassis plate
betrays Le Mans history



between the rear axle and the petrol tank, chafing a hole and causing a fuel leak.

The other Type 55 motored on through the evening and by midnight Czaykowski and Friderich had moved up to fourth behind a trio of 8Cs. As the sun rose, the blue challenger was up to third, but seven laps behind the Italians, and by midday after the leaders had been further delayed there even looked to be a chance of snatching second. But Bugatti's Le Mans jinx returned as Friderich's car misfired to a stop at the exit of Arnage. A fractured oil pipe had caused piston failure and, although still listed as fourth on distance at the flag, the Bugatti wasn't classified because it failed to finish. Molsheim would have to wait another four years before the marque finally conquered La Sarthe with the spectacular Type 57G streamliners.

Fresh from Le Mans, the tank was repaired and chassis 55221 was sold by Bouriat to Jacques Dupuy, a wealthy French magazine publisher. After enjoying the Type 55's formidable pace in its Le Mans guise, Dupuy decided to send it to Carrosserie Figoni in Boulogne-sur-Seine,

where Italian-born founder Giuseppe 'Joseph' Figoni began creating one of his most beautiful and restrained designs for the Bugatti.

Best known for his flamboyant and glamorous coachwork, Figoni's work was highly innovative in detail. The one-off roadster was finished by 1933 and Dupuy proudly entered the 1933 Paris-Nice rally and won, proving that the gorgeous-looking but heavier new body style hadn't hampered the car's performance. The rebodied Type 55 was a regular at French concours events throughout the 1930s, including the Bois de Boulogne in Paris where the crew dressed in natty two-tone nautical fashions together with a black Scottie dog to match the Bugatti's colour scheme.

During the war, like so many exotics, the desirable car was hidden away from inquisitive occupying forces, and with peacetime it found its way down to the south of France. Eventually the Type 55 followed a number of great Bugattis across *La Manche* to England where St John, then an engineer with Smiths Industries, first came across the car while searching for spares for

his rapid Type 35B. Having broken a wheel while racing at VSCC Oulton Park in 1962, St John called in at the garage of HH 'Tom' Thomas, who was well known for his stash of Bugatti spares, and spied the part-dismantled Figoni beauty for sale at £750. Thomas maintained that this Type 55 was the best, but amazingly it was the car's well-preserved wheels that first tempted St John, who had no idea of the car's Le Mans history when he bought it in '63.

The keen racer's spare time was largely taken up preparing and racing his T35B, but he eventually focused on rebuilding the T55 and it was finally back on the road in '67, the little-seen roadster causing a stir when it first appeared at Prescott Hill Climb. When a Type 51 replaced his Type 35B, St John briefly fitted a towbar to the back of the Type 55 to haul his racer, the quad-cam equipe making an amazing sight striding out across the Cotswolds from his home workshop in Chedworth to Prescott, always with his stylish wife Rita by his side. "It was a bit unkind to the Type 55," reflected St John. "You can't slip Bugatti dry-plate clutches, which is



Bouriat/Chiron Type 55
chases down the Stutz
DV32 of Édouard Brisson/
Joseph Cattaneo at '32 Le
Mans. Right: enthusiast
Duke welcomes the Figoni
Bugatti back to Goodwood

MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Elegant lines of the Figoni
Type 55 are most telling
from the rear, where the
cutaway doors and humpy
tail of the factory car are
replaced by flowing curves

a problem when you're faced with a slight incline and you have a ton of trailer on the back."

St John competed occasionally with the T55 in sprints and hillclimbs. At Prescott he was regularly given number 55, but it was on the open road when touring across Europe that he and Rita found the car in its element. Rarely was the roof raised, while the high doors with wind-up windows offered superior protection to the Jean Bugatti-styled factory car. "The Type 55 is happiest on undulating, slightly winding French roads, where it can be up and ahead of most modern cars," concluded St John. Motorways were avoided because of the drum brakes, but St John maintained that the Bugatti's limitations were mainly down to the narrow rubber rather than the design.



On long trips to overseas events the 2.3-litre, 140bhp straight-eight returned just 14mpg and, despite meticulous maintenance, the engine regularly threw out its Straight 50 oil. "Bugattis are one of those terrible diseases," St John told journalist Mark Gillies in 1989. "I just like the stubborn individualism. It's always very pleasant to work on these cars and handle the parts. There just aren't any comparisons."

St John retired early from Smiths to focus on Bugattis, both his own projects and restoration for others. His appreciation of fine engineering also embraced Velocette motorcycles and an 1892 Samuel & Co steam launch.

In 1994 the T55 was involved in a shocking accident when St John was convoying across France to an Italian Bugatti rally with his good friend Rodney Felton's Brescia. The two cars were hit by an uninsured local, with Felton's leading vintage *voiturette* coming off worse.

Once he had recovered, St John set about rebuilding his cherished car and it soon looked smarter than ever. Although he wasn't a concours man, I managed to tempt my hero to display the Ficoni-bodied Bug in the Cartier Style et Luxe

'Press in the clockwork-style key and the straight-eight engine immediately barks into life with a glorious, rousing rasp'

at the 1997 Goodwood Festival of Speed. In spite of fierce competition in the Pre-War Supercharged Sports Car class, the judges were smitten by the T55, which was a resounding winner in the final vote for Best of Show. None were more surprised than Rita and Geoffrey when they were called up to collect the award.

During the weekend we had plenty of time to chat as we sheltered from the rain. When I mentioned the Earl of March's passion for Bugattis, St John said he would be happy to offer the event's founder a drive, but frustratingly we never managed to get everyone together at Goodwood for the informal run.

St John died in February 2019, and for months I wondered about the fate of one of my all-time favourite cars. When Bonhams announced that the Type 55 would be the star of its Grand Palais Paris auction on 6 February, I suggested to director Sholto Gilbertson the idea of finally sorting a drive for the Earl, now the Duke of Richmond. The plan found enthusiastic approval and on a beautiful autumn day the Ficoni roadster is back at Goodwood House, 22 years after it won the Cartier Style et Luxe. Parked in the sunshine in front of the James Wyatt-designed Palladian frontage, the exotic Bugatti looks right at home.

Finding a window in his packed schedule was a challenge, but the enthusiastic Duke was determined not to miss the opportunity of a drive in the T55. Bugattis have been a fascination for him from an early age, and back in 2000 he tested a Type 51 up the famous hillclimb that forms his driveway. "I loved coming down to

Goodwood to see my grandparents, who were the most wonderful characters," he recalls. "When I was eight, they gifted me a copy of Ralph Stein's book *The Great Cars*. I spent all of Easter trying to draw the Bugattis it illustrated. The style and details of these amazing machines still captivate me."

Since the launch of the Festival of Speed and the subsequent reopening of the circuit for the Revival, Goodwood has hosted some remarkable marque highlights including a display of five Royales in 2007, and the largest-ever Bugatti-only grid at the 2014 Members' Meeting. Coincidentally, just inside the house, a Baby Bugatti has indoctrinated another generation: "My three-year-old grandson adores it."

Outside, the Duke slowly walks around the Type 55 and Ficoni's sleek body, with its elegant detailing, immediately enthalls him. "The shape is exquisite and the lines really flow," he enthuses, his hands moving to acknowledge the profile and neat tail design. "The low windscreen perfectly finishes off its style and reminds me of a classic '32 hot rod."

After glancing inside at the bench seat, he finally climbs in for a drive up the familiar strip of Tarmac. The clockwork-style key is pressed in and the straight-eight immediately barks into life with a glorious, rousing rasp: "The throttle is super-responsive and I love the fantastic blend of sounds the engine plays. There's nothing quite like a Bugatti exhaust note."

The Duke is fortunately well prepared for the tight footwell, having worn narrow shoes, but the centre throttle comes as a surprise. After practice he declares the layout better for heel-and-toeing and marvels at the feel of the controls, particularly the light, short clutch action.

Having familiarised himself with the reversed gate of the modified constant-mesh 'box, first is engaged and the Duke moves around the gravel circle in front of the house and on to the blacktop. Quickly into second, the Bugatti accelerates up the hill, its crisp, throaty exhaust audible long after the car has vanished up the tree-lined route to Molecomb corner. After several runs the Type 55 returns, autumn leaves caught in the distinctive honeycomb radiator core and the black paint dulled by light grime.

"It's beautiful to drive," the Duke smiles as he switches it off. "The steering is as light and sharp as the T51 GP car I drove here, and the torque is marvellous. The engine feels wonderfully smooth right through the rev range, and the gearchange is much faster than my AC 16/80. I'm amazed at how tight the whole car feels."

Clearly delighted by the diversion from a busy schedule, the Duke reluctantly has to go. For a few more minutes before historic racing specialist Dan Setford arrives with the trailer, we stand and admire the T55 in the late sun. As he loads up, Setford concludes: "I just hope the next owner uses it. Too many great cars are now being stuck away." On such a beautiful afternoon, it's frustrating that I can't drive the Bugatti back over the South Downs into the sunset. That's what St John would have done, with Rita by his side and the elegant Scintilla headlights illuminating the road as darkness crept in on the way back to his beloved Cotswolds.

Thanks to the Duke of Richmond, Setford & Company (www.setfordandcompany.co.uk) and Bonhams (www.bonhams.com)







FUN FOR THE CITY

Sired by congestion-friendly *kei* regulations, Mazda's first road car became a best-seller on Japan's busy streets. In the USA, however, it's a head-turning rarity

WORDS **MARTIN BUCKLEY**
PHOTOGRAPHY **JERRY WYSZATYCKI**

Part of the charm of early Japanese cars, particularly the *kei*-class miniatures, is that outside their home territory they are still a bit of a mystery. Because they were a peculiarly domestic market-focused product, not imported into the UK in any significant numbers (if at all), so we missed out on all kinds of intriguing oddities that are now considered the crown jewels of any serious microcar collector.

Mike Malamut can certainly be considered as such: there is a rich seam of bubbles and dinky European runabouts in his private museum of 100-plus cars, but he is particularly proud of his Mazda R360. Malamut and his little blue coupé are more than holding their own among some of the most valuable exotica in the world when we first spot them at the Concours on the Avenue in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. This relaxed, free-to-enter display of street-parked classics is a pleasant aperitif to the sensory overload of Monterey Car Week. Here, among the Ferraris, rare muscle cars and seemingly every possible species of Porsche, all and sundry are cooing over the absurd cuteness of this baby Mazda.

The marque's first true private passenger car, launched in May 1960, the R360 is a cartoon character of a vehicle with its bubble roof, bug eyes and mini tailfins. Less than 10ft long and just 4ft 2in wide, this tiny 2+2 coupé is a car so adorable you would have to have a heart made of flint not to want to scoop it up and take it home like an abandoned puppy.

The R360 wasn't built to pull on heartstrings, however, but merely to fulfil the strictly regulated criteria of the Japanese government's *keijidosha* (light car) rules, brought in a decade earlier as a way of stimulating the local automotive industry in a country that was still five years away from even having its first motor show. Despite the high urban density of the domestic conditions, where roads were poorly surfaced and narrow, and the speed limits were low, to own your own car was becoming the great national dream by the end of the 1950s. The appeal of the *kei* regulations was that small cars of less than a specified length would be taxed at the equivalent of £1.50 (rather than £15) per annum, and that drivers of such vehicles would be subject to a less stringent driving test.

The original 1949 ruling applied to vehicles of up to 150cc (100cc for two-strokes), but it was only when the limit was upped to 360cc, in 1955, that the *kei* idea had a practical application in the

enough to be lifted by an adult, this engine would push the R360 along at 56mph through its four-speed manual gearbox. There was the £20 option of a two-speed semi-automatic, Japan's first torque-converter-equipped transmission, a nod to the fact that first-time drivers in a country not exactly steeped in car culture may struggle with a conventional gearchange.

Everything had been designed with lightness in mind, from the torsion-bars-in-rubber suspension to the bodyshell, which weighed only 150lb. With its Perspex rear window and ultra-minimalist cabin, the R360 Coupé was the lightest car built in Japan. To put things into perspective, a Renault Twizy weighs a whopping 200lb more than the Mazda.

There were 4500 pre-orders and production was soon up to 2000 a month in a mostly self-sufficient and very modern factory that had been only lightly damaged by the events of 6 August 1945. With 23,000 sold in the first year, the little Mazda soon had 64% of the *kei* market. The sliding door windows were replaced by the proper wind-down type fairly early on, and from 1962 there was a Deluxe version with a two-tone paintjob and mudflaps among other refinements. Production lasted until 1966, by which time Japan's inroads into the American market were well under way, although, unlike Subaru, Mazda



Clockwise from above: a new name for Tokyo's streets; Malamut with coveted R360 Coupé; original toolbag survives



When the museum closed, it came up for auction at Scottsdale in 1986, which is where Glenn Roberts, owner of the highly respected Finishing Touch body-

realm of private cars. Suzuki announced the two-stroke Suzulight the same year, although only 43 were built of the first version.

With Japan's economic miracle well under way, Subaru followed with its 360 in 1958. This was the first mass-produced model in the class and production lasted through to 1970, the year *kei* car sales peaked at 750,000.

Mazda – or Toyo Kogyo – of Hiroshima was better known as a truck manufacturer, having built its first in 1930. When the firm introduced its R360 in 1960 there were still only 1.3 million private cars on the Japanese roads. Like most of its *kei* rivals the R360 was rear-engined, but it was four- rather than two-stroke and thus less smelly, and thriftier, than any of its rivals. It was a V-twin with a diecast aluminium crankcase, magnesium-alloy clutch housing, fan-cooled cylinder barrels and aluminium cylinder heads.

Good for 16bhp at 5300rpm, and easily light

had no interest in inflicting its *kei* car on buyers outside Japan. It saw its future in bigger products such as the 800cc Familia and the new, Bertone-styled 1½-litre Luce saloon.

The attentions of the engineers at Mazda had in any case moved on to the possibilities of the Wankel rotary engine – the company was poised to launch the futuristic Cosmo coupé – although from 1962 baby-car customers could buy a more grown-up true four-seater: the water-cooled, four-cylinder P360 Carol.

R360 production totalled some 65,000 cars, all but 700 of them thought to be right-hand drive. The early history of this left-handed car is not known, but it is believed to be one of the handful – perhaps 30 examples – built for American servicemen stationed in Japan.

It subsequently came back with one of them and ended up in a museum collection, still wearing a 'US Military' sticker.

shop in Fountain Hills, Arizona, bought the diminutive Mazda, almost on a whim. It had covered just 12,000 miles, but had at some point been poorly repainted.

An initial surge of enthusiasm, which resulted in the body being stripped down to a naked tub in just a day, was followed by a 12-year lull. Then, in 2002, Roberts resolved to revisit the Mazda, having discovered a cache of new parts in Japan. Two years later the restored R360 won its class at the annual Japanese Classic Car Show in Long Beach, California, and 15 years on it still looks like a new vehicle. Everything is exactly as it was from the factory: seat trim, tools and even the owners' manual (in English).

The engine, which is pleasingly presented with a central dynamo that's almost as big as the block, has plenty of space to vibrate. The front boot is mostly occupied by the battery and fuel tank; you lift the lid to get to the filler, but not



Tiny Mazda buzzes along the Carmel coastal road. Below: lightweight 356cc twin uses aluminium and magnesium extensively

too often because the R360 is good for 70mpg.

As for the driving, all I can tell you is that being on the outside, looking at the Mazda, is probably better than being in it, looking out – unless it's raining or you've lost your shoes.

Actually, I should qualify that by saying the interior is cheerfully coloured, light and with few distractions apart from a steering wheel, column stalks, a speedometer and a tiny temperature gauge. The seats are wafer-thin and it's not too tight a squeeze for a pair of adults inside.

Malamut drives the R360 expertly around the tight, hilly back-lanes of Carmel, but the sounds from the rear end are more garden machinery than automobile and the gears need to be used liberally; first is 'crash'.

It occurs to me that I probably know people who weigh more than this car, and you have to wonder what it would be like three-up with a load in the boot. It rides well on its torsion bars, though, to cope with the poor local roads of the time, and the rack-and-pinion steering is light and accurate. The weight and power of the thing hardly tax its drum brakes.

The point is, this is an object that just makes you smile; I can't help but think of Inspector Clouseau's police car from *The Pink Panther*

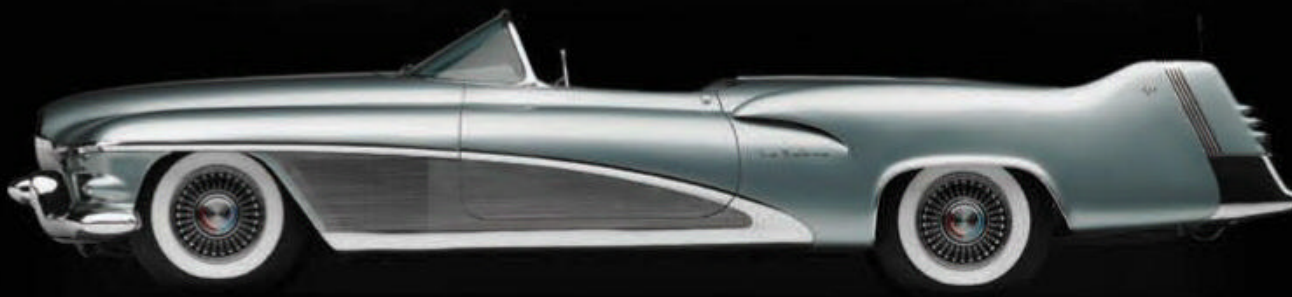
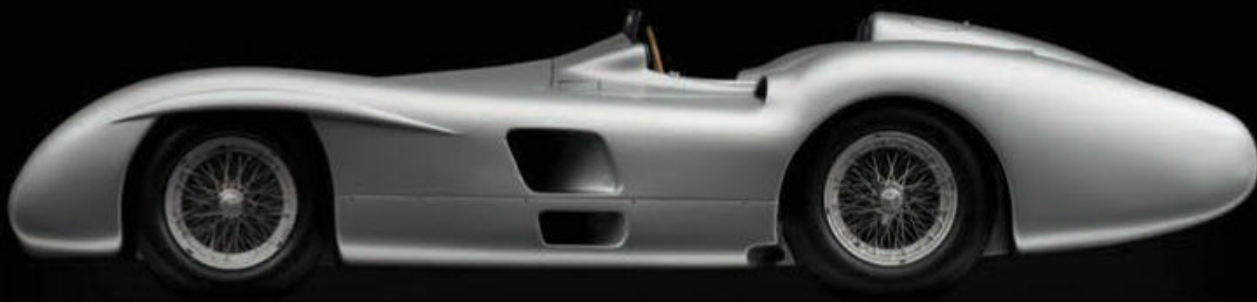




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SUNOCO PORSCHE - MICHAEL FURMAN . LE SABRE - MICHAEL FURMAN AND GENERAL MOTORS CO.

cartoons. The colour, and the size, also give the R360 a strong hint of the British Ministry of Health cars of unhappy memory – but because the Americans never had an NHS that handed out free motor cars to people, that comparison may get lost in translation so I keep it to myself.


And why dampen the mood? Being with this Mazda is like hanging out with a minor celebrity. Children want to be photographed next to it and, as an attractor of attention, nothing comes close. Forget E-types and 911s: the R360 is a magnet for every Californian jogger that comes into its sight line. “People go crazy about it – I just tell them it’s a new model,” jokes Malamut, who began his love affair with cars as a youngster repairing VW Beetles in the 1960s, before gravitating to Porsche 356s while, at the same time, getting in early on the growth in computer



diagnostics machinery and finally making his fortune with a multi-franchise car-leasing business. He sold out in 2001 to go full-time playing with old cars. Thus, rather than being the traditional gilded Californian collector, he came up the hard way and really knows his cars, with a fondness for the sort of vehicles he was involved with as a young man. Yes, he has a Merc Gullwing and a Toyota 2000GT, but he is equally passionate about his BMC Minis, his four-wheeler Berkeley or his ’60s Saabs and Volvos. His Japanese selection includes a Datsun Fairlady and an early B222 pick-up, plus Honda Z600 and S800, and an early Land Cruiser.

But the R360 had eluded him until fairly recently. He courted the previous owner for years, trying to persuade him to part with the little car: “I would see it at car shows and I’d say, ‘Glenn, that deserves to be in my museum.’ After five years he called and said, ‘I’m sending one of my kids to college, I’m ready to sell it.’” Malamut also bought a Mazda Cosmo from Roberts.

Malamut thinks there are probably only five R360s in North America, and his left-hand-drive car may be unique. It would have cost that original 1964 owner the equivalent of around £300; it would be a lot more today. Malamut won’t be drawn on figures: “I could have bought a nice Porsche for what this cost me.”

So we can assume that, at a featherweight 838lb, the Mazda R360 is, per pound, one of the most expensive classic cars out there. 

MAZDA R360 COUPÉ

Sold/number built 1960-’66/65,000

Construction steel monocoque with aluminium bonnet

Engine all-alloy, ohv 356cc V-twin, single carburettor

Max power 16bhp @ 5300rpm

Max torque 15.9lb ft @ 4000rpm

Transmission four-speed manual, RWD

Suspension independent, by rubber springing and torsion bars

Steering rack and pinion **Brakes** drums

Length 9ft 9in (2972mm) **Width** 4ft 2in (1270mm) **Height** 4ft 2in (1270mm)

Wheelbase 5ft 9in (1753mm)

Weight 838lb (380kg)

0-40mph 18.5 secs

Top speed 56mph **Mpg** 70

Price new £285 **Price now** £40,000



‘Being with this Mazda is like hanging out with a minor celebrity; forget E-types and 911s, the R360 is a people magnet’

Head and tail-lights blend into fins and swage line. Top: minimalist cabin officially seats four, but it’s snug even for two

GONE WITH THE WIND



Chrysler's sales flopped when it launched its bold new streamliner. But although a commercial catastrophe, the Airflow inspired other makers including Volvo for its glamorous Carioca

WORDS **JON PRESSNELL** PHOTOGRAPHY **WILL WILLIAMS**



Challenging the ‘me-too’ mediocrity with the bravely new is a path strewn with danger. But Chrysler must have thought it was on to a winner when in January 1934 it unveiled its Airflow – ‘the first real motor car since the invention of the automobile’, according to Walter Chrysler.

Streamlining was the design fad of the time, from toasters to locomotives, and keyed in with artistic trends such as Art Deco and Bauhaus. Meanwhile, automotive engineering was emancipating itself from horseless-carriage crudity and rejecting unyielding cart springs, the heavy separate chassis, and rod or cable brakes. An ‘aerodynamic’ car that was technically as bold as it was aesthetically in tune with the moment: how could Chrysler’s new ‘Fashion by Function’ model conceivably fail?

Yet fail the Airflow did. Abandoning the controversial waterfall front for 1935 made no difference. In its cheaper De Soto form, just 13,940 were sold in 1934, against 22,736 more conventional De Sotos the previous year. That figure crashed to 6275 cars in 1936, the De Soto’s final year. The more expensive Chrysler version registered 11,292 sales in 1934 and managed just 4600 units in its farewell year of 1937. In total, and after continual facelifts, a mere 55,155 of all types would find buyers.

The story had begun when, to celebrate his 10th anniversary as a car manufacturer, Walter Chrysler had wanted something special. His engineers, meanwhile, had been questioning, exploring, experimenting. The company was ahead of its rivals in having a high-grade engineering department, led by a trio known as ‘The Three Musketeers’ – Fred Zeder, Owen Skelton and Carl Breer. Having already come up with the ‘Floating Power’ flexible engine-mounting system, the threesome’s next field of investigation was aerodynamics. With input from the Wright brothers, a scale wind tunnel was built – and an astounding realisation was that the cars of the time were more aerodynamically

efficient when put backwards through the tunnel.

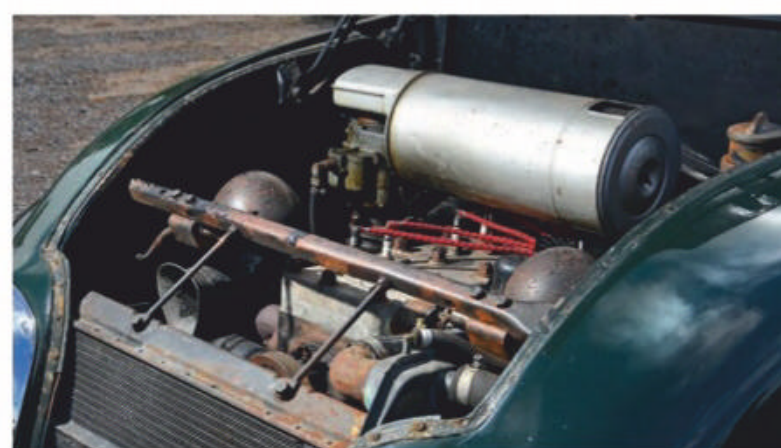
Led by Breer, a car was designed around aerodynamic requirements, starting by lowering the build of the body by moving the rear seat forward and dropping it down in front of the axle rather than having it sit above it. But the Airflow wasn’t just a wind-shaped styling exercise: uniquely for a mainstream American model, it was an integrated design. The new body lent itself to semi-monocoque construction, so was given a perimeter frame that was a part of the shell. Bolted to this was a sketchy chassis to locate all of the mechanicals. The result was a structure that was 150-200lb lighter than a conventional separate-chassis design, with 40% improved torsional stiffness. Finally, the weight distribution and the periodicity of the springs were carefully studied, resulting in a loping ride said to be in harmony with the rhythm of the human stride.

Such was the car unveiled at the 1934 New York Auto Show, as a straight-eight or straight-six Chrysler or a cheaper and smaller-engined 3956cc six-cylinder De Soto. The first signs were good: according to Breer, there were more orders placed at the show than any other car had ever achieved. But the Airflow was slow into production. Advanced multiple-spot-welding machinery required more development time. Making the stylish chrome-plated tubular-framed seats meant mastering new techniques for a car factory. And there were strikes at suppliers. By the time production started, in April 1934, many would-be buyers had walked away, aided by whispering campaigns by rival manufacturers. There were, of course, the inevitable teething problems, too.

The received wisdom is that, whatever its shaky start, the main problem was that people took against the Airflow’s looks. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is true, but Carl Breer was not convinced. ‘[Had] we been able to put some 25,000 Airflow cars in the hands of owners during the month of January immediately after the show, we felt certain that Airflow styling would have been accepted,’ he



Clockwise from above: utilitarian wheel fronts Art Deco-style dash; 4-litre straight-six is good for 100bhp; soft Airflow makes for a relaxing drive





'The De Soto is a magnificent beast in the richness of its detailing as much as in its imposing, hunkered-down shape'

later wrote. 'It would have forestalled rumours from developing about the car's reputation.'

Whether Breer's view is right or wrong, the Chrysler certainly left its mark. It informed car design in many European countries (see p147), while in the USA its influence filtered through piecemeal to mainstream automobile design – in matters of body/chassis construction and suspension as much as in aesthetics. So much for historical context. To see how the Airflow rates in the real world, what better than to pitch a rare British survivor against one of the cars it most probably inspired, Volvo's PV36 Carioca?

Adam Moody's six-cylinder Airflow is in fact a 1935 De Soto model, but as a British-built Airflow assembled at the company's premises in Kew it was called a Chrysler, and it has some detailing borrowed from its sister marque – such as the triple-bar bumpers of '34-season US Chryslers. Owned by the Moody family for 50 years, the car is in unrestored original condition, barring two repaints. It's a magnificent beast in the richness of its detailing as much as in its imposing, hunkered-down shape.

In place of the Chrysler's original waterfall

prow, and flanked by oval headlamps, there's the 1935 De Soto's narrow grille – which has more than a little of the Chrysler Building about it, that Art Deco masterpiece. There are those stacked-blade bumpers front and rear with their 'teardrop' vertical embellishers, a line of bonnet-side louvres that could have come off your grandmother's stove-enamelled oven, a chromed spline to emphasise the split rear window, and a stylised emblem on each wheel spat. Add in the streamlined doorhandles, 'Chrysler' lettering on the hubcaps, the leaping-gazelle mascot and those torpedo rear lights on their beefy cast-alloy brackets, and you have a mix heady enough to delight any lover of '30s exuberance.

The interior continues in the same register with its tubular seats – pure Bauhaus, with their exposed side framing, complete with little armrests in the case of the rear seats. There's plenty of legroom in the back, where passengers have a full-width footrest, and the seats are trimmed in buttoned leather, presumably a detail of British-assembled Airflows. By the same token there's a cloth headliner, rather than the avant-garde Formica item on US cars.

Up front there are gold-faced dials on the painted dashboard, and switches with curved brass trim plates; a clever detail is that the front quarterlights are not only winder-operated, but can also be locked so they descend with the side glass. The only false note is a utilitarian three-spoke steering wheel that looks as if it has been plundered from the Dodge Trucks parts bin.

What, though, of the Carioca? That the style of the Volvo was informed by that of the Chrysler seems self-evident, despite the relatively short interval between the Chrysler's launch and the March 1935 unveiling of the Carioca. There are also traces of the 1935 model-year 'aerodynamic' Hupmobile about the front end – quite possibly as a result of the designer, Ivan Örnberg, having spent time working for Hupmobile.

It should not come as a surprise that Volvo – then a fledgling manufacturer that in 1935 made fewer than 800 cars – should have turned to the United States for inspiration. In Sweden, US cars dominated the market, and Volvo's mission was to build itself up by offering products that were pitched at those who would otherwise buy an American vehicle.

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Peugeot's slippery 402 was a strong seller

HOW INFLUENTIAL WAS THE AIRFLOW?

It is often loosely assumed that the Chrysler Airflow was an influential product. This needs to be qualified. To be sure, during the period between 1934 and 1936 a rash of supposedly streamlined designs was introduced, in just about every country with a motor industry. But strip out those cars that were nothing more than Deco-detailed fastback versions of their maker's regular 'perpendicular' style – think SS1 Airline, Rover Streamline, MG Airline – and in fact the imitators are few in number.

In the USA, the other manufacturers mostly let Chrysler pioneer for posterity while they continued to churn out more saleable orthodox fare. One exception, arguably, was the 1938 Graham, but take away the reverse-rake snout and the 'Sharknose' was stylistically pretty conventional. That leaves the Lincoln-Zephyr as the only other aero-look US design. But John Tjaarda's Lincoln forsook Deco excess for a svelte simplicity that ruffled few feathers. Helped no doubt by its signature V12 engine, it comfortably outsold the Chrysler. In its first year, 1936, 14,994 found a home, against 6275 Airflows. The following year Zephyr output doubled, while the Chrysler sank beneath the waves. It should also be noted that the Lincoln was lighter, stiffer and more aerodynamically efficient than the Airflow...

Outside the United States, two of the most blatantly Chrysler-inspired designs were the

1935-season Singer Eleven Airstream (right down to its tubular seats) and Toyota's first private car, the 1936 Model AA, which was created after Toyota had bought and stripped an Airflow. The Singer was a sales disaster, with perhaps 100 being made out of a planned run of 750, and the Toyota was built in very small numbers – around 1500 examples, including a later derivative.

A more predictable essay in Airflow copyism was the Volvo Carioca featured here. Pitched into a market in which American marques reigned supreme, the avant-garde Volvo nonetheless struggled to find buyers. Sundry middle-European countries chipped in, too: a good example is Austria's 1936 Steyr 50. Over in France, Panhard's baroque '36 Dynamic shared many design details with the Chrysler, but the eccentric sleeve-valve saloon was again a minority interest, with an estimated 200-300 cars built. Renault also had a crack at the genre, with its 1935-season Viva and Nerva Grand Sport saloons; these spilt-screened, hunchbacked oddities lasted just a year.

More relevant from a sales perspective was the handsome Peugeot 402 introduced in 1935, with the smaller 302 version following a year later. Indeed, the aero Peugeots – baby 202 included – can legitimately claim to be the sole Chrysler clones to have been a commercial success, with almost 188,000 made.



Singer Eleven Airstream was a blatant Chrysler crib



Toyota stripped an Airflow before it designed the AA



'The Volvo's specification was advanced, befitting an upmarket model, but it eschewed the radical rethinking of the Chrysler'

Using an 84bhp, 3670cc sidevalve straight-six, as found in Volvo's other cars and its trucks, the Carioca was built around a separate cruciform chassis and boasted coil-sprung independent front suspension, hydraulic brakes, and a semi-elliptic rear end controlled by an anti-roll bar. This was a relatively advanced specification for the day, befitting what was seen as an upmarket model, but at the same time it eschewed the radical rethinking behind the Chrysler's design.

Although this cannot be confirmed, the Carioca seems to have been manufactured only in 1935 and 1936. Offered as an upmarket alternative to the company's conservatively perpendicular PV658/PV659 mainstay, just 500 were laid down – plus one chassis bodied as a drophead by an outside coachbuilder – and the last was sold as late as September 1938. Again it is held that the looks proved too radical for the intended clientele, although a price in Sweden 1000 kroner higher than that of a De Soto Airflow must also have been dissuasive.

Volvo learnt from the exercise. The basic recipe was right, but simpler and less expensive mechanicals were required, along with less challenging aesthetics. The result was the PV51, introduced in December 1936. Powered by the same 3.7-litre engine, it had a beam front axle, a more orthodox front-end treatment, simplified interior trim and a body that, while based on the style of the Carioca, lost the more costly details. Gone were the wheel spats, the split windscreen and the two-piece back window. In addition, the body was now all steel, as opposed to the more labour-intensive shell with some wood framing that was used on the Carioca. At 5800 kroner, against 8500 kroner for a Carioca, this was the model that set Volvo on the road to becoming a

Though separated by the Atlantic, the PV36 (leading) and the Airflow both offer remarkably similar styles – Volvo's imitation being the sincerest form of flattery



‘Alongside the De Soto the physical kinship is flagrant, despite the Volvo’s more sober frontal treatment’

serious player in the Swedish private-car market.

In preparing the ground for the PV51 and its successors, the Carioca was thus a more important car for Volvo than its sales figures suggest. But how does it stack up against the Chrysler? As Andrew Anderson's example, the only one in the UK, positions itself alongside Adam Moody's De Soto, the physical kinship is flagrant, despite the more sober frontal treatment. The shallow turret top, the two-part glazing front and rear, the fall-away back end, the integrated headlamps and the rear spats with their Deco emblems: we're on familiar territory, notwithstanding the Volvo's four-rather than six-light configuration.

Missing, though, are many of the De Soto's spirited details. There are two-piece vee-shaped bumpers, slightly oval headlamp surrounds, a rather splendid bonnet mascot, and that's about where it stops. The same goes for the spacious interior, which is plain and workmanlike, the only glitter provided by the chromed rail topping the front seat. Bonus point: the Volvo has external access for its decently sized boot. It also has a heater, an interesting counterpoint to the De Soto, which does without – but which, with its disappearing front quarterlights and its windscreen with two opening panes, is doubtless suitably in tune with rather different US needs.

It's easy to forget that how the two cars look is only part of the story. How do they drive? Easy, lazy power is a given, notably for the Airflow, which not only offers 100bhp but also, at 31cwt (1575kg), is 188lb (85kg) lighter than the Volvo. Unsurprisingly, then, the De Soto offers broad-shouldered and torque-rich performance – without ever descending into the rumbly roughness of an early V8 Ford. The long and loose gearlever slots in sweetly and, once



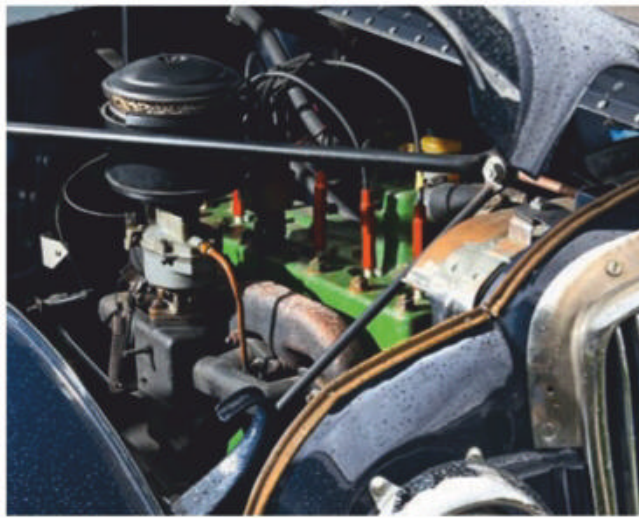
Above: PV36's split bumper lacks the delicacy of the De Soto's triple-blade item. Below, left-right: more sober dashboard; 84bhp sidevalve 'six'



you're rolling, you can let the freewheel do its stuff and achieve snatch-free and smooth changes up and down – although the three-speed gearbox does have synchromesh. The automatic overdrive cuts in almost undetectably, knocking back the revs for relaxed cruising.

This is the core of the De Soto's character, flouncing along the road on its gently soft suspension, that 4-litre 'six' turning over unhurriedly, the steering – heavy at low speeds and with a poor lock – holding the car on a steady line with no undue effort required. Dial in the effective hydraulic brakes and you have a beguiling package for traversing the Far West... but maybe not the West End.

"The overdrive makes it long-legged and it'll roll along all day at 50-55mph – although there's a surprising amount of wind noise, given that it's



supposed to be streamlined," says Moody. "The long springs deal well with bumpy roads even if the car does roll a bit. I think the springs have settled, though, and this has upset the steering's geometry and made it heavier. For a 1930s car it drives extremely well, but with those seats it's quite weird – a bit like riding about on a sofa."

The Volvo plays a different tune – one that's more sober and Swedish. The Carioca feels taut, riding more firmly and with a touch more zing to its responses. There's the same generous low-down torque, and again the big sidevalve is pleasantly smooth. The steering is loose and slightly vague, the brakes short in travel and efficient, the gearchange sticky in action. There's none of the automaticity of the De Soto's freewheel-plus-overdrive transmission, so you have to take your pause-in-neutral time as

you work through the three-speed gearbox with its leisurely synchromesh, if you want to avoid clashing the gears. But once you're under way it's a relaxing old beast – and will surely be better with a bit of attention to the steering.

For a company that had only been making cars for eight years, and whose production of passenger vehicles up until 1934 was less than 5000 in total, the Carioca is a laudably resolved machine. "It's well built and advanced for its time, but quite heavy," says Anderson, who found the car in the United States and has been gradually getting it into good running order. "It's not as good as the later pre-war Volvos to drive, or my post-war PV60, but it picks up speed quite well and the engine is very smooth."

It's clear that the De Soto benefits from Chrysler's rethinking of American design norms. Differently, the Volvo has a less showy approach to modernity that seems well judged for a young company needing to poach buyers away from more conventional machinery. In their native habitats, either car would surely have given satisfaction to its 1930s owner. But they would have to have had the bravery of an early adopter to have parked the De Soto or the Volvo on their driveways, and suffer the puzzlement and mockery proffered by their unappreciative neighbours. Such are the perils of being a pioneer.

Thanks to Sywell Aerodrome (01604 801620; www.sywellaerodrome.co.uk)

INHERITED BEAUTY

It's one of just 15, the genesis of the modern Aston Martin and a treasured family heirloom, yet this DB1 has lived a wonderfully understated life

WORDS **MARTIN BUCKLEY** PHOTOGRAPHY **JAMES MANN**





'It was undeniably handsome, even if pre-war Aston buyers probably didn't think much of its rather louche bench-like seat'



Life for a nation at war, as well as being exhausting, terrifying and expensive (both fiscally and in human terms), has an immediacy and an urgency about it that tends to sharpen minds and appetites so that creativity flourishes in the ensuing peace.

Even so, and considering the limited resources, the ingenuity, energy and sheer variety of Britain's immediate post-war motoring landscape are increasingly impressive the further this ignored period recedes into history.

It was the 1948 British International Motor Show at Earls Court, and the Jaguar XK120, that seemed to give people official sanction to dream. But somewhat lost in the well-deserved furore surrounding the XK was another new fantasy machine for the even more fortunate few: the Aston Martin Two Litre Sports.

Little recalled today, it was a good example of that almost primal urge to make fine expensive motor cars, in the face of the ration books and powdered-egg misery of the times, that rekindled some of the joy and excitement of the 1930s.

The fact that Aston had survived at all was

probably a surprise to most show visitors, given the firm's troubled first 20 years, but the excellence of cars such as the International, Le Mans and Ulster meant there was a reserve of goodwill towards the firm that was somewhat out of proportion with its achievements and output. Destined only to be built to the tune of 15 examples, today we know this car better as the DB1, a retrospective title bestowed after its demise in favour of the DB2 in May 1950.

The classic cycle-winged Astons of the '30s had mostly been skimpy and low-slung; the voluptuous Two Litre Sports, styled by the underrated Frank Feeley of Lagonda and almost decadent in comparison, had a full-width aluminium body with full-sized front-hinged doors and a flowing tail with a proper bootlid. The battery and spare wheel were stowed in wing bays, Bristol style, and its tall, gently reclining front grille was a clue to its identity, even if pre-war Aston Martin buyers probably didn't think much of its rather louche bench-like seat. Yet it was undeniably handsome, and said to be good for 93mph from its 90 horsepower.

Priced at more than £3000 with Purchase Tax, the equivalent of £110,000 adjusted for inflation,

it was the first of the David Brown Aston Martins to be offered to the public and the last to have a four-cylinder engine.

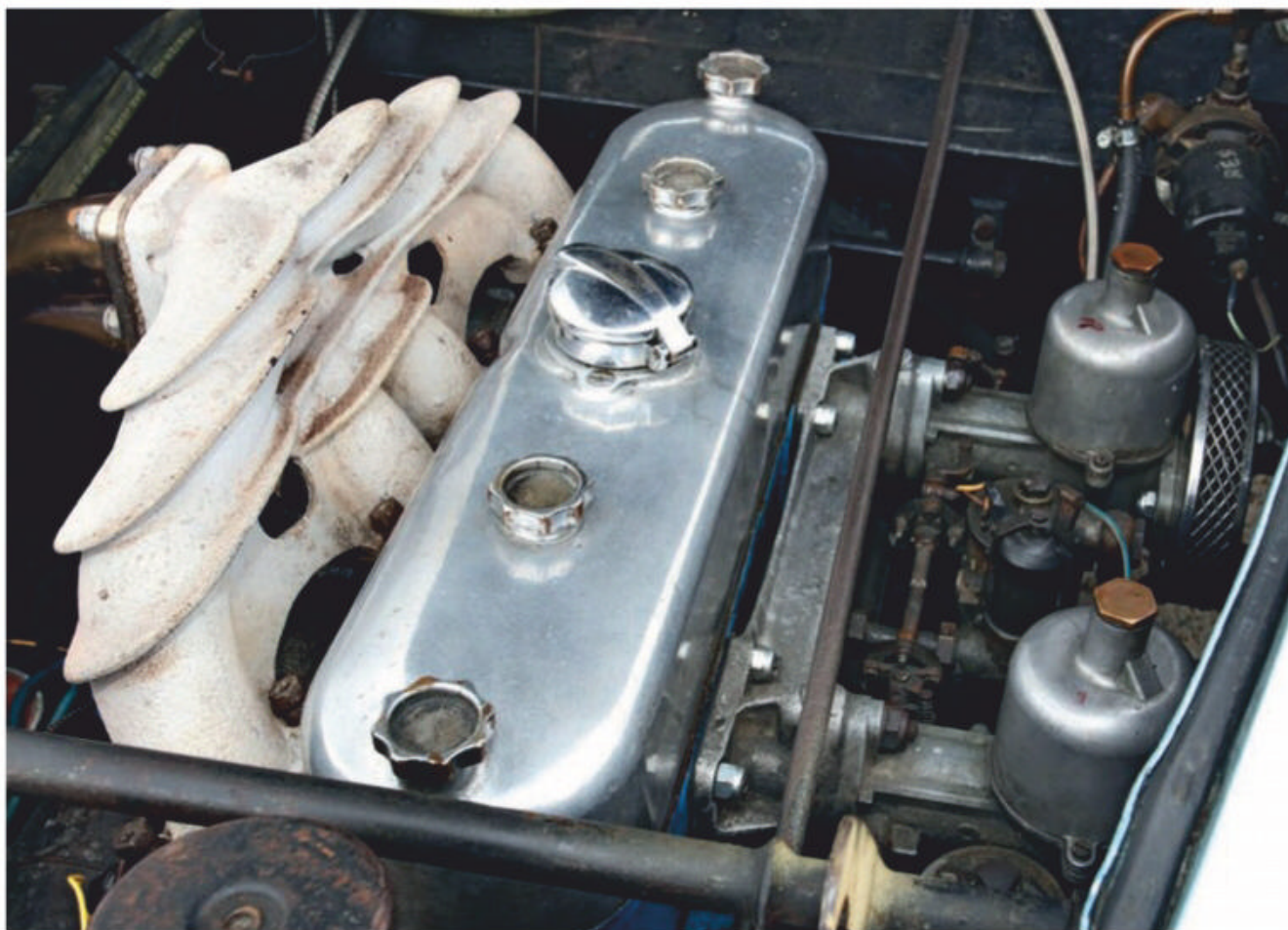
In-line fours had been a noble tradition at Feltham – the 1½-litre cars of the Bertelli era had made the firm's name – but, behind the scenes, tractor tycoon David Brown was already beginning to have second thoughts on this topic.

Having scooped up Aston Martin and its modest assets in 1947 in response to an advert in *The Times* – 'offers invited for the purchase of a sports car company' – DB quickly followed this by acquiring Lagonda for £52,000. Even if he didn't get the Staines factory in the deal, £72,500 was a very reasonable price, even then, to secure ownership of two of the most respected names in British motoring. Both would almost certainly have foundered without Brown's support.

The Lagonda purchase came with the prototypes of the WO Bentley-designed 2.6 saloon, which were almost ready to go into production, but the way forward for Aston Martin was much less obvious at first. Undoubtedly its chief asset was engineer Claude Hill, an on-and-off fixture at Aston – when it could afford to pay his wages – since the '20s.



Main: Frank Feeley design had its origins before WW2 in Aston's Atom. Below: exuberant finned exhaust manifold is most striking element of utilitarian engine bay



ASTON MARTIN 'DB1'

Sold/number built 1948-'50/15

Construction aluminium body, steel tubular semi-spaceframe chassis

Engine all-iron, ohv 1970cc 'four', twin 1½in SU carburettors

Max power 90bhp @ 4750rpm

Max torque 135lb ft @ 3000rpm

Transmission four-speed manual, RWD

Suspension: front independent by trailing arms **rear** live axle, parallel arms, Panhard rod, Watt linkage; coil springs f/r

Steering worm and roller

Brakes 12in (305mm) hydraulic Girling drums

Length 14ft 8in (4470mm) **Width** 5ft 7in (1702mm) **Height** 4ft 7in (1397mm)

Wheelbase 9ft (2743mm)

Weight 2520lb (1143kg)

0-60mph not disclosed

Top speed 93mph **Mpg** n/a

Price new £3000 (1948) **Now** c£500,000

He had already devised a rigid chassis, made up of 13- and 18-gauge square-section tubes and running a 9ft wheelbase. Picking up where his pre-war Atom prototype saloon had left off, Hill equipped it with 7in trailing-link front suspension (where the links turned on roller bearings in an oil-filled crossmember) and a coil-sprung live rear axle located by a Panhard rod and trailing arms, thus setting the refined yet rugged tone for Aston road cars right through to the de Dion-equipped DBS.

Hill started work on the new 2-litre engine in 1944. While his choice of four cylinders was consistent with Aston tradition (it had never built a 'six'), its pushrod-operated valvetrain seemed retrograde in the light of the marque's long history of overhead camshafts. It was, however, an expedient choice in the prevailing atmosphere of austerity, where simplicity was an asset and the quality of fuel put a limit on compression ratios and power outputs: 90bhp was pretty impressive from a 1970cc engine running twin 1½in SU carbs.

Its high-mounted camshaft was driven by a chain running off the rear of the cast-iron, five-main-bearing crank, and the cylinder-head design featured large, vertically mounted inlets and 20° angled exhaust valves for a high-turbulence swirl-action combustion chamber shape.

With flat-topped pistons and higher compression, Hill's engine had already proved itself in the Spa Special, a shorter-wheelbase, cycle-winged prototype of the Two Litre Sports that won the 1948 Belgian 24-hour race, driven by St John 'Jock' Horsfall and Leslie Johnson.

But if the stamina of the four-pot 2-litre was not in doubt, then its showroom appeal – when measured against the cheaper, sexier six-cylinder twin-cam XK120 – certainly was.

The answer, of course, lay with the Lagonda straight-six in the restyled DB2 that, from 1950 onwards, marked the true beginning of the post-war Aston Martin story. This was a move that resulted in the departure of Hill from Feltham, nursing a case of hurt pride after Brown cancelled his planned pushrod 'six' in favour of the WO Bentley unit.

Of the 15 DB1s built, nine are known of today and they are most readily identified by their registration numbers. THX 231 was the brochure car and the first to be sold, while

UMD 123 was the fourth DB1 built and ran at Le Mans in 1949; TME 474 was the 1948 show car. The second DB1 built is in Ireland and there are others in Japan, Belgium and Switzerland. KOH 120, the 1949 Earls Court car, was the only one with a folding windscreen. As recently as 2013 car number three, TML 278, was discovered in Scotland needing full restoration.

The DB1 story would have come to a natural conclusion at just 12 cars had John Cavendish (later Lord Chesham, and chairman of the RAC) not put in a request for a Two Litre Sports. He wanted an open Aston (there was no convertible DB2 at the time), but Feltham told him that DB1 production had ceased. However, they agreed to build him one if he could find two more customers to make the job cost-effective.

Chassis numbers 13, 14 and 15 were thus laid down in the spring of 1950 and would be registered OPD 51, 52 and 53, the last of them being delivered to Cavendish in June. This car, OPD 51, was sold to a Dr Campbell Golding of St John's Wood for his wife to use, which she did for the following 18 years.

"Dr Golding was a friend of my grandfather," says the car's current owner, Allan Southward of Beckenham. "He and my father would be round at their house regularly and my dad, Robin, always admired the car and would offer to wash it. But it wasn't until later, when he was about 18, that my dad heard Mrs Golding was regularly sending the DB1 back to Feltham to be serviced: she would send the chauffeur with the car but, when it arrived, Aston couldn't find anything wrong." This had become a monthly event.

"My dad, who was an engineer at a firm based in Feltham, offered to take the car into Aston the next time it played up," continues Southward. "He quickly worked out that it just didn't like being driven around London at low speeds. All it needed was a good run on an A-road."

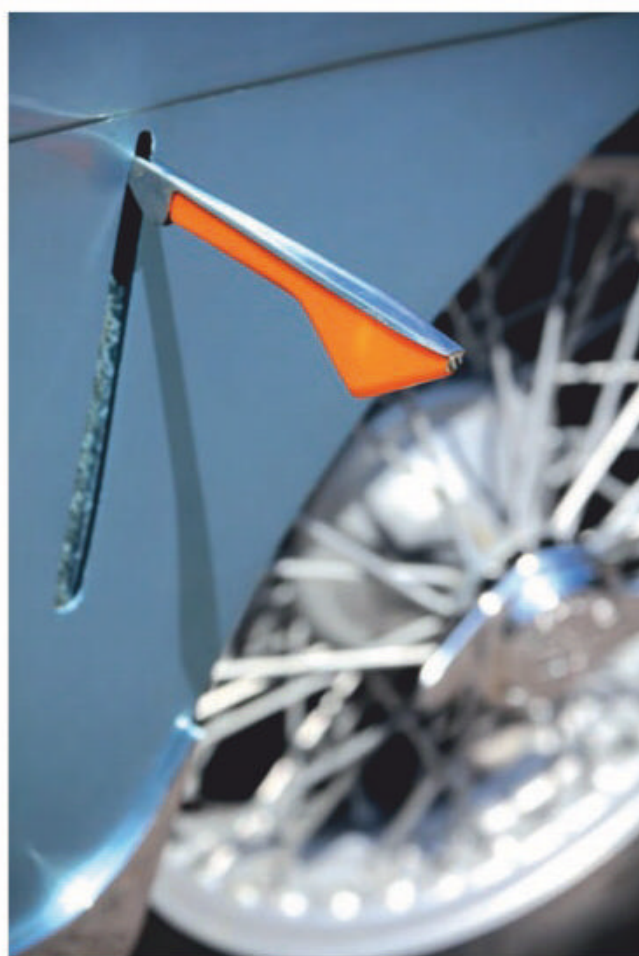
Obviously that wasn't a problem for the keen young Mr Southward: "So my dad then formed an even stronger bond with the car and told Mrs Golding that he would like first refusal if she ever decided to let it go."

The Goldings' children, when they came to driving age, briefly had use of the Aston – which had been resprayed gold and was originally blue – but considered it an old wreck and had no desire to keep it in the family. Mrs Golding, meanwhile, had moved on to a new Ferrari and finally the day came when she put in the call to Southward. "She asked £5," his son explains, "and Dad said he couldn't possibly give her just £5... 'How about £7 10s?'"

At last Southward had his dream car, but the first day of ownership was not without drama. On the way home from St John's Wood, he stopped at a petrol station and was offered £1000 for the Aston on the spot, but turned it down.

"The car then lost a rear spat on the A30 – it got squashed by a lorry – but otherwise arrived in Guildford unscathed," says Southward Jnr, who reveals that neither his mother nor grandparents were impressed that his father had turned down such an obscene profit on what was a very out-of-fashion old sports car at the time. Allan was a twinkle in the parental eye when the DB1 joined the family, so grew up with OPD 51: his earliest memories are of going to club meetings sitting next to his sister in its tiny rear seats.

His father used OPD 51 on and off for 10 years. It wasn't particularly watertight or



"It seemed that Dad's work was wasted due to the time it sat in the garage. He was very happy to see it finished"

reliable, with the chances of getting to and from your destination being about 50/50.

Then one day, while descending a hill, the front wheels went in different directions. This was the early 1980s and an indication that the time had come to tackle a restoration.

Stripped down to a bare chassis in the family garage – Southward can dimly recall lending a hand, armed with a screwdriver – it was discovered that there was very little keeping the body attached to the frame. This initial burst of enthusiasm was followed by long periods of inactivity where the Aston sat under a tarpaulin on the drive. The chassis was taken to be blasted and zinc-coated in 1983 and, at some point, the shell went off to be painted.

Sadly, the bodyshop's lackadaisical attitude meant the car was put to one side and forgotten. All that was gained over the ensuing five years was a layer of dust, a few dents, and no new paint.



Owner Allan Southward enjoys his rare Aston, mixing display appearances at high- and low-profile events



Main: uncomplicated dash complements simple trim.
Left, from top: grille hints at Aston's future design trends; trafficators lasted until the DB MkIII

Meanwhile, Southward Snr had become distracted by a Citroën SM, although he had managed to remake all the wood around the Aston's windscreen and rebuild the engine. By the late 1990s, however, it was looking increasingly unlikely that he would ever get around to finishing the car.

His son, by then an IT manager with a healthy mechanical interest, decided to take on the job himself. He persuaded his dad to part with the Aston (which was a garage-bound rolling chassis with the various parts piled up in boxes inside it) and went in search of professional help to get some momentum behind putting it back together, as and when time and funds allowed. This wasn't your usual think-of-a-figure-and-double-it, open-checkbook restoration.

Southward speaks particularly highly of Peter Pryce-Tidd and John Talbert of General Automobile Services, who, picking up where his dad left off, recommissioned the car. He also received a great deal of support from Tim Cottingham of the Aston Martin Heritage Trust. "It has taken 15-20 years to get it to this stage," says Southward, who was busy raising a family. "It was more of a time thing than a money one."

The car was back on the road in 2014 and appeared on the Cartier Lawn at Goodwood in 2017. "At first, every time I drove it something would go wrong," Southward says. "It seemed that a lot of Dad's work was wasted due to the time

it sat in the garage. Dad passed away in April 2019 but he was very happy to see it finished."

The DB1 has been Southward's ticket to a variety of glamorous motoring events but he is enthusiastic enough to drive it himself to some of the more down-to-earth ones as well – I first encountered it at Bicester Heritage. But he would be the first to concede that the Two Litre might not be your ideal choice of Aston for a trip to Scotland or a Continental tour. "You drive it defensively, like a motorcyclist," he admits. "Concentration levels are much higher than in a modern car."

Attractively but rather plainly trimmed, the DB1 feels roomy with a flat and purely functional dashboard, a giant steering wheel and a neatly resolved hood arrangement. The small, square, floor-hinged brake and clutch pedals are not particularly heavy, but the uninspiring brakes are doubtless the main cause of Southward's anticipation anxieties. You really do have to keep a close eye on what is happening two or three cars ahead of you.

The throaty, offbeat exhaust makes no secret of the Aston's four-cylinder credentials, a sound that somehow doesn't chime with the car's suave looks. The motor sounds as ruggedly dependable as it appears: a tall, all-iron lump with that curiously finned manifold. Brown understood the visual appeal of a twin-cam straight-six, but this doesn't look anything like as special.

You urge it through the four fairly long ratios of the DB gearbox, which rewards patience with clean shifts, noting the long-stroke torque but missing the silky, eager responses of a 'six'.

The acceleration is, in truth, fairly pedestrian; Southward thinks a rebuild might be in order but doesn't relish the idea of disturbing the one-piece front 'clip' that comprises the body's front end – a necessity if you want to take out the engine.

At pottering speeds the steering wanders slightly but it gets better as you pick up the pace, peeling away the understeer and feeling both stable and with a supple ride, a modern compromise Aston had not managed before.

After appearing at the NEC Classic Motor Show in November, OPD 51 will spend the winter in the small collection of historic cars on display at Aston Martin's Gaydon factory.

A slightly uncertain and rather overlooked opening gambit in the marque's post-war adventure, it established Aston's credentials under DB for building well-groomed cars with good handling. It is a pretty, pleasant car, yet not an exciting one in relation to what came after it: but you knew that already. The point about the DB1 is its rarity and its place in history at the beginning of the marque's most charismatic chapter. Sometimes that's enough.

Thanks to Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar (bigginhillheritagehangar.co.uk)

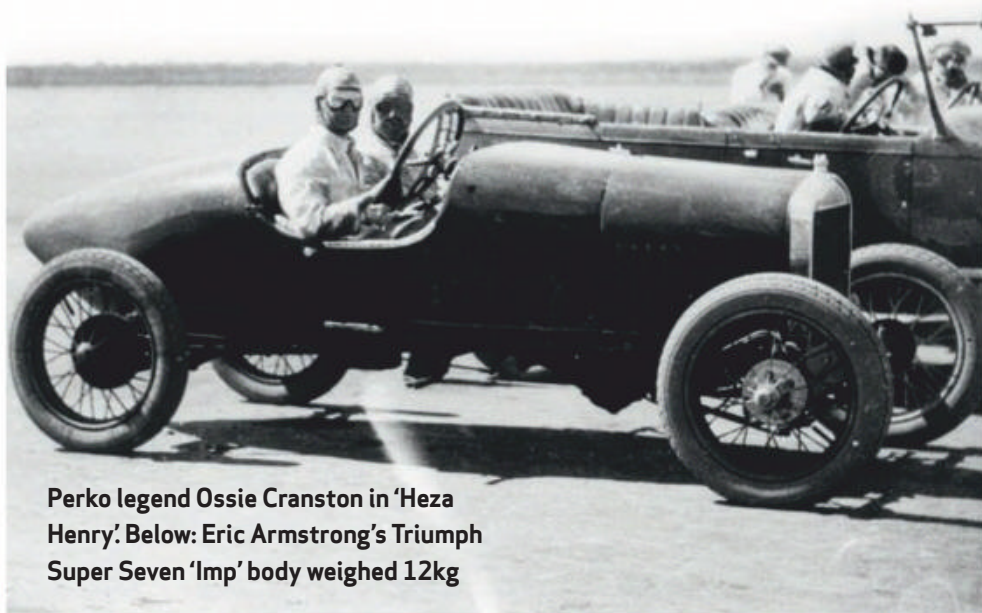


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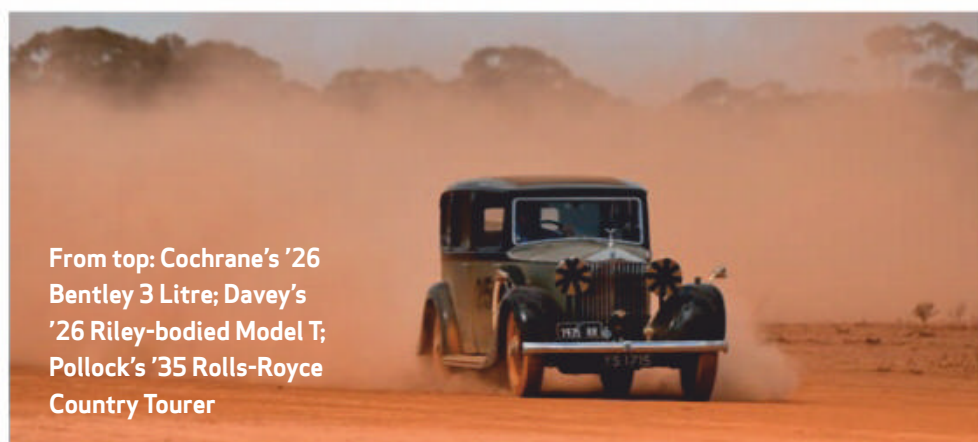
Deep in the Australian Outback is a race that's a world away from modern motorsport, where Ford Model Ts face off against specials of all varieties

WORDS **GRAEME COCKS** PHOTOGRAPHY **SHARON SMITH/NICOLE LOTHE**





Perko legend Ossie Cranston in 'Heza Henry'. Below: Eric Armstrong's Triumph Super Seven 'Imp' body weighed 12kg



From top: Cochrane's '26 Bentley 3 Litre; Davey's '26 Riley-bodied Model T; Pollock's '35 Rolls-Royce Country Tourer

Is it possible to experience what it was *really* like to race 100 years ago? After all, just about everything has changed since those wild days. The great race tracks of the world have been rebuilt dozens of times and would now be unrecognisable to the drivers of old. The world's first purpose-built race circuit, at Brooklands, is now just a fragment of the famous banked track where legends were made. The Circuit de Le Sarthe at Le Mans enables cars to exceed 200mph on modern Tarmac made for safety; in the early 1920s, that same loop had rocks the size of cricket balls dotted along some parts of the track. The Indianapolis Motor

Speedway has just a narrow strip of bricks to mark the original starting line of the fearsome 'Brickyard'. The Mille Miglia is today a rally squeezed on to modern roads, and those of the Targa Florio in Sicily are now sealed.

There is a place, however, that provides a snapshot of the early 20th century. It is absolutely, exactly the same and is called Lake Perkolilli. And for one week in September, the roar of engines once again broke the solitude.

It is not an easy place to get to. The journey begins in Perth, the state capital of Western Australia tucked into the green south-west corner of the expansive southern continent. The landscape turns from green to red during the

unrelenting 600km drive east, as the farming land thins and the rich hue of the true Outback becomes the base colour.

Kalgoorlie, the nearest city, is one of the world's major gold-mining centres. Beginning with the gold rushes in the 1890s, the lure of the precious metal created an entrepreneurial spirit, a can-do attitude, which is still alive in the area today. The road continues to head north-east for another 42km, past the ghost town of Kanowna, to where a simple handwritten sign bearing the words 'Lake Perkolilli Red Dust Revival 2019' points down a dirt track.

The name says it all. The rich red dust is a powder that rises like morning mist and sits



From left: Brits in the bush included Austin Sevens of all shapes, along with Morgans and Singers



Daniel Cocks in the cockpit of a 1913 Ford Model T Speedster called the 'Ashton Racer'. His beard isn't normally red!

in the atmosphere for minutes after you pass. The track widens and another sign welcomes you to the 'Mecca of Motor Sport'.

Really?

This is Lake Perkolilli. It's not a lake, no, but a shimmering claypan that is billiard-table smooth and rock hard thanks to a high gypsum content (the stuff used to make plasterboard) in the clay.

It's been five years since pre-war motorsport enthusiasts last trekked to Lake Perkolilli. On that occasion they celebrated the centenary of racing at the Outback venue, but the event was washed out after two days when the dry basin became waterlogged and turned into a temporary lake. The enthusiasm to do it all again

became overwhelming and an informal club was founded to revive motor racing at 'Perko', as it is known. The Lake Perkolilli Motor Sports Club was formed two years ago and the announcement of the Red Dust Revival soon followed.

The response was extraordinary, with 100 pre-war motor car and motorcycle owners accepting the challenge to race again, because Perkolilli has an allure that is hard to describe. It seems crazy to restore a vintage racer and then take it to a place where it will be blasted with red dust that will fill every nook and cranny. Teams camp in the woodland next to the track, and it's true bush camping: bring all that you need to sustain you and your machine for a week, with no

electrics or phone signal, and water from a truck.

Nothing much has changed in 100 years. The routine is simple: wake as the light of dawn stirs the camping ground, make breakfast, wander down to the pits on the fringe of the claypan, fire up your engine and take to the 4.25km oval. It is the very essence of motoring freedom.

Perko has been called the Great Red Dyno, because it is where the most minor faults in racing machines are quickly found out. This is full-throttle driving, if you have the courage to keep it at maximum revs for two laps. Temperatures rapidly climb to 40°C by mid-morning, and the enduring dust clouds are more of a challenge than a barrier to racing.



Gary West's 1939 Dodge Brax Special was unbeatable at Perko. The car is a veteran of the Phillip Island Historics

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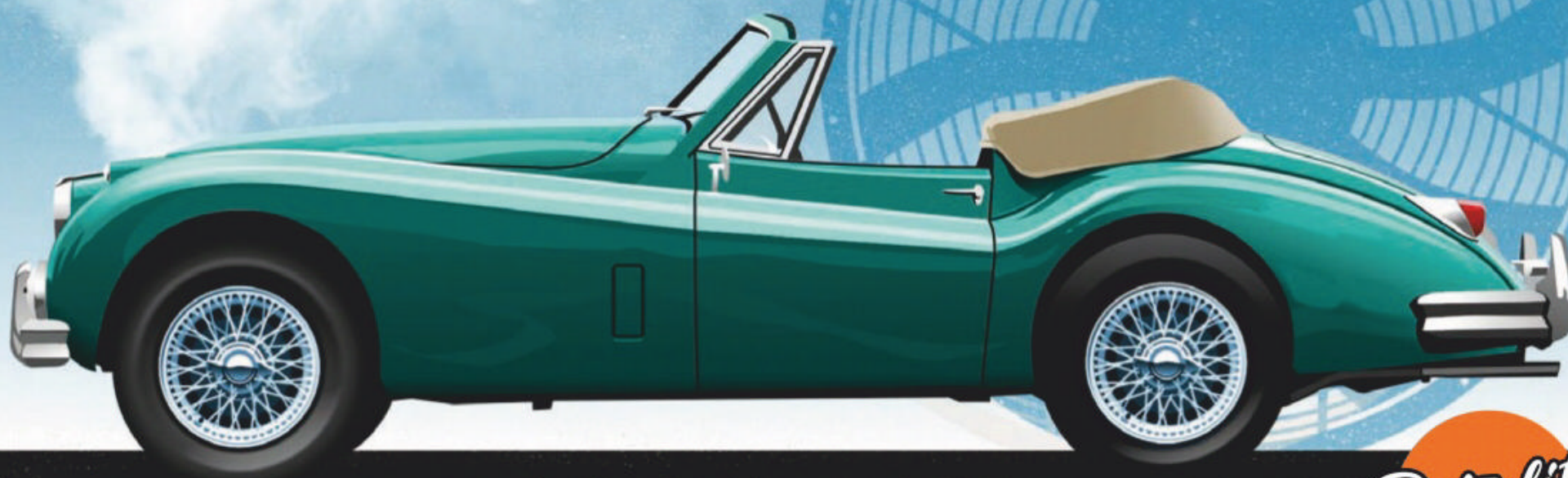


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The surface is the same as it was in 1914 when it was discovered by the local motor club, invited to come from Kalgoorlie for a picnic by the cattle-station owner. Naturally, they couldn't resist the temptation to race; there was simply nowhere else in Western Australia where their machines could be exercised at full throttle.

Australian motorcycle speed records would soon be set there, and drivers and riders returned again and again until the First World War halted motorsport. When hostilities ended and racing returned to Perko, the cars and 'bikes were faster and Australasian records were broken again. That culminated in a series of 24-hour benchmarks set by Chryslers and a Studebaker, the fastest all-day times posted on an unbanked track with a natural surface anywhere in the world.

For the Red Dust Revival, a temporary mechanical workshop was erected on site by long-time Rolls-Royce enthusiast Mick Rust. His Kalgoorlie Motor Works became the first port of call for ailing machines. "We are now part of a brotherhood... and that includes women!" he announced at the closing function, acknowledging the male and female drivers who competed during the week. The challenge of racing and surviving on the Outback claypan creates a community of Perko veterans, he says.

The Lake can be brutal, and some cars couldn't be brought back to life even in Rust's workshop. Steven 'Waldo' Alexander shipped his 1936 Lagonda Woodbatt Special from the UK, but it lasted less than two laps before blasting a conrod out of the block at right angles. Unperturbed by his misfortune he spent the rest of the meeting racing an Austin Seven, loaned to him by Hugh Fryer. Alexander won the 'Longest and Shortest Distance Travelled Trophy' to the cheers of the Australian drivers, who appreciated his good humour and hard-luck story. He vowed to return, admitting he hadn't had as much fun since he first raced at Goodwood.

Many cars were built solely to race at the Red Dust Revival, coming from all over Australia to this remarkable patch of dirt in the Outback. The other cars at Perko were a mix of British, American and European specials, but only one of them competed in the original pre-war events: the Lagonda Rapier now owned by Paul Dean of Perth. He always races it flat-out, without much regard for its thoroughbred status.

The fields varied from large Americana such



Above: Mick Rust of Kalgoorlie Motor Works. Below: 1936 Ford V8 Special queues up with '34 Ford V8 Coupe behind



'Cars set off at different times and drivers must be on the limit through the blinding dust – it just sits like red fog'

as Chryslers and Ford flathead V8 specials to diminutive Austin Sevens. Nigel Makin of Perth entered a Triumph Super Seven that was built as a replica of the supercharged 'Imp' campaigned in period by Perko legend Eric Armstrong; it always kept the Austin Sevens honest.

Kevin Cochrane raced a 1927 Bentley 3 Litre and Kevin Coote a 1947 Bentley MkVI against all comers, but the most surprising cars at the Red Dust Revival were the Fords. The Montier Specials based on Henry Ford's creation put in creditable performances at Le Mans, and one much-improved Model T even went to Indianapolis, but it was at the fairgrounds of America and race circuits such as Perkolilli where the Fords came into their own.

There was a full field of rustic Model Ts ranging from an out-and-out racer known as 'Heza Henry', which has a Brooklands Riley body and a Rajo overhead-valve engine, to a 1926 Ford 'Gow Job' entered by Graeme Lockhart, inspired by the early hot rods of California in the late 1920s. Ted Mumme drove the 3400km through central Australia from Darwin to race his 1915 Speedster and join what was probably the greatest number of Model Ts competing anywhere this century.

Brett Pollock entered his own unlikely race car, a 1935 Rolls-Royce 20/25 saloon. Surely only at Perko will you witness Model Ts contesting the same race as a Rolls-Royce.

Racing at Perkolilli combines moments of sheer terror with others of exhilaration, not least because the event employs a handicapping system to try and ensure that cars will cross the line together after two laps or nine kilometres of the circuit. To create that parity, cars set off at different times and drivers must be on the limit through the blinding dust. When there is no wind to push it away, it just sits like red fog over the clay track. Anticipation therefore becomes key for the drivers to not only know where they are on the circuit, but also – and more importantly – where the other cars are, too.

It was no different 100 years ago, but the reality of early motor racing is far different to our modern perceptions. Yet still at Lake Perkolilli, like nowhere else, historic motor racing remains in its purest form.

For more information on the Lake Perkolilli Red Dust Revival, see www.motoringpast.com.au



Chrysler 70 'Silverwings' lines up with Bugatti Type 37, Heza Henry and Jack Smith's much-modified Buick in 1927



Builder and restorer Mark Adkin (on left) and owner Alex Hunt with rare and now perfect Alpina C2

“Sytner’s rang and said ‘come back and build it again’, so I put it back together”

Restored by the same team that built it in period, this fabulous Alpina C2 2.7 has made the transition from unloved garage find to family heirloom

WORDS GREG MACLEMAN PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN BRADSHAW







‘Whatever your E30 poison, it could be breathed on by the boffins at Buchloe and assembled in Nottingham’



Clockwise from above: engine had to come out for fettling, but the shell was remarkably sound; Adkin at work on the reassembly; new 63-litre fuel tank; suspension strippdown; build plaque confirms the identity of C2 car 7466



Now back to completely original spec, the Alpina looks superb in Lachs Silver with distinctive Deko pinstriping. Right: four-spoke wheel and matching gearknob



In the light of the events of recent years, it's difficult not to look back on 1973 as something of a watershed moment. Britons, more than ever before, were looking to the Continent for inspiration and, although you were still more likely to holiday in Margate than Marbella, the change was clear to see in everything from pop music to restaurant menus. Just like our evolving gastronomic tastes, we gained a growing appreciation of exotic performance saloons – and who could blame us for having our heads turned when at home we were being served up a lukewarm platter of Austin Allegro and Morris Marina? One of the first foreign firms to capitalise was Alpina, a small company based out of an old typewriter factory in Buchloe, Germany.

What began with tuning kits for the BMW *Neue Klasse* saloon eventually encompassed the lion's share of Munich's model line-up, covering everything from entry-level models right up to the firm's top executive offerings – each of which elicited a fascination among the British public that was rarely matched outside Germany.

Alpina's presence in the UK started in the Surrey village of Westerham, with Crayford. Although best known for its convertible conversions of mainstream fare, the concern also served as a concessionaire for the German firm from 1970. Crayford put a 2002 demonstrator on the road before distribution was taken over by Alpina factory driver Brian Muir, and later Tom Walkinshaw. In 1982, responsibility for



Alpina in the UK shifted to Sytner, the Nottingham outpost of BMW run by legendary Touring Car racer Frank. Sytner's stewardship proved a turning point for the tuner's fortunes in Britain, and for the first time Alpina's cars were available to view in a dealership and – crucially – configured in right-hand drive.

Against the backdrop of shoulder pads, power ballads and white-lined excess of the 1980s, BMW's second-generation 3 Series – the E30 – became a runaway success. The baby Bimmer was soon the car to be seen in for everyone from estate agents and investment bankers to permed footballers and popstars, largely due to the model's broad appeal; it could be had in just about every conceivable configuration, including a four-door, convertible, coupé and even a load-lugging tourer. And whatever your

poison, it could be breathed on by the boffins at Buchloe and assembled in Nottingham.

The first Alpina-tuned E30 derivative was the C1 2.3, introduced in 1983 and featuring a revised version of the previous generation's 2316cc straight-six, but it failed to impress despite an improvement in power output of 30bhp over the standard car's 137bhp. The cam was particularly aggressive, only coming alive after 3500rpm, and when BMW boosted its factory model to 148bhp that same year, it somewhat negated the advantages of the pricey tuned version. By the time the C1 landed on British shores a year later it was a tough sell, and Sytner fell well short of its planned 47-car sales target. In the end, only 35 were built.

It wasn't long before Alpina introduced a bigger-engined version of the E30 – the B6 2.8 – but of the 259-strong production run, just one car was produced with right-hand drive. It was built at Buchloe for Sytner, who decided instead to wait for the more affordable C2 2.5. Power came from the economy-minded smallblock 'eta' M60 engine, modified with a 323i crank and Mahle pistons, with capacity reduced to 2554cc and power upped to 182bhp. Despite impressive performance figures, the 2.5 didn't exactly fly out of the showrooms; it wasn't until its big brother was launched in 1986 that the C2 finally captured the imaginations of buyers.

Unlike previous Alpinas, the full-fat C2 2.7 was an Anglo-Saxon collaboration, with the first example being built not in Buchloe but Nottingham – a task that was entrusted to Alpina Supervisor Mark Adkin. "It was just me and one other bloke – it was basically a full-time job," says Adkin, who worked exclusively on the Alpina conversions from 1983-'89. "I built C2s, B9s, B10s and B11s, and I was the first person to go over to Germany to build a V12 – Frank Sytner's 7 Series demonstrator – but there was nothing on the market like the C2 2.7."

Just three years after the first 2.7 left the Nottingham works, Adkin and his small team turned out F885 JCH, a two-door coupé finished in Lachs Silver: "I built the car in 1989," says Adkin today, as he lifts the front-hinged bonnet and points out the chassis plate, which bears a number that begins with his initials, MA. "It started life as a standard 325i with M-tech suspension and an M-tech bodykit," he explains. "All the cars were brand new and bog standard to begin with. We used to take out the engine, remove the gearbox, take off the old suspension, brakes and exhaust – that was all changed. We swapped the front and rear dampers to Bilsteins, with firmer springs all round, and a tubular exhaust manifold made by Janspeed was then mated to a full Alpina exhaust system."

The attention to detail is impressive even in the interior, where the original dashboard was stripped down and the speedometer and tachometer were modified, with the needles carefully painted in red. The main party piece, however, was that straight-six engine. "It was a real gem," recalls Adkin. "It was built at Buchloe using Mahle pistons, a different camshaft and an uprated ECU."

As with its predecessor, the C2 2.7 used the 'eta' block, retaining the original 84mm bore and 81mm stroke for a capacity of 2693cc. Trick pistons increased the compression ratio from 8.5:1 to 10.2:1, while the cylinder head received hemispherical combustion chambers and bigger

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valves. The result was an output of 207bhp at 5800rpm – not only eclipsing the standard ‘eta’ unit to the tune of 80bhp and the factory 325i by 38bhp, but also comprehensively outmuscling the then-new M3, which mustered 192bhp from its four-cylinder S14 motor. And though the horsepower figures won bragging rights in the bar room, on the road the real difference came from the vast surplus of torque – 197lb ft (213lb ft for the cat version) compared with the M3’s 166lb ft.

Little is known of the car’s history after it left Sytner in 1989, and Adkin followed it out of the door a short time later: “I only left due to a change in the law,” he explains. “In April that year the government decided that all the cars had to be taxed and insured before being converted, which resulted in a lead time of six months. That just killed it off; we went from building a car or two every week to nothing. I decided it wasn’t going to change so got a job at a Porsche garage.”

The story might have ended there, were it not for Alpina’s 50th-anniversary celebration at the



E30 two-door is more of a short saloon than a coupé, but the shape has aged gracefully. Left: sweet ‘six’ is docile at low revs, but sonorous when extended

‘An M3 is a peaky machine that needs to be wrung out; in contrast, a C2 feels quick all over the park’



Silverstone Classic in 2015, and the chance find before it of a C2 2.7 that was ripe for restoration. Sytner’s Matthew Stripling managed to source a car that had languished in a garage for years, forgotten and half buried under a pile of old carpet – and that car turned out to be F885 JCH. An ambitious plan was soon hatched to have the E30 track-ready for Silverstone.

Adkin was still heavily involved in car preparation, and had just finished work on a Lancia 037 and the ex-Harri Toivonen Metro 6R4 when he got the call: “The phone rang and Matt said to me, ‘Come back and build it again.’ So I put the car back together.” Mirroring 25 years earlier, an area was set aside in the Sytner workshop for Adkin’s project: “They gave me a ramp and everything I needed to get on with it – just like in 1989. We had everything out of it – engine, gearbox, suspension – and everything from the underside came off. We fitted new dampers and springs, new brake pipes and a fresh long-range fuel tank – Frank never liked filling up,” Adkin laughs. “Underneath, it had never been welded. It was absolutely immaculate, as was the paintwork – the previous owner had the car painted in the 1990s and it was still perfect, despite being stored all those years.

“It had a few nasty things on it, such as horrible lip spoilers. All the lights were black, so we took those out and threw them away in order to put it back to original. We didn’t have any trouble getting parts – most are still available, and what we couldn’t get through BMW we

were able to source from other manufacturers.”

Despite working alone, Adkin managed to turn the car around in just five months, in time for the birthday celebrations at Silverstone, but the C2 hadn’t even left the workshop before it was snapped up by eagle-eyed E30 racer David Hunt. “I went to Sytner looking at new BMWs,” recalls Hunt, “but when I saw it in the showroom I thought, ‘If I can get that at the right price, it’s coming home.’ It wasn’t even ready for sale, but we came to an agreement.” The Alpina then joined a collection of classic BMWs that included a Buchloe-built E28, his first ever E30 racer, and an E36 that he currently campaigns with the Classic Touring Car Racing Club – “just don’t ask me about this season,” he grins.

As Hunt’s burgeoning collection grew, the C2 2.7’s position within it gradually became more precarious. But, as before, a buyer was found before it was offered for sale: his brother, Alex. “I never thought he’d sell it,” says Alex, who moved on a mint E30 M3 to fund the purchase. “I sold the M3 and bought the C2 that same afternoon. The M3 was a lovely car, but this just had such provenance there was no way I was letting it out of the family. Knowing that Mark has done all the work on it – again – is unbelievable. It’s a gorgeous car; you don’t even have to drive it to appreciate it.” There’s a definite note of mischief in those final words as he presses the keys into my hand.

With the run of the Lincolnshire Wolds open to us, I turn the key and kick the silky straight-six

into life. It’s an unobtrusive, almost civilised engine that sounds only slightly fruitier than a standard 325i at idle, while the luxuriously trimmed interior is unmistakably E30, Alpina wheel aside, from the fantastic all-round vision through the boxy glasshouse to the centre console angled selfishly towards the driver.

The gearbox is shared with the factory car and is precise, with a longish throw, and it’s only when you really start to push the C2 that the advantages of Alpina’s tuning package come to the fore – notably the ready torque and easily accessible power. The M3 is a performance icon, with better brakes and steering unfettered by conversion to right-hand drive, but it’s a peaky machine that needs to be properly wrung out. In contrast, the C2 feels quick all over the park, particularly at lower speeds where the muscle of that 2.7-litre ‘six’ helps it power out of corners. It isn’t the fastest car on paper, or the flashiest to look at, but there’s something undeniably brilliant about the C2 that you only realise when it’s on the move; it’s one of those cars that proves far greater than the sum of its parts.

Giving it back is harder than you might think, but it’s clear that Alex Hunt is a safe pair of hands. Will he ever get rid of it? “If I sold it, I would regret it for ever,” he replies without hesitation. “My brother is definitely sorry he sold it, and, as for Mark, I think he would have kept it if he could. It’s a car that you just want in your garage, and it puts a big smile on your face every time you open the door.”

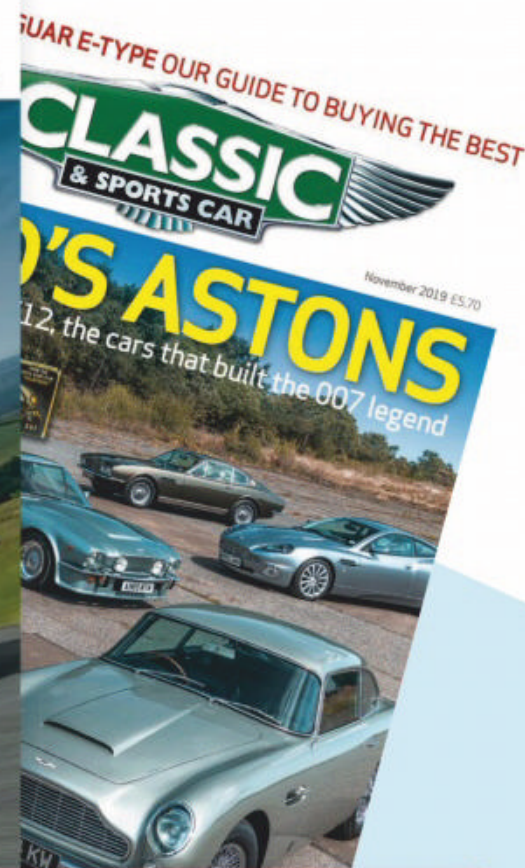
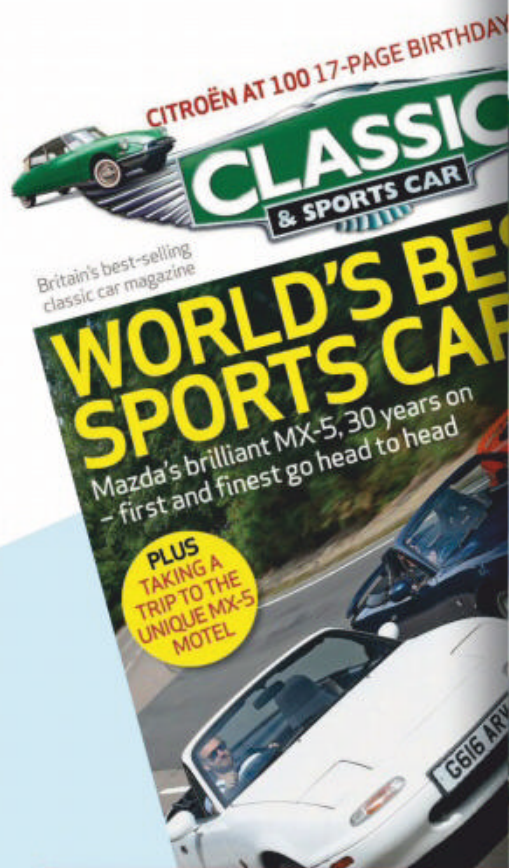


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OWNED SINCE 2003

As the newest member of the team, allow me to introduce the latest addition to the *C&SC* fleet.

I've owned my very beige 1968 1600 Type 3 Fastback for more than 15 years, making it the longest (car) relationship I've ever had. We've been everywhere together, my little VW and I, all over Europe visiting countless car shows, historic racing events and even getting pressed into action as my wedding car one summer's day.

When I bought the VW in 2003 it had just arrived in the UK from a lifetime spent in the Californian sunshine near Hollywood. It must have been a bit of a shock to the poor thing to suddenly have to contend with the British weather.

I'm a big believer in using my classics every day, come rain or shine. So much so, I forsake the modern reliability of a boring Eurobox and rely only on classics for transport. Not always the best idea when I'm stranded at the side of the road at 3am, but that's what breakdown cover is for, right?

Consequently, and because I have a stubborn insistence on all-year-round classic motoring, maintenance and repair on my VW is pretty constant. However, as the legendary German engineering has proved, it's more than up to the job of racking up the miles in the modern world year after year.

To keep the car from being overwhelmed on the *autobahns*, it has had one or two upgrades here and there over the years. The first job after its import was to lose the power-sapping smog equipment and temperamental fuel-injection system and replace them with a pair of sexy Dell'Orto carbs. A much simpler option, and they even came with the bonus of a few extra horses. Not to be sniffed at when you only have a whisker over 40 to start with.

The original steel wheels were also changed for Mahle Porsche

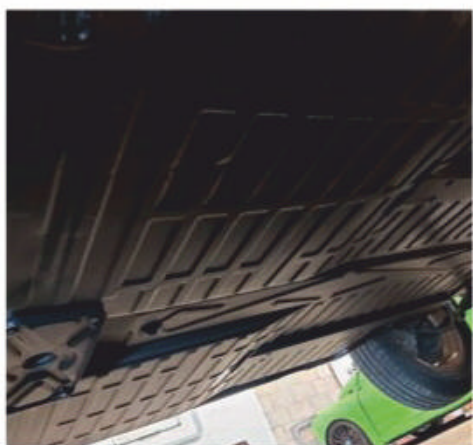


Three stages of grief, for VW's caretaker Anker, as the inner wing is overhauled after rot

914 versions and, like many VWs, a gentle lowering for a slice of cool.

However, like every classic that gets driven through all weathers, the dreaded rust creeps up on you at some point. So, with a heavy heart, this winter I decided to take my trusty companion off the road and start the process of attending to all the telltale signs of bubbling paint and flaking underseal.

This is where the story deviates from the familiar one of a light refresh towards what is now a full-scale restoration. The rot had spread much further than hoped, and beneath the innocent beige panels lay a collection of horrors that meant many more hours of welding and quite a few swears when each small hole turned into something slightly larger.



Floorpan is now as good as new – or better

Earlier this year, my old friend Sam Anker drew the short straw and was entrusted with setting about the VW in his spacious and very organised workshop with a grinder and welding torch. It's been a painful experience, seeing my once immaculate Type 3 reduced to its bare bones, but I know the end is gradually coming into sight.

Many hours have gone into wire-brushing, paint-stripping, sanding and preparing the floorpan and inner-wing areas, which were the worst spots of rot.

As I write this, all the rust has been eradicated from the shell and new metal now lives where rusty holes once lurked. And, with a bit of luck, the Type 3 should be heading off to the paint shop very soon.

I can't wait to have my old friend back for a fantastic 2020 of adventures – all over Europe.



DiY; proof you can fit a fence panel in an 88in. Almost



LAND-ROVER SERIES II

RUN BY Martin Port
OWNED SINCE September 2016
PREVIOUS REPORT Dec 2019

Although I've always subscribed to the 'use it all year round' method of classic ownership, the impending arrival of winter does bring about a slight reduction in the mileage (even more so now my office is my home), and the resulting downtime makes it easier to sort various issues in readiness for spring.

In the December edition I mentioned the problem of 'steering-wheel hands' – an issue that manifests itself by neatly coating the driver's digits and palms with sticky black residue as a result of the original base material absorbing moisture from the atmosphere.

The fix is an easy one and is normally repeated annually if, like me, you are too lazy to send the wheel off for professional refurbishment: wait until your wife is out, pop the oven on a low temperature, slide the steering



Oven-baked and masked, ready for paint

wheel on to the middle shelf and leave while the moisture ekes out. Mask the spokes, rub the outer ring down, then apply several coats of a suitable paint (Hycote Satin Black, in my case) and leave to dry.

As far as the mechanicals of the Series II are concerned, the past 12 months have been relatively quiet, but meeting Martin Lawrie of Fuggle's Fettle (*Specialist*, December 2019) inspired me to finally do something about the Solex carburettor that has been sitting in the garage for too long.

In fact, I had two in the spares store: one I'd bought for my old 1964 IIA and fitted with new gaskets and suchlike but failed to get running properly, and the 1959-dated unit that was originally in place on the Trans-Africa 88in before it was swapped for a Weber 34ICH. Lawrie took one look at the latter and reckoned he could restore it to full working order; hopefully I will have that back soon. Then I'll need to turn my attention to reverting the throttle linkage and choke controls to standard specification to suit the Solex.

In the meantime, though, the Series II has had to fulfil its normal duties. I'm sure it only draws attention because it's signwritten, but I still find it odd that people look with incredulity when I'm loading it up with fence panels and whatever else at the local DiY store. It is still just an old Land-Rover, after all. That said, it appeared to be something of a highlight for the chap at the local tip when I arrived fully laden with rotten old fence posts and feather-edge boards – "Now *that's* the proper way to do it," he said with a smile, much to the annoyance of the Discovery owner parked the other side of me, delicately extricating waste from his plastic-wrapped interior.

AND IN OTHER NEWS...



FORD MUSTANG

The Mustang hasn't been out much of late, but it completed journeys to the Concours of Elegance, Goodwood Revival and a race meet at Thruxton with no major problems. Lack of use does it no good, so a New Year's resolution will be to get burbling more often. **LP**

TRIUMPH 2500TC

The closer I get to having the Triumph back on the road, the more expensive it seems to get. My credit card is groaning this month due to a new set of carbs – HS6s in place of the weedy HS4s. 'New' is a stretch; they look as if they came off the Titanic, so I've sent them to the experts at Burlen to have them refurbished. **GM**



VOLVO 240GL

Since the Brick returned from the brink it has clocked up about 1500 trouble-free miles around the country on various jobs and trips.

Annoying little interior problems remain, and the suspension needs overhauling – especially after MacLeman's loud swear at the squeaking coming from the front left corner recently. **JP**



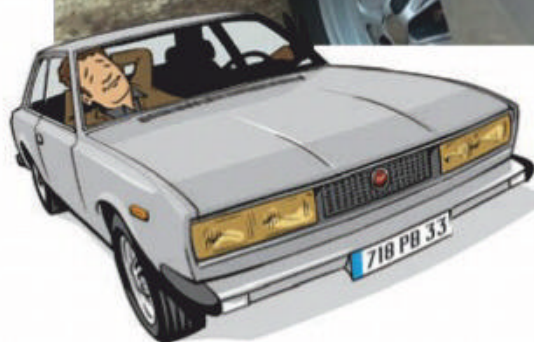
AUSTIN-HEALEY 100/6

As a family, we've recently celebrated four decades of ownership of the Healey, which has been all the excuse I've needed to get out and about. I've also been looking into its history with mixed results – full story next month. **GH**





Devaney, Dino 24 Hundred owner, admires Buckley's handiwork cleaning up the engine bay



FIAT 130 COUPÉ

RUN BY Martin Buckley

OWNED SINCE 2009

PREVIOUS REPORT June 2019

Mark Devaney at 24 Hundred: The Dino Workshop has done a cracking job of sorting the suspension on the 130. With the Gaz Shocks rebuilt struts fitted all round, I'm absolutely delighted with the way the car drives now.

Devaney was slightly concerned that the front end was a mite harsh, but I find the compromise ideal and, in any case, it can easily be adjusted to suit. The car rolls much less now but, more importantly,

doesn't wallow or pitch diagonally; the whole thing feels much more controlled and of a piece.

The only hiccough we had was finding rear pads. The ones that turned up from eBay were wrong, but my Italian 130 contact Andrea Brunazzi found a set in his store.

Past Parts rebuilt the rear calipers and Devaney also replaced a couple of bushes on the rear suspension and fitted the new hoses supplied by Malc Gilliver at Classic Silicone Hoses, who offers a huge and ever-expanding range, from Alfa to Volvo. In classic black, the hoses look great in the engine bay. It's a nice finishing touch after all my underbonnet titivating.

We got a new driver's-side electric window switch from Superformance (same as a Ferrari 308GTB), but the passenger-side window has now decided to stop working, so requires investigation.

I still think of the Michelin XWXs fitted to the Fiat as being

fairly new, but they went on in 2008 and one was down to the carcass on the rear. Given that the 130 was designed around Cinturatos, I thought it might be an idea to give a set of Pirellis a try – courtesy of Dougal Cawley at Longstone.

Longstone is releasing some great period tyres at the moment, from proper 145R14 CA67 radials for the Morris Minor and CN36s for the Ford Mexico to P7s for things such as Countachs and quattros. The CN12 was developed for the Miura and in 205/70 form on the 130 was a seriously meaty-looking tyre for the time.

My 130 feels several degrees sharper thus shod. Shortly after having them fitted I celebrated by taking a trip to Ironbridge. The destination was RAF Cosford Aircraft Museum, near Telford, accompanied by pal Neil Babbage (who knows more about military aircraft than I know about cars) and having plotted a cross-country route that didn't rely on a sat-nav.

The 130 rewarded me for all the attention lavished on it by behaving impeccably, as happy to carve up B-roads as it was wafting imperiously up the odd stretch of dual carriageway as we struck out from Gloucester towards Bewdley, Stourbridge and into Shropshire. I can highly recommend the Cosford museum, by the way: it is free to enter and very quiet.

I smoked around in the Fiat for a few days afterwards and took it to a photoshoot for *C&SC* that was happening locally. I got my first-ever puncture in this car that day due to an inner-tube fault. I had to use the factory jack and tools, which all worked perfectly.

Later, friend and fellow 130 nerd



New pads and hoses were found and fitted

John Antonaki came down in his beautiful, recently acquired Silver Shadow for me to have a go in (it was wonderful) and I returned the favour by giving him a turn behind the wheel of the Fiat, which he has not driven since before it had its gearbox surgery.

I'm pleased to say he was as smitten with it as I am. We did a loop from my shed, past RAF Fairford, and at one point found ourselves driving underneath a U-2 spy plane as it circled to land.

Gus Meyer is primed to do the final sorting on the electrics, the main issue being only one speed on the wipers – which also don't self-park. The headlights are pretty useless on dipped beam and having them on affects the indicators.

I'm going to need to look at new door seals to sort the wind noise. More irritating are the suspension sounds, which could be bearing, differential or brake-related. I've made a start by ordering the correct oil for the limited-slip diff and have identified which suspension parts are common to the Dino to have a better chance of finding them.

The car still looks smart, but various bubbles in the paint have appeared that will need tackling – and I didn't help matters by dropping onto the bootlid a little wooden Alfa sign that I was trying to nail to one of the rafters in the shed in one of my re-shuffles.

THANKS TO

- Mark Devaney of 24 Hundred: www.dinouk.com
- Past Parts: www.pastparts.co.uk
- Longstone Tyres: www.longstonetyres.co.uk
- Superformance: www.superformance.co.uk
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Cross-country run entertained Buckley, so too the airborne classics at Cosford's museum



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From a distance the Midget looks respectable, reckons owner Pressnell



MG MIDGET

RUN BY Jon Pressnell

OWNED SINCE 1989

PREVIOUS REPORT Jan 2015

Various ailments have jinxed the Red Horror these past few years, and I've been distracted by family matters, work demands, and the rival attractions of my hot Mini; hence the long, five-year silence.

Most irritatingly, the saga of the front-wheel bearing has rumbled on – no pun intended. I have had various goes at eliminating the play – it's all down to the slightly incorrect fit of the bearings generally available these days, I'm told. There was also the small matter of my having mislaid the packing shims previously fitted to remedy this. Fortunately Ernie, a local MGB owner, kindly let me

have some B shims, which are the same, and Maidstone Sports Cars provided a new bearing. But yes, the damn thing still isn't right.

Adding to my disillusionment, when I did manage to put a few miles on the car, it kept cutting out. It transpired that the contacts in the distributor cap were well past their prime. I ordered a new cap and the problem didn't go away, because this time the carbon brush was getting stuck on the upward part of its travel. I've fiddled this so that currently all is well, but, frankly, I'd rather pay a few bob more and have a better quality of part in the first place.

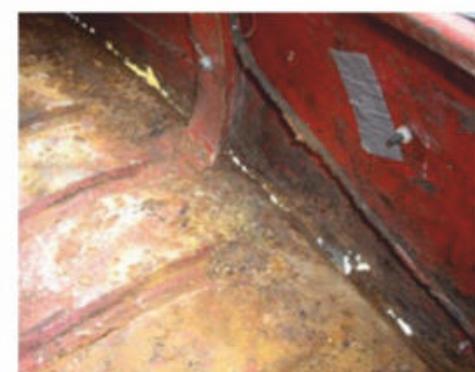
A further hiatus was provided by the need to replace the tyres, after a village idiot pierced them all. This was after he had kicked in the headlamps, the replacement of which turned into another comedy act. The sidelight set-up prevented the lamp units from fitting into their shells, which I had to cut away to allow the lights to seat properly.

Next up, the Midget was sidelined by a wretchedly piddly

problem. I had a split steering-rack gaiter; no big deal, except that the track-rod end, which has to come off first, was seized solid. After fruitless attempts to free it, I took garage-owner mate Dominique's advice and just sprayed WD40 on to the thing relentlessly for a fortnight. It then spun off sweetly, and a new gaiter was soon on. My local garage re-tracked the car, and I was hot to trot.



The 'Red Horror' was more 'Orange 'Error'



Unwanted ventilation for the boot interior



Not beautiful, but repair will do for the moment – the MG is fast becoming a glassfibre sports car



Split steering-rack gaiter eventually off...



...after dousing track-rod end with WD40




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Safely in place, the Bentley gleams in the carpeted sanctum of the Royal Automobile Club's Rotunda



BENTLEY SEDANCA

RUN BY Simon Taylor

OWNED SINCE October 1996

PREVIOUS REPORT Aug 2019

Enter the dignified portals of the historic Royal Automobile Club building in Pall Mall and, once you have negotiated the revolving door and been gravely saluted by the commissionaire, you are faced by a broad staircase that leads up to the Rotunda. This is the hub of the clubhouse, a magnificent oval-shaped, double-height space surrounded by the balconies that serve the first-floor rooms. And usually, posing on the deep-pile carpet, there is a motor car on show – maybe a tribute to a historic anniversary, or a magnificent veteran, or sometimes a newly introduced specialist car. And you wonder how on earth it got there.

Now I know. The RAC decided to mark Bentley's centenary by exhibiting in the Rotunda, each for one week, a succession of great Bentleys, from Cricklewood to Derby to Crewe. Bentleys were only built in Derby from 1934 to 1939, but they make up an important chapter in the story of the marque, so I was honoured when Peter Read, chairman of the RAC Motoring Committee, called to say that the Club wanted mine.

My orders were strict: the car had to be brought to Pall Mall no later than 5am on the appointed Monday, because the road has to be closed while the previous display car comes out and the next goes in.

So at 4:45am the Sedanica and I were wafting along a deserted Knightsbridge, through the Hyde Park underpass and along Piccadilly, with only the occasional Uber for company. Right turn past the Ritz, down St James's Street with St James's Palace ahead, left into Pall Mall and draw up outside the Club's grand façade. I was rather nervous about quite how my beloved Bentley was going to be got inside and upstairs without



Bentley drives through the front door...

harm, but the cheerful team that does this every Monday assured me it was a piece of cake.

First the revolving door is removed. Then a custom-designed pair of modular steel ramps is assembled that goes from the doorway, above the foot of the staircase and up to the top of it. My job was to drive the Sedanica through the doorway, which seemed impossibly narrow, and on to the ramp. Then a winch anchored underneath the car

wound us up with me at the wheel, heart in mouth, following instructions from the gang – "left hand down a bit, steady as she goes" – until suddenly we were on the flat, and had made it into the Rotunda.

Then it was just a case of starting her up and manoeuvring until the car was central on the carpet, and at an elegant angle. Drip trays went underneath in case of any minor incontinence, the ramps were dismantled in minutes, and the revolving door went back into place. Job done.

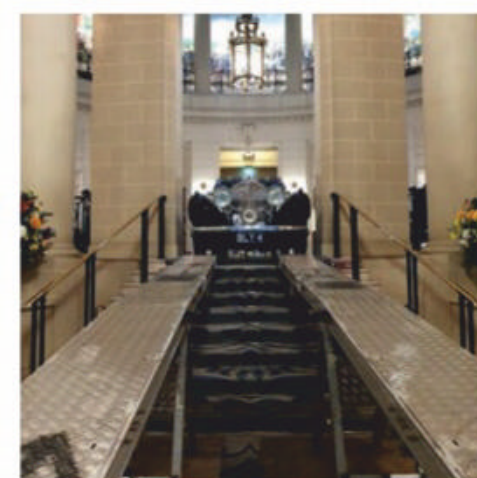
I have to say that the Sedanica looked perfectly at home in these grand surroundings, and during the week that followed I found myself popping into the Club every so often to remind myself how elegant it looked. It seemed to be drawing plenty of admiration from Club members on their way to a grand meal in the Great Gallery or a quick snifter in the Long Bar, or to the swimming pool, the indoor squash courts or the Turkish baths.

The following Monday at 5am we did the whole thing in reverse, with me steering the Bentley down the ramps and the winch making sure that it didn't all happen too fast. Then we squeezed out through the doorway with an inch each side, and trundled home wishing that the roads of Central London were always that empty.

It's been quite a year for showing off the Derby – at Burghley House, in Bentley's own exhibition at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, and then in the RAC. For all three it's been polished to within an inch of its life, so I hope all that wax will protect it as it spends the winter months with its fellows in the garage – gently heated, of course.



...and up the ramps over the front staircase



A week later, back down the ramps again

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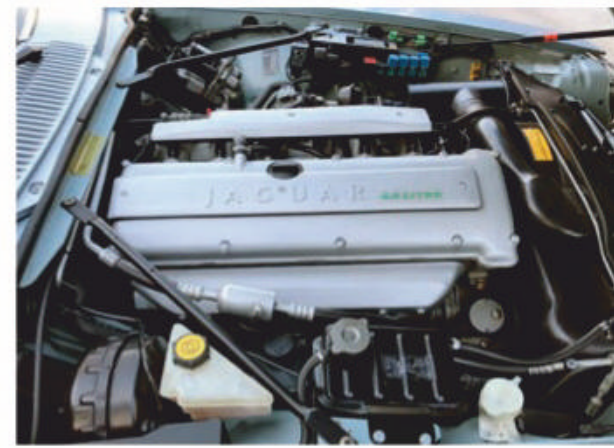
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Sons Aaron and Joseph are big fans, despite the Jag's limited rear legroom



From top: silky-smooth 4-litre straight-six; plush cabin is holding up well. Below: facelifted rear end

GRAND TOURER WINS FAMILY HEARTS



1996 JAGUAR XJS 4.0 CELEBRATION

OWNED BY Stephen Lynch
FROM Cuckfield, West Sussex
FIRST CLASSIC 1974
Volkswagen Beetle 1300
DREAM CLASSIC Maserati Ghibli SS
BEST TRIP London to Geneva through the Alps in a BMW 5 Series Touring

I have always been drawn to cars that are a little bit different. My first, in 1989, was a Marine Blue Volkswagen Beetle when most of my peers were driving Ford Fiestas and Escorts: good cars, no doubt, but back then the Beetle offered something more original and at a price I could afford.

With a 1300cc engine it wasn't the quickest, but it looked great and had that unique sound that only an air-cooled car provides. It was cherished for a number of years until I finally moved on to another VW, a 1988 Mk2 Golf GTI, which was also a fun car for me – until it was stolen from Brighton seafront while I was on a night out.

Fast-forward 25 years and, after a number of relatively sensible cars,

an opportunity arose to purchase something different again. Working from home and covering minimal annual mileage, my attention turned to buying a classic and, with the prices of old Porsches climbing into the stratosphere, I turned to a car that had always been on my wishlist and was a surprise to most of my friends: the Jaguar XJS.

I have my father to thank for my interest in the XJS, because he owned a number of Jaguars over the years. Great memories of travelling in GT luxury in two of those cars, a 1989 Solent Blue XJ-S coupé and a facelifted 1993 Regency Red XJS, ultimately led to my purchase.

With the long sweeping bonnet and those famous 'flying buttresses' providing the unmistakable, Malcom Sayer-inspired sleek appearance, my heart was set – especially because it was affordable at the time. After conducting a good degree of research I decided to go for a late-model car, and eventually found a 1996 4-litre, one of 121 six-cylinder coupés registered in the final months of production. Powered by the AJ16 engine, it provides the best in XJS refinement, still showing off the classic 1970s design and without the crushing fuel bills of the V12.



'When a chance came up to buy a Porsche, I put it to my sons – and "XJS!" was the resounding response'

Being a final Celebration edition, the car is finished in Ice Blue metallic – a nod to my VW Beetle days. Special items include embossed Jaguar leapers on the headrest facings, sapwood veneered woodwork, 'aerosport' diamond-cut alloy wheels and a half wood/half leather steering wheel – all standard equipment on the limited-edition model, which has now covered 109,000 miles since its registration on 1 January 1996.

While the car is almost a quarter of century old, however, it's still fantastic to drive and having been kept overnight in a garage for the majority of its life has ensured it has remained remarkably solid.

Open up the wonderful 241bhp straight-six engine, a benchmark in

refinement 24 years ago, and the car still delivers an exceptionally smooth drive even by today's standards. It really does have an amazing way of making you feel good when you are behind the wheel.

My young sons Aaron, eight, and Joseph, 10, fit in the back – for now! – and love being driven in "Dad's XJS". When an opportunity to buy a Porsche came up last year, I put the question to them – and "XJS!" was the resounding response. The decision was made to keep the Jag.

It's a car that was originally pitched at customers considering GTs from Ferrari and Mercedes at its launch in 1975, and it continues to turn heads and receive comments of appreciation whenever we're out, particularly given the distinct lack of XJSs now on the road.

I'm planning on enjoying the Jaguar for many years to come, and it continues to live up to the 1996 brochure's opening statement: 'A car offering more excitement, distinction and value for money than ever before.'

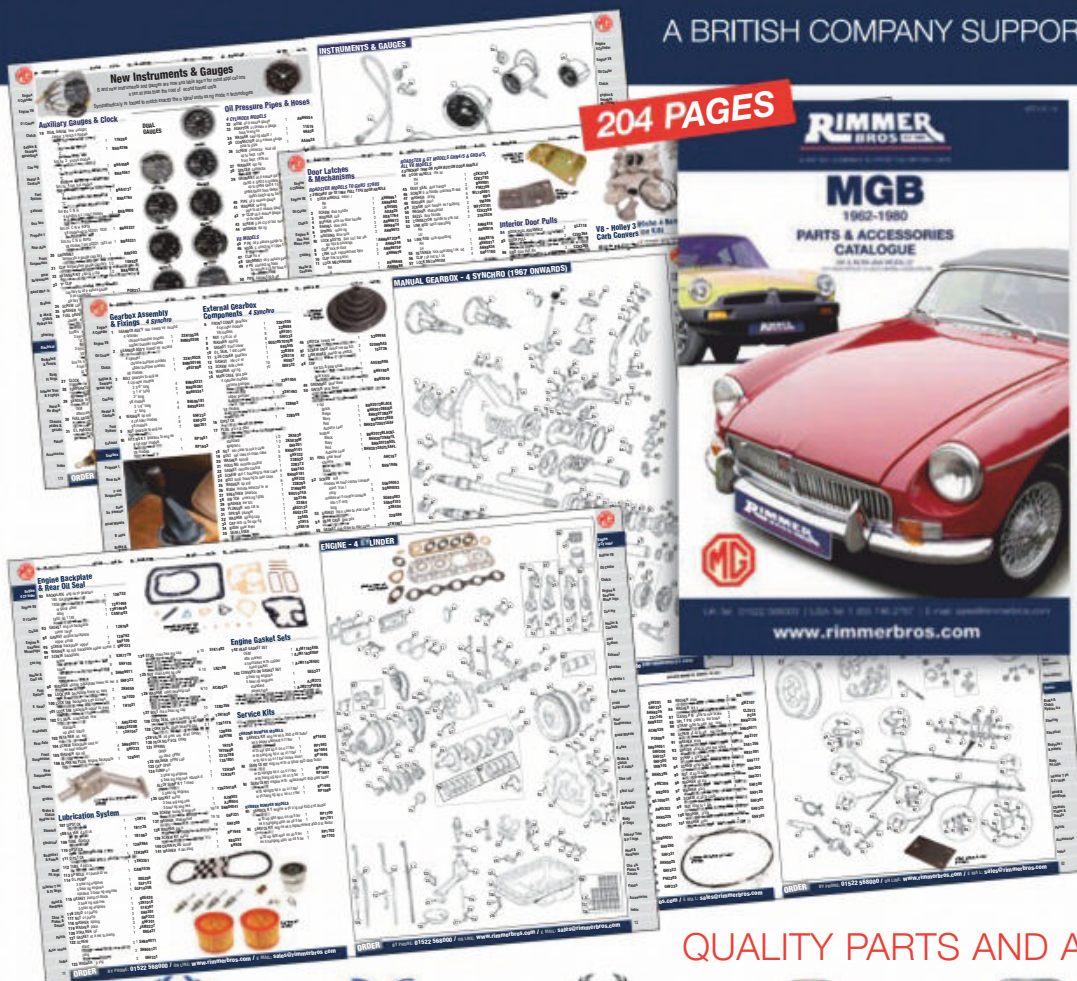
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Sadler with Porsche 911 RS 2.7, wife Daisy's Austin Seven and their trusty wagon. Below: Seven is Daisy's transport of choice into town

JOSH SADLER

The Porsche expert with high-mileage workhorses of four legs and four wheels

WORDS JACK PHILLIPS PICTURES LUC LACEY

The name may be familiar, because he has been an important fixture in the Porsche scene since the 1970s through Autofarm, the company he co-founded in 1973.

But there's more to Josh Sadler and his wife, Daisy, keeping them busy at their hobby farm.

Actually, Daisy spent much of last year away, travelling the length of the country for five months in their kitsch Bow-top wagon from Banbury to The Kelpies, the two huge horse-head statues in Falkirk. The journey was 1000 miles and raised more than £25,000 for The Brain Tumour Charity. Her incredible effort was recognised when she won *Horse & Hound's* inspiration award. She rode alone behind the couple's two gentle giants, Belgian draft horses Olive and Arthur. "They're much stronger than Clydesdales," explains Josh. "Clydes and Shires have been bred too tall so the geometry isn't right – they struggle with hills. Whereas Arthur could pull this on his own."

"Brabants is the make of them," adds Daisy.

The wagon's quaint interior belies its magic. "It was a pre-war farm cart," Josh says. "The bed had rotted so we rebuilt it in aluminium."

"All aluminium!" Daisy interjects.

"It's a traditional shape and that is where it stops," he continues. "It has four solar panels on the roof, Wi-Fi and USB ports. It's a restomod."

ALSO IN MY GARAGE



Naturally, there's a link to the Porsche 911 RS 2.7 that is sitting next to it: "It's got 911 rear shocks all round. The leaf springs were about 10 leaves, they just didn't move, so we binned those. It's now got Renault Traffic axles, with single leaf."

Perhaps the only thing that doesn't have a touch of Porsche is Daisy's 90-year-old Austin Seven daily runabout. "They don't fit a Seven too well," laughs Josh. "We have an adapted 6V VW Beetle dynamo on it, though. The Austin has been remarkably faithful, but is now getting a bit tired – it was her wedding present in 1973."

"He said 'go and use it'," Daisy says. "And it

looks as though I have. It's disgusting, really!"

Like Josh, Daisy's no stranger to competition – nor is the Seven, because she contested trials in the Chummy: "Daisy is an honorary member of the MCC, the Motor Cycling Club."

She previously used an Allard, and once raced a 911S at Oulton Park. "It was raining," recalls her more experienced racer husband, "and it was running bald P7s. She spun all the way down the pit straight and stopped at the barrier."

It would remiss to visit Josh and not mention a 911. The RS came from the family of the former president of Porsche Clubs France. "He bought it with high-mileage in 1986, threw his wallet at it and said basically, 'Turn it into the RS I want,'" Sadler says. "He colour-changed the whole bodyshell, rebuilt the engine onto a new crankcase, put in a factory exchange gearbox, redid the interior and put on the wider wheels. The list goes on and on, which for '86 was amazing because they weren't worth anything then."

"He died in 2004 of a heart attack and his collection went into storage. When his wife died their son put the cars on the market, contacting classic Porsche specialists rather than advertising. I offered to buy some for sensible money but he put too high a price on this because of the family history. We haggled an agreement."

Remarkably, all are regulars on the Cotswolds roads. After a hard-earned winter rest, you'd hope.



Organisation is key inside the packed, ethereal parts store



Stash of donors will be a source of parts for years to come



Paul Cooper shapes a Graber nose using 3D-printed pattern



Inside the busy restoration shop, Eon Burgess welds a nose section on a TE21 Park Ward Saloon, while Dave Gernon test fits a 1935 Speed Twenty SC Vanden Plas tourer wing



Julie Vanderwalt finishes the leather flutes

THE SPECIALIST

A NEW CHAPTER

Red Triangle now does more than keeping classics on the road, as it joins the 'Continuation' gang

WORDS PAUL HARDIMAN PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN BRADSHAW/PAUL HARDIMAN

It's now more than 20 years since Red Triangle's previous appearance as our *Specialist* – and there's some catching up to do. The firm continues to service Alvis cars from the site it has occupied since the demise of the Alvis company in 1968, using its vast stock of original and remanufactured parts. But under new ownership there's a new showroom – and, most significantly, the company is the engine room of the resurrection of Alvis as a car manufacturer.

Alan Stote bought the firm in 1994, and in '09 started developing the 4.3 – a '30s design – for Individual Vehicle Approval, with the hands-on work being done by Red Triangle. Normal operations continue, servicing cars on six lifts, and there's a rolling road and engine dyno, too. But the method of control has changed, with each job now being tracked digitally. Stote, whose background is in parts manufacture, has been passionate about Alvis since he bought his first in the '80s. There are at least half a dozen cars in the workshop at any time, and all are now collected and delivered in a covered transporter; between 150 and 200 are seen each year.

Upstairs, along with a small trim shop, is the incredible treasure trove of parts, both new and used, some stored in the original 1929 Alvis racks (the floor has been cut to accommodate them, rather than trim the stillages). Stote's enthusiasm shines through as he rattles off part numbers: "We've got 35,000 different fitments here. Kingpins are our biggest mover, representing some 1.5% of sales."

The famous archives – including build records, blueprints and customer correspondence – have moved a couple of hundred yards up the road and now live above the showroom. It's the first thing you see as you drive into the Common Lane estate, where 12-15 cars are sold every year. Drawings on the wall show the new cars Alvis offers:

4.3 VdP, 4.3 Bertelli coupé (copying Stote's own car), Lancefield coupé and 3-litres as Park Ward drophead coupé, or Graber coupé and cabriolet.

"I fell into owning the company by accident – the original priority was to preserve the archive," explains Stote. "We're in a unique position of owning the brand, all the drawings and a huge stock of parts. We've got all the spares, you see – enough to make 40 or 50 cars." Stote had to acquire the trademark from BAE, which had just sold Rolls-Royce and Bentley: "The chief exec came up and said 'I hadn't thought of this' when we showed the new car at Goodwood."

The fabrication shop, with computer-cut bucks and panel rolling, is behind the main workshop, where the new cars are taking shape. A sign on the wall – 'Still making cars how they used to be made' – points to the partnership with Meiji Sangyo, the Alvis agent in Japan, where five new cars have been ordered. Continuation cars have fuel injection (and catalytic converters on IVA cars), five- and six-speed 'boxes, big ventilated discs and LED lighting: "We don't want to change the way it drives. Fuel injection doesn't change that."

The current job is to make a copy of Stote's Graber-bodied coupé, for which the chassis has been already completed. The original was 3D-scanned, then 'mirrored' to ensure symmetry, while the new front is being formed around a buck – 3D-printed in plastic. Quaintly, under the aluminium skin there's still some ash frame tying the cast roof/door pillars together.

Stote has acquired the surrounding buildings in preparation for laying down a production line. Tucked in a corner of the site is a storage room, rammed with dead 3-litre donors that he's been buying as a source of parts. You could even have a new TE21 if you wanted, thanks to the vision of saving all the original parts half a century ago.

The knowledge

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BIG MONEY FOR UNTOUCHED MIURA

An unrestored Lamborghini Miura S sold for £1.24million at the RM Sotheby's London Olympia auction on 24 October, smashing its upper estimate by £240,000.

The barn-stored car had been with the same family since 1974, when Hans Weber bought the Giallo Flay supercar from its first owner, Walter Becker. The rare

example was produced in 1969 but not sold by Lamborghini until 1971, and retains its original engine and Skay Bleu interior. The only alterations from how it left the factory are the addition of front indicators and harnesses.

Numerous bidders helped push the value skywards, far past its £800,000-1,000,000 estimate.

It wasn't the only car to beat predictions at Olympia, not least the 1961 Ferrari 250GTE Series 1 that achieved £404,375 against its £325-375,000 guide.

Meanwhile, a 1984 Daimler Double-Six Long-Wheelbase Saloon once owned by the Queen drew £10,000 more than its upper estimate at £80,500 (£50-70,000).

Two-owner Lamborghini is believed to be one of the most original Miuras in existence, with only indicators and belts added

FERRARIS IN FIRST FOR SCOTTSDALE

The world's biggest auctioneers descend on the Phoenix desert from 11-19 January, as Arizona Auction Week kicks off the US sale calendar in Scottsdale.

Among the highlights so far are the Ferrari F50 Prototipo from 1995, which was tested by F1 stars Niki Lauda, Gerhard Berger and Jean Alesi at Fiorano and is the last Ferrari with a five-digit chassis number. The unique F50 will be sold on 15 January by Worldwide Auctioneers.

Gooding & Co's lot list is led by a matching-numbers 1965 Ferrari 500 Superfast (\$2.5-3m, 18-19 Jan), the only one of its type in factory black paint.

A 1955 Lancia B24S Spider America is one of the headliners at Bonhams on 16 January.



Clockwise, from main: Superfast is the marquee lot so far at Gooding; one-of-240 Aurelia; the original F50 was owned by Jacques Swaters





Triumph TR2's interesting history helped it set a new World Record for the model at auction

Works TR2 triumphs

A factory Triumph TR2 that contested the tragic 1955 24 Hours of Le Mans stole the headlines at Silverstone Auctions' Classic Motor Show sale on 9-10 November, more than doubling its £100,000 lower estimate at £258,750.

Driven to 19th place by Leslie Brooke and Mortimer Morris-Goodall, PKV 374 was bought right after the chequer dropped by King Hussein of Jordan and taken directly home. It found its most recent owner in 1972, and has since been restored to original Le Mans specification and returned to competition. After 47 years in one family it exceeded all expectations

in an emotional and eagerly fought sale, setting a new World Record for a TR2 in the process.

Elsewhere, a 6800-mile E30 BMW 325i sold for a staggering £51,188, far exceeding its upper estimate of £35,000. An Alfa Montreal in need of restoration attracted £39,375 (£22-26,000).

An Aston Martin DB2 once owned by Vern Schuppan went unsold for the second time in 2019, while the auction's highest-priced lot was an Aston Martin DB5 that has featured on a Royal Mail stamp. It achieved £607,500, having failed to sell in May – then wearing an estimate of £675-750,000.

SANDELL'S BIG BENTLEY BIRTHDAY

Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialist N Sandell of Isleworth in London brought together three special Bentleys for a triple celebratory open day in October.

To cover the breadth of the marque, and to honour 100 years of Bentley, 40 years of Nigel Sandell's company and 20 years since it moved to its west London base, on display was a 1931 8 Litre Bentley, an S1 Continental and a bulletproof Turbo R used by the Metropolitan Police to chauffeur Prince Charles.

The Turbo R is still owned by the Met's Heritage Department and is shod with run-flat tyres, bomb-detection, bulletproof glass and more, all of which combine for a weight of 3.8 tonnes.

Around 75 guests from the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club and beyond were given tours of the workshop, with 35 cars forming a varied gathering on the forecourt.



Every era of Bentley was represented

Auction diary

DECEMBER

7 CCA Leamington Spa 01926 640888; classiccarauctions.co.uk

7 Bonhams Bond Street, London 020 7468 5801; bonhams.com

7 Classicbid Nuremberg, Germany 0049 6727 89718 100; classicbid.de

9 Shannons Melbourne, Australia 0061 2 8019 4116; shannons.com.au

10 Barons Sandown Racecourse, Surrey 023 8066 8413; barons-auctions.com

14 Mathewsons Pickering, North Yorkshire 01751 474455; mathewsons.co.uk

29 Oldtimer Gstaad, Switzerland 0041 31 819 61 61; oldtimergalerie.ch



Lancia Stratos could clear £500,000 at BH Auction's sale at Fuji's Super GT event

JANUARY

10 BH Auction Fuji, Japan 0081 (120) 087 111; bhauktion.com

10-11 BH Auction Tokyo, Japan 0081 (120) 087 111; bhauktion.com

11-19 Barrett-Jackson Scottsdale, Arizona, USA 001 480 421 6694; barrett-jackson.com

15 Worldwide Auctioneers Scottsdale, Arizona, USA 001 260 925 6789; worldwideauctioneers.com

15-19 Rosso and Steele Scottsdale, Arizona, USA 001 602 252 2697; russoandsteele.com

16 Bonhams Scottsdale, Arizona, USA 001 323 850 7500; bonhams.com

16-17 RM Sotheby's Arizona, USA 001 519 352 4575; rmsothebys.com

17 Coys Maastricht, The Netherlands 020 8614 7888; coys.co.uk



'Blue Butterfly' flew high at Bonhams

PANHARD AFLUTTER

The 1901 Panhard et Levassor 7HP known as 'Le Papillon Bleu' doubled its £200-250,000 pre-sale estimate at Bonhams' London to Brighton auction on 1 November in Bond Street, as three bidders pushed the price all the way to £442,750.

Built for Chevalier René de Knyf, who at the time was director of Panhard et Levassor, it was christened by the daughter of its second owner and is a Brighton Run regular.



Busy auction calendar takes in many of the UK's biggest shows

New Year auction dates

The 2020 British auction calendar is taking shape after a flurry of date announcements.

While Coys will hold its annual 17 January sale in Maastricht, The Netherlands, Anglia Car Auctions kicks off the UK season on 25 January. Silverstone Auctions begins its year at Race Retro on

22-23 February, while the opening Barons sale takes place at Sandown Racecourse two days later.

Brightwells returns on 4 March, three days before Historics' opener at Ascot, and Classic Car Auctions' reshuffled diary starts 2020 at the Restoration Show at the NEC, Birmingham, on 28-29 March.

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**1993 MERCEDES AMG
E36 ESTATE**

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£20,000 - 30,000



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Buckley's market matters

Having read my *Backfire* in the November issue regarding the Mercedes-Benz 500K scam, Mike Hodges contacted me about his brush with early classic car fraud. Aged 22 in 1975 he encountered a larger-than-life character called 'Brian' (not his real name, it later turned out), who offered him the chance to buy seven 'new' Jaguar E-types for £500 each.

The Suez Canal had just re-opened, and ships had been marooned there for seven years, unable to unload. Understandably, there had been lots of insurance claims to cover the losses.

Among them was a shipment of 96 E-types, and Brian showed Mike a manifest from Lloyd's of London.

"They were all Series 1s," says Mike. "Roadsters and coupés, all right-hand drive, packed in wooden crates and sprayed with wax."

Brian assured the youngster that the cars were as-new, needing only new tyres, a degrease and general recommissioning.

The story was, a pal of Brian's who worked for Lloyd's had told him about the cars. Lloyd's wanted to dispose of them at £350 each. So, at £150 profit on each car, Mike's new friend was not exactly being greedy. Young Mr Hodges was a penniless student working in a model shop (where he met Brian) and couldn't find £500 for one E-type, let alone £3500.

"You can easily sell them for £1000 each to the motor trade,"

reckoned Brian. "With £3000 profit you'll have enough to put one car back on the road 'til you graduate."

It all sounded so plausible, reckons Mike, who even had a deal set up with a trader who wanted to buy half a dozen crated E-types, as per the fraudster's suggestion.

Luckily, fate intervened before anyone parted with any dosh. A while later a story published in the *Financial Times* headlined 'The Mystery of the Suez E-types' stated that the Metropolitan Police was investigating an alleged confidence trickster who had been carting one '68 E-type (in a wooden crate, sprayed with wax and with dodgy tyres) around the UK to secondhand car dealers, spouting the same story.

Jaguar Cars never despatched 96 RHD E-types via the Suez Canal in 1968, and it never shipped cars in wooden crates or sprayed them with wax. 'Brian' was eventually arrested for trying to steal a motor cruiser from a local marina (he had got it stuck on the weir while trying to make off with it) and was sentenced for this attempted theft and about 50 charges of fraud.

It sounds like a plot from Roald Dahl's *Tales of the Unexpected*. Are you still out there, 'Brian'? Or did you meet a sticky end?

Jaguar E-types in production, none of which went via the Suez Canal...



AUCTION RESULTS

October's top 50 sales



Long-nose Ferrari 275GTB topped October's sales, one of only 60 produced with alloy body



Huge Cadillac at RM Sotheby's Hershey sale



Mercedes SL cleared £1m with Dorotheum

PRICE	CAR	SALE
£2,875,000	1965 Ferrari 275GTB Alloy 'long-nose'	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£1,506,500	2004 Ferrari Enzo	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£1,248,125	1969 Lamborghini Miura P400S	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£1,067,000	1955 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing	Dorotheum, Salzburg, Austria
£1,035,000	1957 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£952,380	1930 Cadillac V-16 Sport Phaeton	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£920,000	1989 Ferrari F40	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£890,281	1931 Invicta 4½ Litre S-type Low Chassis	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£876,600	1989 Ferrari F40	Dorotheum, Salzburg, Austria
£764,375	1985 Lancia Delta S4 Rally	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£687,190	2016 Ferrari F12tdf	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£639,059	1947 Alfa Romeo 6C-2500 Sport	Finarte, Italy
£639,059	1968 Porsche 911S targa and 2018 Porsche 9114 targa 4S	Finarte, Italy
£432,500	1973 Ferrari Dino 246GT	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£429,000	1931 Marmon Sixteen Coupe	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£410,000	1961 Maserati 3500GT Spyder	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£406,200	1983 Lancia Rally 037 Evo 2	Dorotheum, Salzburg, Austria
£404,375	1961 Ferrari 250GTE	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£402,500	1974 Lancia Stratos HF Stradale	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£398,750	1970 Maserati Ghibli 4.7 Spyder	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£386,100	1911 Oldsmobile Autocrat Model 28 Roadster	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£379,500	1964 Osca 1600GT 'Double Bubble'	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£361,400	1957 Porsche 356A T1 1600 Speedster	Dorotheum, Salzburg, Austria
£351,780	1931 Duesenberg Model J Limousine	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£330,330	1908 Oldsmobile Limited Prototype	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£303,750	1974 Ferrari Dino 246GT	H&H Classics, Duxford, UK
£300,300	1911 Rolls-Royce 40/50hp Silver Ghost Drophead Coupé	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£286,250	2018 Ferrari California T 70th Anniversary	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£281,750	1958 AC Ace Bristol	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£275,000	2014 Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG GT Final Edition	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£265,980	1929 Auburn Eight 120 Speedster	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£257,400	1915 Stutz Bearcat Model 4F	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£253,000	1980 Ferrari 512BB	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£231,660	1927 Lincoln Model L Imperial Victoria	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£230,000	1973 Iso Grifo GL Series II	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£224,250	1953 Aston Martin DB2 Vantage	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£224,250	2009 Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG Black Series	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£223,080	1934 Packard Twelve Convertible Victoria	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£216,653	1941 Chrysler Town and Country Nine-Passenger Station Wagon	Bonhams, Philadelphia, USA
£214,500	1930 Cord L-29 Cabriolet	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£214,500	1970 Ford Mustang Boss 429	Mecum, Chicago, USA
£208,065	1911 Rambler Model 65 Seven-Passenger Touring	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£207,000	1968 Citroën DS21 Décapotable	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium
£207,000	1999 Aston Martin Vantage Le Mans V600	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£207,000	1990 Lamborghini LM002	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£207,000	1992 Mercedes-Benz 300CE 6.0 AMG Hammer	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£197,500	1970 Aston Martin DB6	RM Sotheby's, London, UK
£193,400	1963 Maserati Sebring 3500GTI	Dorotheum, Salzburg, Austria
£193,050	1912 Locomobile Model 48 'M' Five-Passenger Torpedo	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£189,750	1957 Alfa Romeo 1900C Super Sprint	Bonhams, Zoute, Belgium

Prices include buyer's premium. Exchange rate used: \$1 = 75p. For our full database of sale results, see www.classicandsportscar.com/auctions

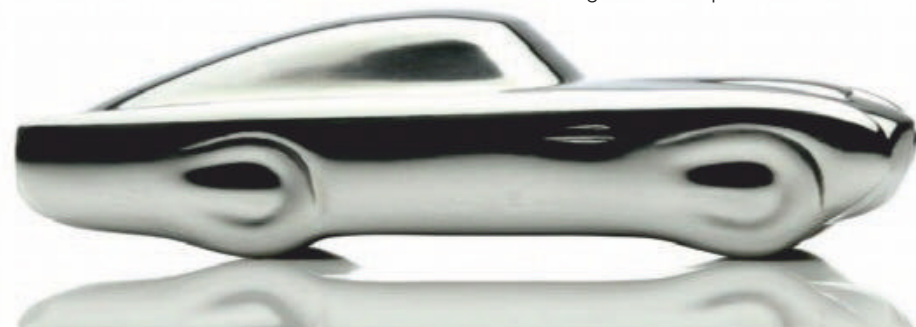


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PORSCHE 911

Many of the most usable classic 911s, the 1974-'89 'big bumper' cars, are still affordable, so buy with care and enjoy

WORDS **MALCOLM McKAY** PHOTOGRAPHY **JAMES MANN**



After 10 years of production, the delicate and tail-happy original 911 had matured, with a longer wheelbase, some tougher bumpers and a robust, powerful engine.

Though never cheap, the 911 was well made and more durable than most sports cars of comparable performance – and more practical than many, with rear seats for children and sensible luggage space. It would still punish the careless, but in the hands of a skilled driver it was sensational. Porsche's progressive development concentrated on increasing flexibility and refining the 911 to make it less raw – but there was a turbo for anyone wanting the ultimate driving challenge.

As sophistication and equipment were added, power outputs rose just enough to maintain performance levels. The run-out Club Sport of 1988 was only fractionally faster than the Carrera RS 2.7 Touring of 1973, but the 1980s 911 was without question a more usable everyday car – and remains so today.

Rust, despite the galvanised bodyshell from late 1975, remains the buyer's biggest challenge on all 911s through to 1989. Start by checking

the sills, then the 'kidney bowl' panels that run up from the back of the sills inside the rear wheelarches, just behind the B-post. Bodging is common here, and proper rectification costly. On sunroof cars, the drains block and rot the screen pillars (front and rear), and on all cars rust can take hold below the windows. Check the front wings around the lights (new wings are £1000 each); the bottoms of the doors; A-posts; B-posts; the front boot floor, especially below the battery; floorpans front and rear; rear seat pans; and the torsion tube where it goes through the chassis legs. Look also for corrosion around these main rot areas, where past repairs are beginning to fail at welded joins.

Most UK 911s of this era have had at least one restoration already, and it's unlikely to have been no expense spared. There's a lot to be said for buying a 'dry state' US car that will require some expenditure on de-restricting tired mechanicals and replacing sun-dried trim, but that only needs a respray over a largely rust-free bodyshell.

Rare models from this era command strong money, yet there are still reasonably priced 911s that offer a little less pace but all the same style and practicality. Buy on condition, rather than spec, if you want a car to drive and enjoy.

Trouble spots

RUST Check all points listed (left) and look for poor past repairs that will need to be re-done

BUMPERS These hefty aluminium parts corrode, and on mid-'70s cars are complex and made from laminated sheet, which delaminates

ENGINE Look for oil leaks and excessive breathing, plus check on a test drive for poor performance and noisy rattling/thrashing

GEARBOX Graunchy changes denote worn synchromesh. Check for corrosion on pre-'80 magnesium-cased transmissions

EXHAUST Look for corrosion. US cars from '75 have restrictive thermal reactor exhausts, which overheat and break head studs

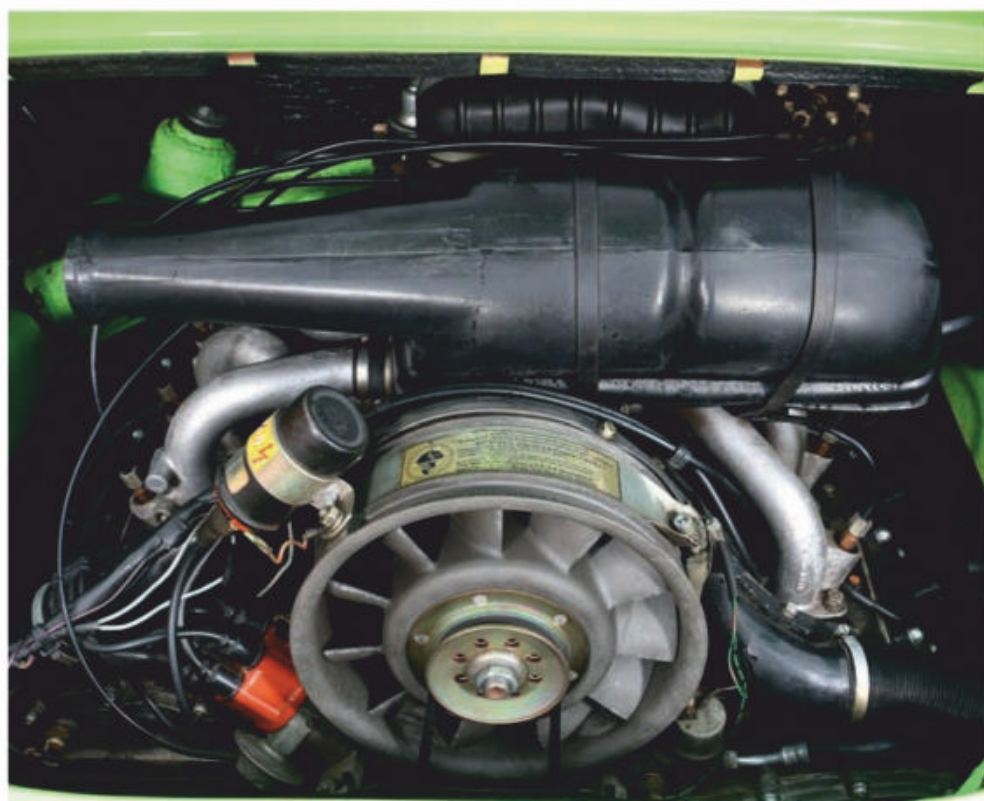
ELECTRONICS Damp ruins alarm/immobiliser systems on 3.2s and the DME relay and ECU (£1000 secondhand): check for wet carpets



Early examples such as this Lime Green 1974 car look great, but demand caution due to the lack of galvanising; 'cookie-cutter' alloys were standard



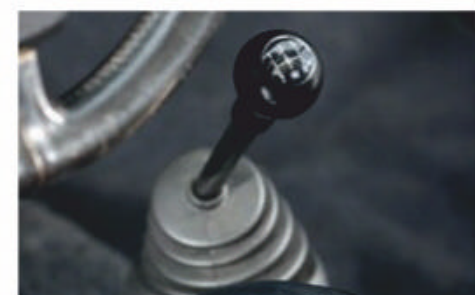
The classic 911 rewards sensitive driving, getting your braking done early and powering out of bends: immense traction under acceleration will leave most rivals behind and is apt to generate a healthy dose of silly grins on every trip – yet it offers practical, fun transport for an enthusiastic couple or young family



Flat-six **engine** is fairly simple, but costly to overhaul (£5k for top end, £3k for bottom end – more with a crank re-grind and pistons). Oil leaks can mean failed head studs: expensive on early units. Check history for oil changes and cam-chain tensioner replacement; many have retrofitted post-'84 pressure-fed tensioners



Check **dashboard** top and surround for distortion and cracking, and that all instruments work. A healthy oil pressure is 4bar at 4000rpm, warm



Most had a 5-speed **gearbox**; some early cars were 4-speeds, and a few Sportomatics. Improved G50 'box with hydraulic clutch from late '86



Look at the **underside** of the engine to check the condition of the heat exchangers, which rust, and the heads and crankcase for leaks and corrosion



Check in the front **boot**, especially in the corners and under/around the battery tray for rust, poor repairs and signs of past accident damage

Slim rear wheelarches and unadorned engine cover of earlier examples contrast with the fat arches and 'whale tail' spoilers of the higher-spec later cars



On the road

A good 911 feels taut, smooth and alive, with performance instantly available. Until the SC, a magnesium-alloy crankcase and Nikasil-lined aluminium cylinders were used on most 2.7s – they are light and efficient, but particularly prone to studs pulling out and distortion, especially in US spec with restrictive exhausts. Repair is costly, and not always successful due to block porosity, so beware. American engines were de-rated (0-60mph in 8.2 secs and 131mph top speed on the base 2.7) and US Carrera 2.7s had K-Jetronic injection instead of the multi-throttle mechanical system on European Carreras. K-Jetronic is great when set up properly – many are now spoiled by split vacuum pipes, sticking throttle flaps and air leaks, but are easy to sort.

While some oil drips are to be expected on earlier models, excessive leaks are not. In contrast, 3.2 engines can corrode externally due to better oil sealing! Motronic injection on 3.2s was the first programmable system, and chip upgrades are available (£750 including the essential rolling-road session to tune it to the car).

The gearchange was a bit clunky when new, and is the same when newly rebuilt, but shouldn't be sloppy (a fairly easy fix) or crunchy (budget £1500-3500 for rebuild). Listen for knocking from the rear end, indicating worn CV joints: the pre-'80 joints are scarce now and costly. Soggy dampers are common and inexpensive. Notchy steering results from a seized bearing on the top of the rack, which can be replaced.

Owning one



VW Camper Co boss **Angus Watt** had his first VW, a Fiberfab buggy, at 15. "I ignored 911s for years," he admits, "then I went to San Diego to buy campers and they were all rubbish, but there was a 2.7 targa. We

took off the roof and went for a drive: it was an epiphany moment. I bought it, then three more, starting an enjoyable learning curve.

"I bought this Texas car in California four years ago. We've rebuilt the 'box, replaced the original clutch, tidied up the engine, restored the fan and sourced the correct wheels – it's original apart from our retrofit CDI multi-spark system and I've just enjoyed it. We've been to Le Mans, the Coppa Europa rally and Donegal. The next step is to turn it into a Carrera RS replica with mechanical injection – it's already the right colour!"

"I ignored 911s for years, then drove a 2.7 targa with the roof off: it was an epiphany. I bought it, then three more"

Alternatives



ALPINE A310 V6 1976-'84, 9276 built

With dramatic styling and a rear-mounted V6 replacing the 'four', this was the French 911. Its 148bhp gave 137mph, but sales were held back by a lack of development. **Price now** £20-35k



FERRARI 308/328 1975-'88, 19,555 built

Mid-mounted V8 gave Porsche-topping pace and price, but this was a car to cherish not to rack up *autobahn* miles in. Lovely Pininfarina styling, but costly to fix. **Price now** £50-100k



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The knowledge

TIMELINE

1973 Aug 2.7 production begins, for '74 launch as 150bhp 911, 175bhp S and 210bhp Carrera
1974 Aug 'Whale tail' spoiler option, full-width rear 'Porsche' reflector added
1975 Aug Fully galvanised body; Carrera goes 3-litre with 930 engine & K-Jetronic; standard 911 gets 175bhp 2.7; S model dropped
1977 Aug 3.0 SC replaces 2.7: electronic ignition, Sport (big spoilers) and leather options
1982 Oct SC Cabriolet launched
1983 Aug Carrera 3.2 replaces SC: Motronic management, 231bhp, optional 'turbo-look'
1987 Club Sport & Anniversary (50 each for UK)
1988 Aug Speedster added
1988 Carrera 3.2 replaced by 964

FACTFILE

Sold/number built 1974-'89/215,743
Construction steel monocoque
Engine magnesium/aluminium alloy, ohc 2687/2994/3164cc flat-six, with Bosch K-Jetronic/Motronic fuel injection; 165bhp @ 5800rpm to 231bhp @ 5900rpm; 174lb ft @ 4000rpm to 209lb ft @ 4800rpm
Transmission four/five-speed manual or four-speed Sportomatic (to 1979), RWD
Suspension independent, at **front** by MacPherson struts **rear** semi-trailing arms; torsion bars, anti-roll bar f/r
Steering rack and pinion **Brakes** discs, with servo from SC **Length** 14ft 1in (4290mm)
Width 5ft 3½in (1612mm) **Height** 4ft 4in (1319mm) **Wheelbase** 7ft 5½in (2274mm)
Weight 2378-2697lb (1081-1226kg)
0-60mph 7.2-5.1 secs
Top speed 135-155mph **Mpg** 16-24
Price new £16,732-18,179 (1980)

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WHAT TO PAY

	2.7/SC/3.2*
Show/rebuilt	£70,000/55,000/60,000
Average	£35,000/28,000/32,000
Restoration	£10,000/6000/5000



OUR VERDICT

If the classic 911 look appeals, with air-cooled flat-six, organ-type pedals, offset driving position and thoroughbred performance and handling, a good car from this era will not disappoint. The 2.7s are the most fragile; prioritise finding a car with no rust and a well-sorted engine above any particular model or spec. Targas and (rare) Cabrios suffer more from rot and flexing than coupés, and beware fakes of the rare models.

FOR

More capable of everyday use than almost any other supercar, great parts and specialist back-up and a huge knowledge base for support

AGAINST

Durability doesn't mean they last for ever, and extensive rebuilds are very expensive. Parts are costly compared to lesser cars, too



One you can buy

Year 1989 **Recorded mileage** 89,518
Asking price £32,995 **Vendor** Anthony Godin, Kent; 01622 814140; anthonygodin.co.uk **For** FSH; drives perfectly **Against** If you don't like Cabriolets...

Don't let the low price mislead: this six-owner G50 Sport gets better the deeper you look. Its Baltic Blue finish is mostly original (still with paint-code stickers) except for where a tiny bubble is appearing in the scuttle, and the sills have more recently been refinished. There's been some work in the right door shut, but the left looks factory, and it's rot-free underneath. The boot floor is good, and the front wing and strut bolts are undisturbed. The wheels aren't scuffed and the well-treaded tyres (1990s Pirellis front, 2011 Falkens rear), along with MoTs and a full service record, confirm little recent use.

There are 20 stamps in the book, mostly from main dealers, up to 89,391 miles in May, when the service included a valve-clearance check and adjustment – there are new Nylocs on the cam covers – as well as rebuilt calipers. The heat exchangers look new and the exhaust is recent.

The electric seat adjustment works in all planes, the mirrors in some. It drives really well, tracking straight, with smooth brakes that don't pull and decent synchromesh once the 'box is warmed through. The required 4bar oil pressure comes up at 3000rpm rather than the usual 4000, rising to 5bar from 5000. Not perfect, as you'd expect at this price, but seriously worth a look.



Cabriolet's electric hood is excellent, and works perfectly



Interior looks tidy; electric seats function as they should



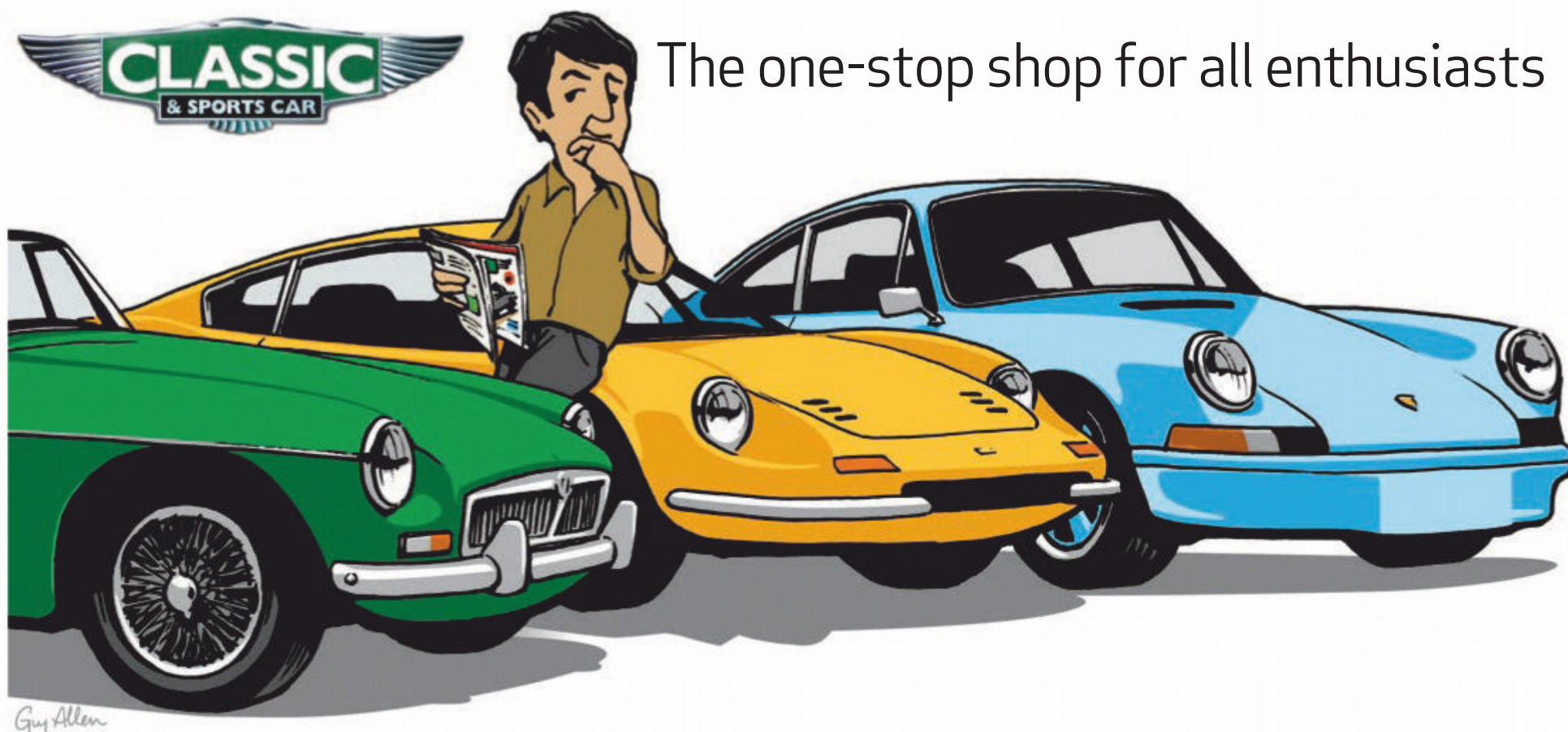
MoT runs until May, and the Porsche is sold with two keys

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What was the one that got away? A fire-damaged Lamborghini Miura that a friend had in storage, but to be honest there are so many vehicles I wish I had kept.

What is the future for the classic market? I can't see a future for cars built after 2000 because they have too many electronics, so older classics will keep rising.

What should readers buy now? We can't get enough of Fast Fords, and prices are already going up.

CASE HISTORIES Cars for sale we've tested this month



'58 Austin-Healey 100/6 p201



1970 Maserati Ghibli SS p213



1934 Rolls-Royce 20/25 p218

Our Case histories are carried out by experts and are a fair reflection of the selected cars on the day they were viewed and tested. They should not be taken as a full inspection, and buyers must satisfy themselves of a car's condition before purchase

PICK OF THE CLASSIFIEDS Great classics you can buy

1963 JAGUAR Mk2 3.4 £34,995

Green with red leather interior and chrome wire wheels. In superb condition, showing just 23,600 miles and having had a full engine overhaul. The large history file includes invoices from the restoration. Call 07766 195303.



PANHARD ET LEVASSOR £200,000

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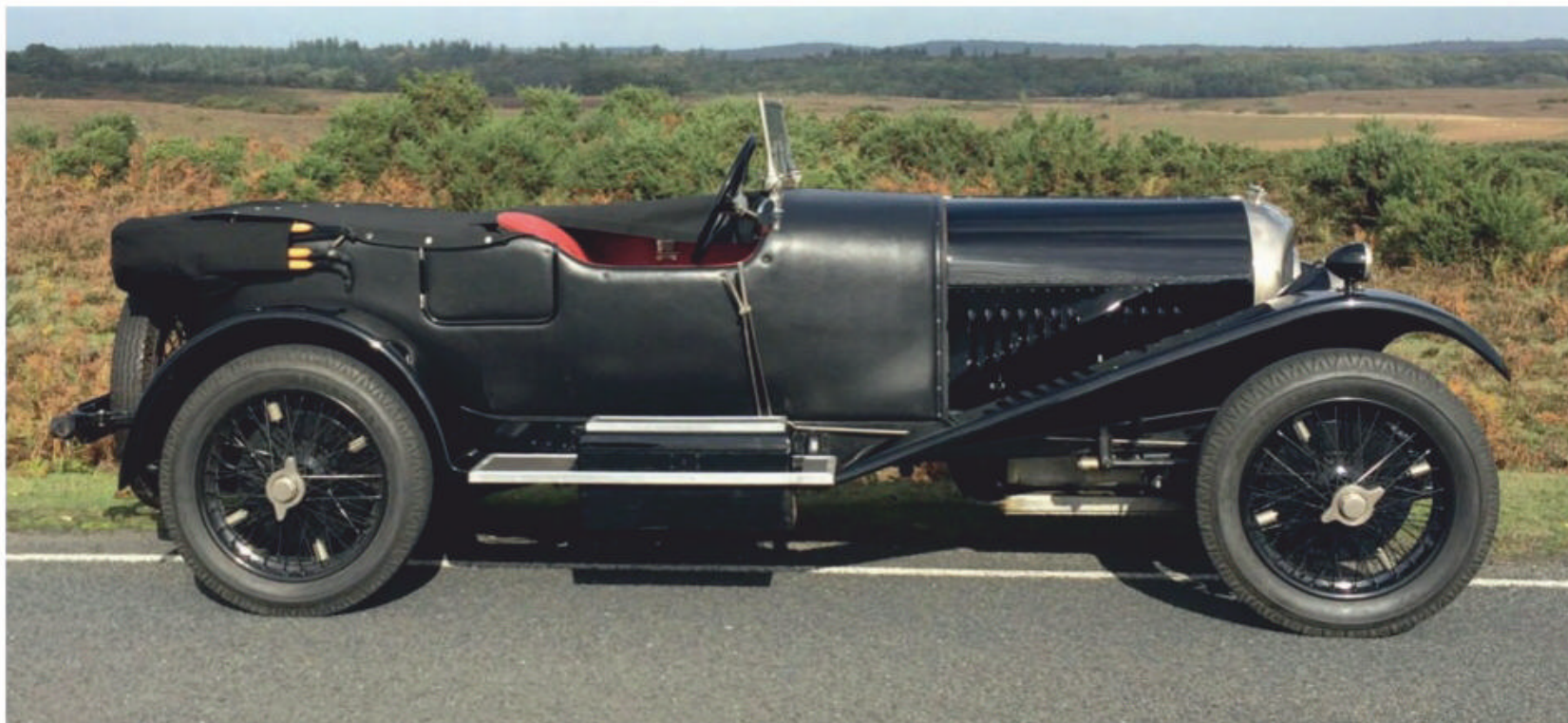
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MERCEDES 280SL/8 1968

881,707 miles Finished in Light Ivory with Cognac Tex trim this Pagoda is one of the very earliest 280SL's being Chassis Number 53. Fitted with rare and desirable 4 Speed manual transmission, matching hardtop, power steering, original Becker radio and tinted glass. This 280SL/8 has benefitted from a full engine rebuild by ourselves as well as other recent expenditure to the gearbox, suspension and brake system all of which ensures it is ready and reliable for peace of mind usage. **£119,995**



MERCEDES 420SL 1987

42,344 miles Finished in Artic White with Blue Leather with Blue Soft top. Totally immaculate in condition and fully sorted with a lovely history file. 2 owners from new and without question one of the finest V8 examples available on the market. Great opportunity for enjoyment and investment **£49,995**



MERCEDES 280SE/9 3.5 1971

82,000 miles. Finished in Icon Gold Metallic with Green Leather. Presenting in wonderful condition throughout this is one of the finest W108's in the UK. Known to us for over 25 years this is as good as it gets or Classic Mercedes-Benz ownership. Highly desirable and viewing is strongly recommended. Coming soon.



MERCEDES 300SL 1989

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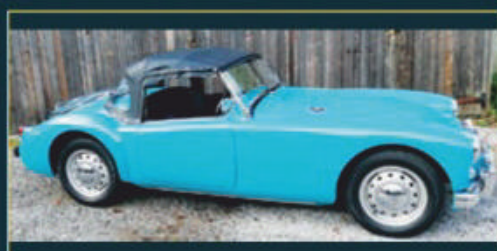
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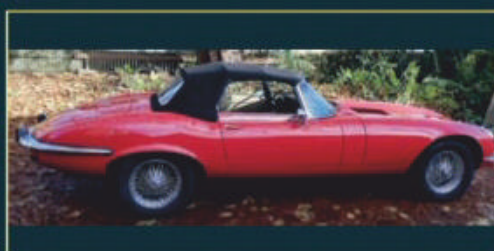
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2005 Ferrari F430 Manual. A UK, RHD Supplied example delivered new on 15th January 2006 via H.R Owen South Kensington, London. Specified with the desirable manual transmission in a Rosso Corsa exterior, complemented with a Crema interior, Daytona electric seating, Bordeaux stitching and carpeting. With only 7,700 documented miles from new, complete with main dealer service history and freshly serviced with all books, tools and charger. **£146,850**



2006 Ferrari F430 RHD. A UK supplied example delivered new on 1st September 2006 via JCT 600 Brooklands Leeds. Specified with a Nero Daytona exterior, Daytona crema interior, Nero stitching, leather headlining, carbon zone, yellow calipers and Scuderia shields. 3,980 miles with 2 previous owners, the last for 11 years. Complete documented main dealer service history and freshly serviced. **£109,850**



2008 Porsche 997 Turbo - RHD. A UK, RHD supplied example, delivered new on the 26th March 2008 via Porsche Centre Kendal, Longpool, Kendal. Specified in a GT Silver (U2U2) exterior, complemented by a Black leather interior, black alcantara headlining, fitted black carpet matts, Automatic Tiptronic transmission & red brake calipers. With documented main dealer OPC service history along with mot certificates on file, this freshly serviced, immaculate example of the collectible 483bhp, Mezger Hand built 3.8 Flat - 6, Twin H6 Turbo Charged, 997 Turbo, complete with documented history file is available for immediate inspection. **£68,850**



2001 Ferrari 360M Coupe. A UK supplied, RHD manual example delivered new via Stratstone's of Wilmslow on 1st March 2001, chassis #122827 was specified with an Argento Nurburgring exterior, complemented by a Nero leather interior, Nero carpeting and "medium" racing seats. With documented ownership and service history from new, this superb example has travelled only 21,800 miles. Complete with books, tools, spare keys, unused schedoni luggage set and freshly serviced prior to delivery. **£66,950**



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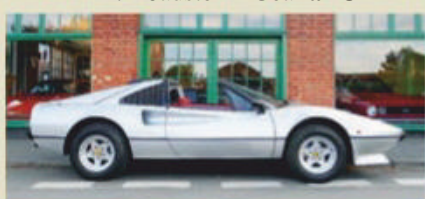
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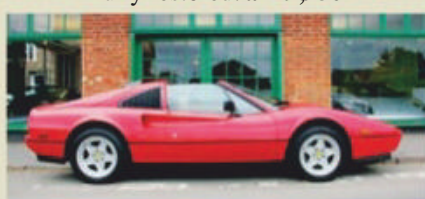
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Case histories

We test the classics that you can buy



AUSTIN-HEALEY 100/6

Year of manufacture 1958 **Recorded mileage** 10,674

Asking price £49,950 **Vendor** Runnymede Motor Company, Bucks;
01753 644599; www.runnymedemotorcompany.com

WHEN IT WAS NEW

Price £1226 17s **Max power** 117bhp **Max torque** 148lb ft
0-60mph 11.2 secs **Top speed** 109mph **Mpg** 20

This BN4 (2+2) is a home-market right-hooker (though the chassis number has an erroneous L in it) in its original colours, and according to the Heritage Certificate it was specified with overdrive, wire wheels and Roadspeed tyres, a laminated 'screen and an mph speedometer. It's had two owners in 37 years, four in total, with a handwritten log of mileages before that from 1969-'83.

It's straight, apart from a shallow ding in the right rear wing, and glossy, with very good door fit. The chassis rails aren't bent, though jacked and lightly dented for much of their length. There are stacks of bills back to 1966, and 21 MoTs to '69, but nothing to indicate when it was last painted; invoices for shiny bits such as headlight rims and door locks in 2015 are a clue. The bumpers were new in 2001 and the rear wheels in '02, with new front dampers (from Rawles) in '05. The tyres, older Fuldas, are wider-than-standard 185/70s that fill the arches perfectly, with an unused Pirelli P6000 on the spare.

The steering wheel is original and the rest of the interior is just taking on a little patina, with light creasing to the seat leather, an unworn rear vinyl bench and older but tidy reproduction carpets (with rubber mats). The hood and tonneau are in good order, with clear windows all round.

The straight-six motor was rebuilt in 2001, the specialist finding no wear to the crank and bores, and it now sports an unleaded head, a finned alloy sump and a spin-on oil filter, plus an aluminium radiator (fitted in 2000). The coolant is clean with a tint, the oil see-through and to 'max'.

It starts easily without choke, burbling a lovely bass tone through the twin tailpipes, drives nicely and goes well for a 100/6 (only a 2.6, remember), with a comfortable, creak-free ride. The gearchange is slick once warm, with good synchros, and the overdrive clicks in and out instantly. The drum brakes pull up straight, and the 2in of static play at the wheel rim isn't noticeable on the move. Oil pressure is 60psi at 2000rpm, temperature steady at 180°F. It's sold with a huge history file, including a handbook and a copy of the original buff logbook.



SUMMARY

EXTERIOR

Crisp bodywork, glossy paint and good chrome

INTERIOR

Newish leather is just starting to take on patina

MECHANICALS

Engine was rebuilt in 2001

VALUE ★★★★★☆☆☆☆

For Nice order, drives well

Against One light ding in the rear wing

SHOULD I BUY IT?

If you're after a Healey don't discount the 100/6 – this one goes well and the price has just been reduced

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**Jaguar E-type Series 1
3.8 Coupe, 1963**

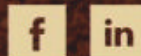
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There are a few light cracks in the finish on the passenger-side suicide door, and apparently a couple of areas of new paint where dents have been removed – but they are hard to spot. The floors are well defined and the sill joints are straight and sharp. All of the chromework and lights are bright and undamaged, though the reflective white and yellow numberplates are rather unfortunate. The underseal in the wheel wells looks new, and the tyres are unused, 2019-dated Michelin Xs, with an unused Pirelli Cinturato on the spare (possibly the original). The folding vinyl roof is perfect, and there's even the original dealer sticker in the back window, for F L Li Albini.

Inside, the seat vinyl and the rubber floor mats are not worn or damaged, the latter protected by Rand Everest overmats. The rubber for the luggage bay is still in place, and beneath it, under the wooden engine cover, the little lay-down twin is still in factory finishes, its oil still golden. There's a bill in the file for a new exhaust, plus an ignition rebuild kit.

Having been standing for some time, the AutobiANCHI started unassisted after a brief churn and it drives like a new one, with a tight feel and no wear evident in the controls. The gearchange is good and still appears to have synchromesh, because it doesn't crunch, and the all-drum brakes pull up confidently and straight.

The 500 will be sold with a meticulously researched written history, a copy of the Italian registration documents, plus bills and an indoor car cover.



SUMMARY

EXTERIOR

Mostly original paint with a few cracks

INTERIOR

Original vinyl and rubber mats

MECHANICAL

Still feels factory-tight

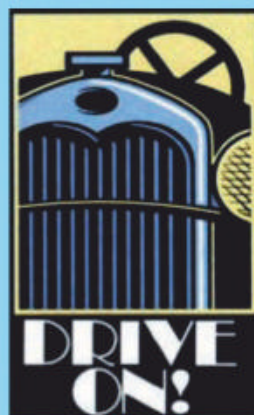
VALUE ★★★★★★☆☆

For Original; drives like new

Against Shame about the reflective plates, but they are easy to change

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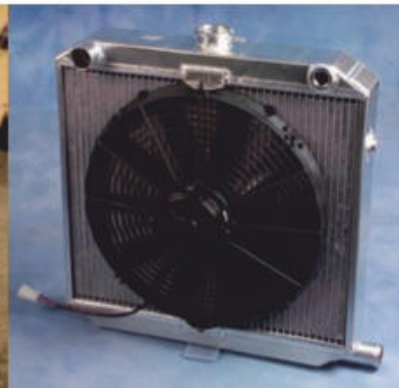
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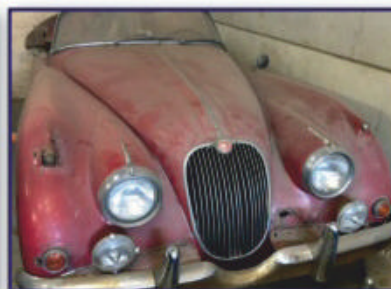
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Case histories

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WHEN IT WAS NEW

Price £10,180 (1969) **Max power** 330bhp **Max torque** 354lb ft
0-60mph 6 secs **Top speed** 160mph **Mpg** 18

This car is an old friend, having been part of the Maserati UK historic fleet between 2000 and 2004. It's one of only 12 right-hand-drive 4.9 SSs built, four of which were Spyders. Supplied new to Australia, it arrived in the UK in 1991 and went through £20,000-worth of fettling with marque specialist Bill McGrath to get it right, including making the headlight lifts and air-con work properly. Maserati later spent £10k in its own workshops, and it subsequently went through the hands of several dealers, and a Bonhams auction in 2016, after which there's a further bill for £2177.

Originally Verde Gemma with white leather, it was already red by the time it was repainted in 1994 by Windmill Restorations, with the work also including new sills. The finish is still excellent, with good door fit. The chrome was redone in 2005 and the refinished wheels are unscuffed, shod with Michelin XWXs that are almost unworn but dated 2007. The stainless-steel exhaust was fitted in 2005 but still looks fairly fresh, all giving the air of a car that's covered few miles in recent years. The engine was last rebuilt in 2004 by McGrath (£18k, plus another £13,200 on sundries) and its bay is near concours, still with bright plating to items such as top wishbone pivots. As you'd expect, the fluids are still clean, the oil dipped in a dry-sump tank up front.

The leather is now tan and doesn't look very old, and the instruments are excellent. It's a heavy old thing at first, like a Daytona, and the pedal placement means you can't heel-and-toe, which makes progress when cold awkward. It lightens up as soon as you are moving, and once warm the big V8 fairly thunders along. The gearchange is excellent and the brakes are sharp. Oil pressure is a mid-gauge 4bar at 3000rpm, with temperature at 75°C, and there's an override switch for the electric fan. Both windows work and there's no air-con.

It will be sold with a repro parts manual, a 1995-dated letter from Maserati confirming its build details, all those bills... And an accompanying sense of relief that they are behind it. The number isn't included – it's really JYY 382J.



SUMMARY

EXTERIOR

Straight, with shiny paint

INTERIOR

Fairly recent leather; good instruments

MECHANICALS

Engine, suspension and brakes have been rebuilt

VALUE ★★★★★☆☆☆☆☆

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Against Some will need electric steering in town

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1993 Bentley Turbo R. Finished in Diamond graphite Magnolia, Hide Interior, 52,000 miles. Service by Bentley up until 2010 then by specialists. Last of the pre head gasket cars. Exceptional condition throughout. **£17,000**



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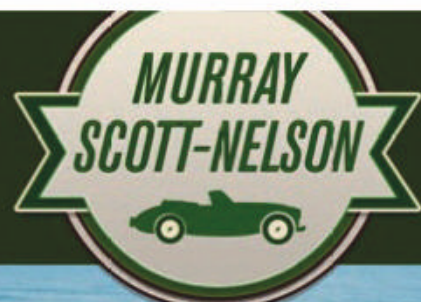


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Chevron B19, ex Ray Bellm.
Ferrari 195 Inter Ghia Coupe, 1951.
Ferrari 250GT Boano, 1956.
Ferrari Testarossa Monospecchio, 1986.
Ferrari 550 barchetta, 2001.
Lancia B20 Coupe MM, 1953.
Lancia B24 America Spider 1955.

Maserati Trofeo racing, 2003.
Mini Cooper S, 1971. FIA G2 racing-car
Mercedes SLS AMG, 2010.
MG-B SEC Turbo, '80. 1 of 5 made by MGOC.
Porsche 911/930 RUF Turbo, 1978.
Porsche 997 Cup-racer. 2014 Specifications.
Riley 9 Brooklands Dixon Special, 1932.
Jaguar XK120 OTS, 1950. LHD. Original.
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Case histories

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ROLLS-ROYCE 20/25 PARK WARD

Year of manufacture 1934 **Recorded mileage** 44,093

Asking price £58,000 **Vendor** Ghost Motors, Sevenoaks, Kent;
01732 886002; www.ghostmotors.co.uk

WHEN IT WAS NEW

Price £1658 (1935) **Max power** c80bhp **Max torque** n/a
0-60mph 31 secs **Top speed** 73mph **Mpg** 20

This Park Ward saloon – an elegant low-profile design in comparison to the many 20/25s that carry bulky limousine bodies – is a lovely, unmolested old thing, looking as if it has been titivated periodically over its life rather than fully restored. It has had only three owners, and has been known to vendor Ghost Motors for the past six years. The paint is older, with a few cracks and blemishes here and there, over a fairly straight body whose doors fit well. The chroming to the headlights and radiator shell is good, with only a couple of tiny dings in the lamps.

The steel sunroof still slides and the wheel discs are all straight, including those fitted to the elegant twin side-mounted spares. The tyres are Dunlop Forts with plenty of tread, and the built-in jacks remain on the axles – one up front and two at the rear – complete with the handle and extension still clipped under the bonnet.

Inside, the dashboard and instruments are very good, with the lovely inlaid boxwood and brass continuing to the door cappings. The leather may well be original, because it's well cracked and has been refinished – painted, basically – and the door trims have been redone, while the carpets and headlining look fairly new. The folding picnic tables fitted to the rear of the front seats remain excellent, with shiny veneers.

The 3669cc straight-six looks 'used' rather than concours, but will be serviced again before the car leaves Ghost Motors. It drives sweetly, eventually on all six, with that lovely slick gearchange, though it's possible to crunch second if you rush it (there was synchromesh on third and top on these from 1932). It doesn't get hot, running at around 70°C, and the thermo radiator shutters evidently work. Oil pressure is 27psi at 2000rpm – anything between 20 and 30 is about right. The brakes pull up well and the trafficators work, now supplemented by flashing indicators at the rear, wired via the front sidelights. It's sold with a good history file of old bills, plus an original handbook.



SUMMARY

EXTERIOR

Older paint is still shiny, with a few blemishes

INTERIOR

Very original, with attractive woodwork

MECHANICALS

All in good health

VALUE ★★★★★☆☆☆☆☆

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Against Cracked leather

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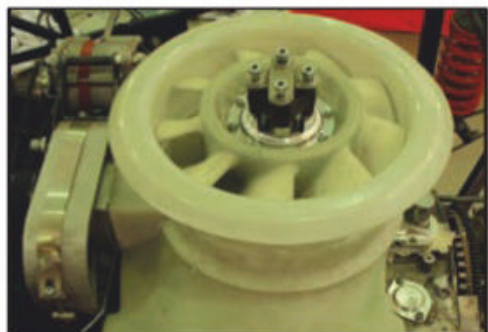
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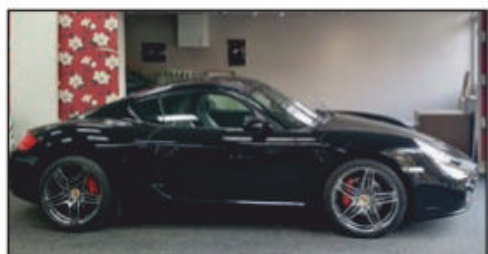
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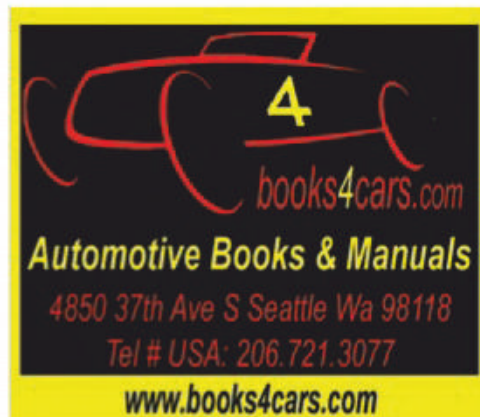


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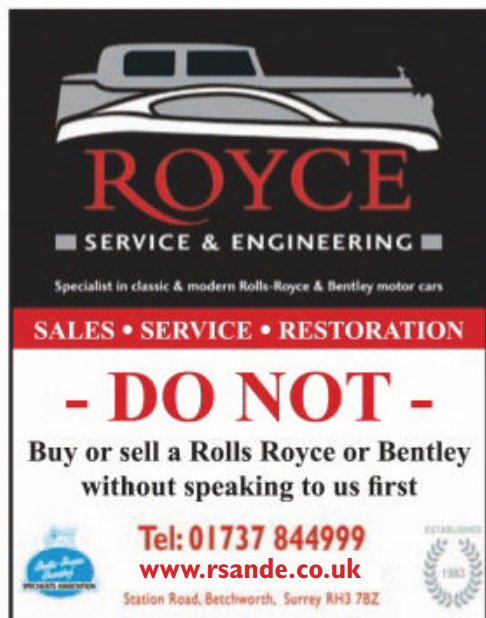
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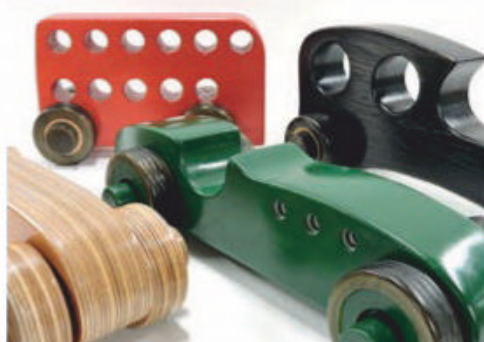
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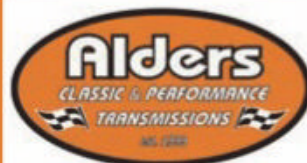
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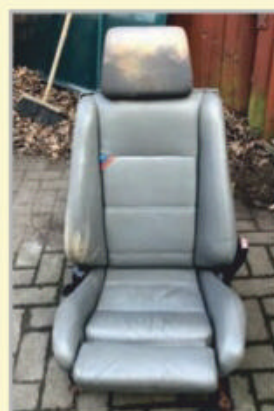
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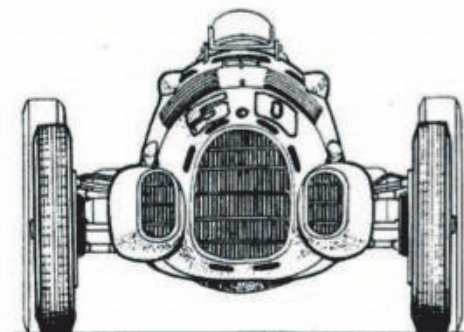


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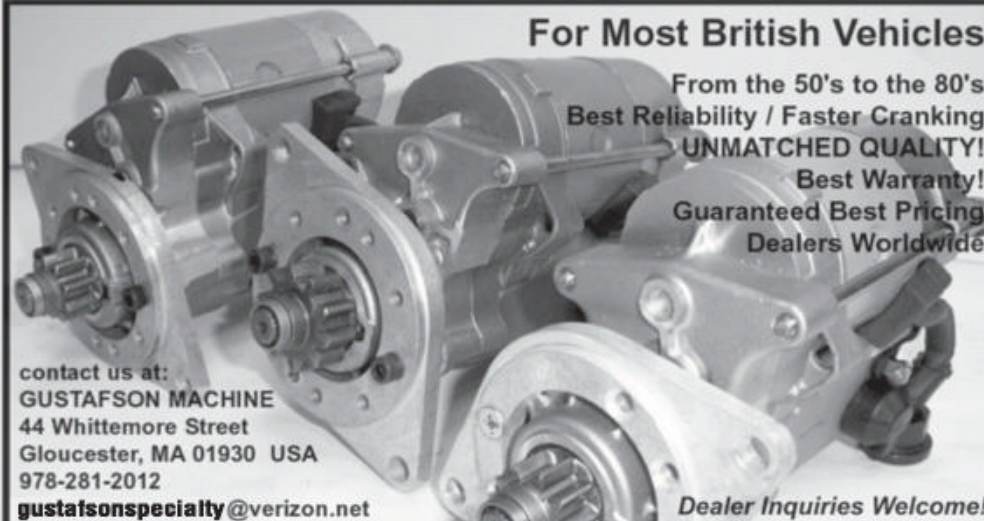
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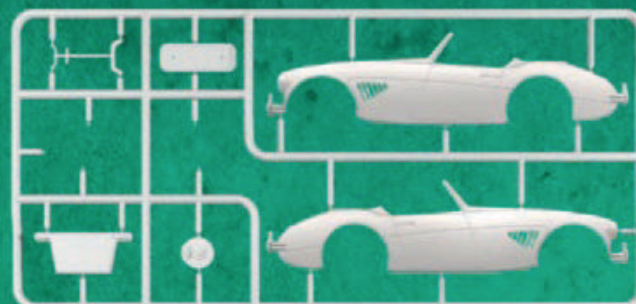
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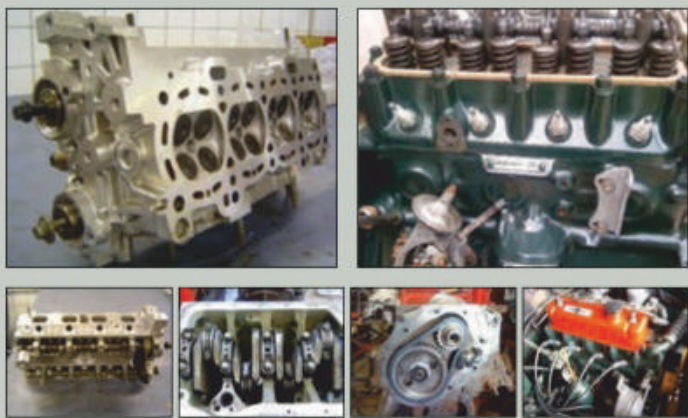
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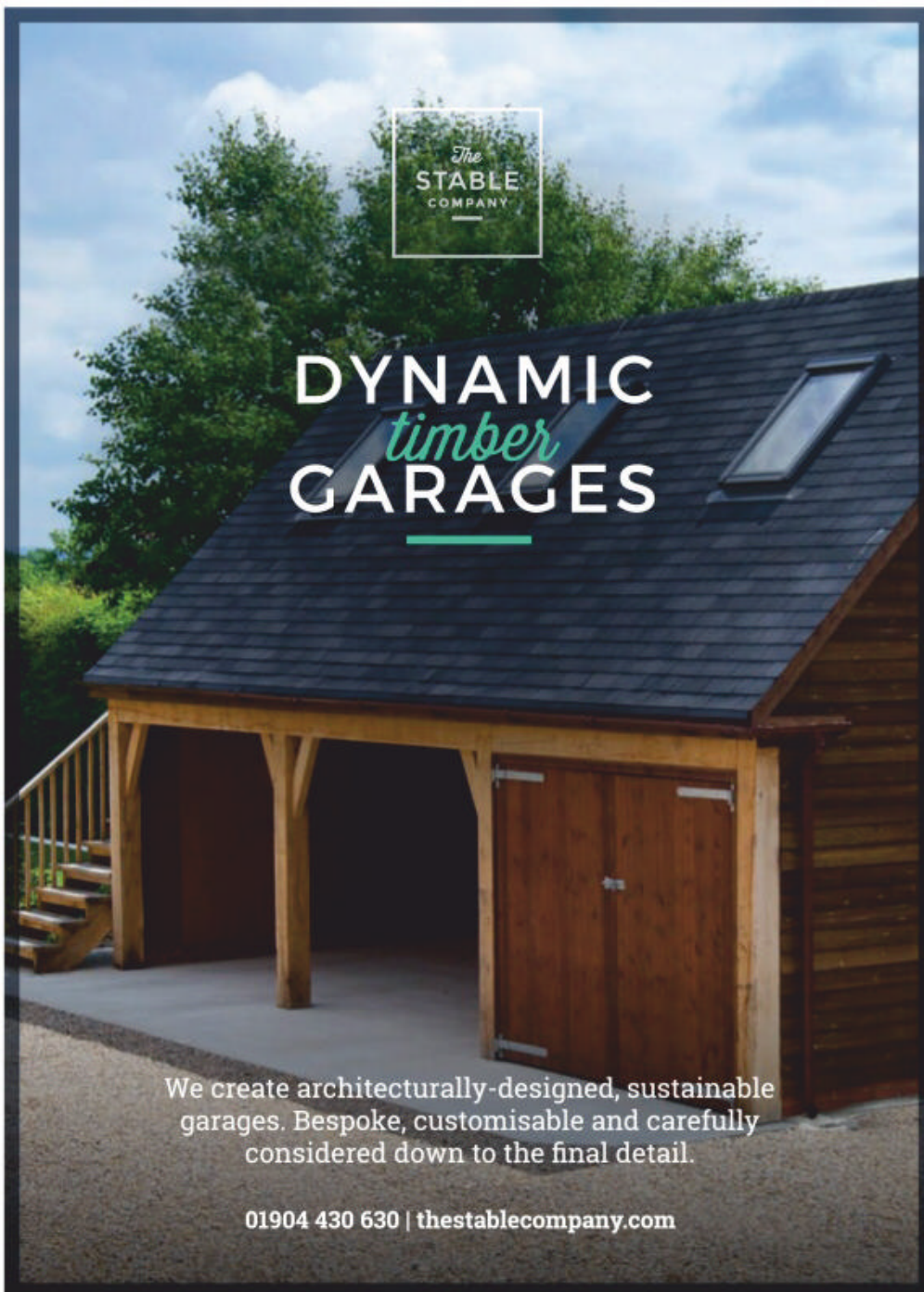
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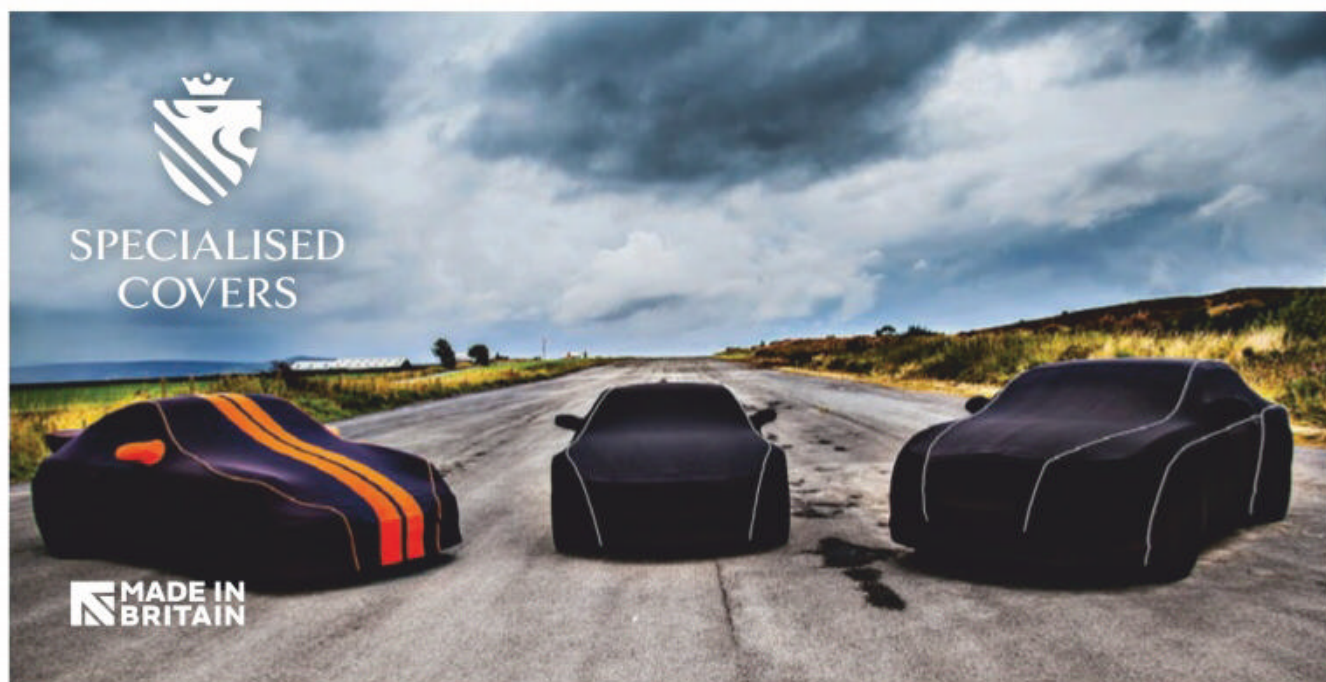
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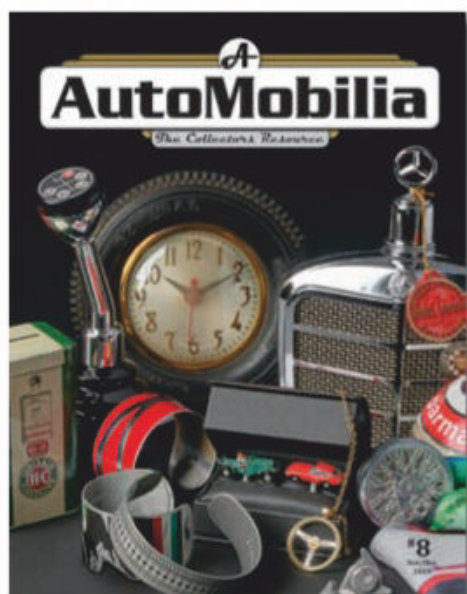
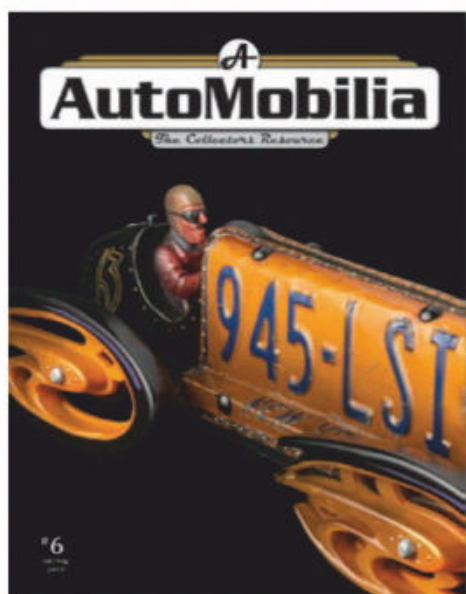
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A lot has changed since the first Rolls-Royce Wraith chassis rolled out of the Derby factory in 1938; not least, that this most British of institutions is now owned and operated by German manufacturer BMW. But much has stayed the same and, while 75 years separate the two models' launches, the Wraith name stands for quality, opulence and engineering excellence as much now as it ever did.

Hailed as the firm's most dynamic model to date, the Wraith has an air of the sporting about it thanks to a striking fastback rear that screams 'high-speed express' – though without straying too far from the Ghost platform on which it is based. The roofline sits 50mm lower than the four-door, while the wheelbase is shortened and the rear track widened. The result is sleek and muscular, though still demolishes the scales at 2.5 tonnes. Two-door Royces have always stood out and the Wraith is no exception, with two vast rear-hinged doors that self-close at the push of a dash-mounted button – as entertaining when at the supermarket as at a red-carpet premiere.

Beneath the skin, similarities to the Ghost continue, starting with the 6.6-litre twin-turbo V12 – albeit putting out around 10% more power at 624bhp, making it the most potent car the firm has ever produced. Also carried over is the double-wishbone front and multi-link rear

FUTURE CLASSIC



suspension, with adaptive dampers. The set-up does justice to Rolls-Royce's fame for a smooth ride, while also making a fair fist of keeping roll in check. The trick dampers can't completely hide the Wraith's weight, but do disguise it, making the big coupé a hoot to hustle along.

It's even possible to switch off the traction control (though you need a degree in computer science to find it, buried in the BMW-derived iDrive system). There's no room for such vulgarity as a 'sport' button – but one is given 'low' for assistance in ascending the steeper hills on one's estate. A rose by any other name, it holds gears longer and adds even greater punch; think of it as the lead weight in the Wraith's sparring gloves, helping it to sprint from 0-62mph in just 4.4 secs. Power delivery is turbine-like, and shockingly urgent given the car's mass.

Inside, the Wraith lives up to its billing as one of the most luxurious cars in the world, with acres of soft hide, deep carpets and a finish that is unparalleled outside the world of superyachts. Opt for the flagship 'Black Badge' and you also get a headlining that mimics the night sky. Whichever you choose, exclusivity is assured thanks to the price and the prevalence of sportier – and, in most cases, more affordable – rivals.

But while quicker, lighter and flashier alternatives abound, those who simply want the best will look no further – just as they did in 1938.



1928 BENTLEY 4½ LITRE

Vanden Plas-style Tourer ■ Restored by Roger Cook to BDC Kensington Gardens Concours winning standard
 ■ Exterior Colour of Cream over Brown
 ■ Sister car to the 4 ½ litre example featured on the famed BBC television series *Peaky Blinders* ■ Enjoyed private ownership for the last 3 decades



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