for enthusiasts by enthusiasts

SPITFIRE & GT6

Featuring Spitfire, GT6, Herald, Vitesse and other Triumph-based Cars

MAGAZINE

Vintage LeMans Spitfire

British Car Day - Toronto

Issue #27

features

- Vintage Spitfire/GT6 Racing
- Spitfire Owner In Ferrari Pits
- Windscreen Trim
- and more...

Vintage Racing Edition

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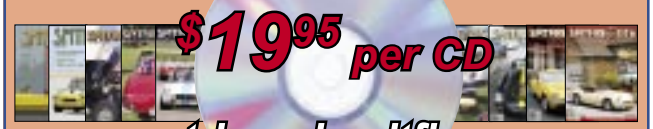

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SPIT-TOGETHER 2008

April 18-20 NASS Gulf Cost Spit-Together
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May 30-31 NASS Southern Spit-Together/EuroBrit
Huntsville, Alabama www.nabms.org

July 11-13 NASS Central Region Spit-Together
Cincinnati, Ohio www.nasshq.org/spittogether

History

History was a subject in school I could take or leave. But back then, we couldn't leave, so we had to take it. While some things stuck with me, many more slipped away, maybe because I wasn't ready to learn, or the information didn't interest me. Now-a-days when not working on an issue of this magazine I find myself surfing for specific, localized history, both in books and on the web. There are no tests, no pressures to read or learn, just an honest interest into what I can discover. Focusing on transportation themes, I have found a vast world of information. Many things that happened right in my backyard so to speak, and others happening around the world.

One such discovery, "***America's First Documented Automobile Race***" taught me several things about automobile development that had escaped me back in school, if ever presented. A challenge was issued to some early auto manufacturers to drive a mire 54 miles near Chicago, but in open vehicles during a snowstorm. There were some up to the challenge, and their efforts can be found here starting on page 14.

If this type of history interests you (while not exactly British cars), please let us know, and we will include similar articles in the future. There are many areas that tie in, one way or another, to our hobby cars. If you too have a hankerin' to study and report on historical information, please feel free to share your findings, and perhaps we can use them here, in a transportation history section. Fun things like one of the first gasoline automobiles made didn't include brakes. One famous car builder built his first car in a shed only to find out his auto could not fit out the narrow door. Or how about windshield wipers, were they invented by a man or a women, and what was the first car they appeared on? Some answers can be found in this issue, others may appear in future issues. Give us your feedback about them, please.

A request to the racing community for a few stories brought in a bounty of new and different ideas, from coast to coast. This issue is filled with racing stories, from the cockpits and pit alleys where the action is taking place.

If you thought our Spitfires and GT6s were just treasured by the driving & historic clubs, you should visit the vintage race tracks across America and see them in action on the track. They may get mixed in with many other production cars, but they hold their own in the classes they represent.

We had such a good response on the racing theme, that the next issue will also include the racing theme. Issue #28 will focus on AutoCross, another form of racing with our vintage cars, racing against the clock. So if you sent an autocross story, it will appear in the upcoming issue. And if you autoX and haven't written a story yet, get busy. We could use them ASAP.

A special thanks goes out to all those that submitted content for this issue. Many were first time writers, and several had never heard of our magazine before. We appreciate you taking the time to share your hobbies and interests with us.

Until next issue, see you on the road...
(or maybe trackside...)

Howard

Thanks to everyone for your submissions. Please keep them coming! They may not be in the next issue, but they will be used in a future issue.

Visiting the Moonshine Store
Moonshine, Illinois

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THE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE WERE SENT BY:

Bob Spruck
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ON THE COVER

LeMans style Spitfire , built & owned by Tim Slater,
West Palm Beach, Florida, USA

The staff of Spitfire & GT6 Magazine expresses its sincere gratitude to the many supporters and suppliers of stories, photos and technical information.

Send us anything Spitfire or GT6 related!
info@triumphspitfire.com or
P.O. Box 30806,
Knoxville, TN USA 37930-0806

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Spitfire & GT6 Magazine...

RETIREMENT

Friends and Colleagues,

The time is fast approaching where my duties here at Rimmer Bros will come to an end. I retire on 12th March after just over 9.5 years in the role of Sales & Marketing Manager.

Over the past few months my successor Andy Mundy has been taking over the role and therefore some of you may already be dealing with him. Please take note of Andy's email address (***andrew.mundy@rimmerbros.co.uk***) which you should use. My own email address will cease to exist from 12th March.

Best wishes to you all.
Richard Sharp

Richard,
It has indeed been a pleasure dealing with you for the past several years. I wish you the very best in your retirement and will miss our contacts, albeit via Internet email. I look forward to working with Andy.

All the best for your future plans,
Howard~

ENGINE QUESTIONS

Dear Editor,
I bought 2 Spitfire engines, one number is FP 47574 UE and the other is FK 1040 HE. I was wondering if the FP engine is a 1500 or 1300 and is it anything special. With the FK I know its a 1300 but was wondering if its anything special ether because of the HE.
Thank you,
Curtis Eiss

Curtis,
The FP47574UE is actually a Midget 1500 engine (post 1974), and the UE is for US emissions or low compression. The FK1040HE is a Spitfire MkIV 1300 engine. The H is a High Compression engine (from the factory). Sorry, I have not found exactly how high it was... a guess 9:1, there rest of the world had 9:1 as well as US 1976's. Most US later Spits had 7.5:1 so 9:1 was "high" by comparison.

www.triumphspitfire.com/enginenumbers.html
John~

STRIPE REMOVAL

Dear Editor,
I was wondering if you have any tips/techniques in removing the original side strip/decal on my 1980 Spit? I want to remove the old decal but I do not want to damage the paint. The paint is original to the car but I would like to know what type it is? Is it acrylic lacquer?
Thank You
David Buttimor
Ontario, Canada

David,
I believe WD-40 or Goo Gone would get the stripes soft enough to peel. A hair dryer might warm them enough as well. Be aware that the paint under the stripes will probably not match the rest of the car, as fading has occured to the exposed paint.
Paint type? I am not sure but believe it is an enamel based paint. I do not think it is acrylic lacquer. Any automotive paint store can help you there.

Howard~

THANX FOR ISSUE 26

Dear Editor,
Thanx for the copy of the magazine! Also thanx for including the picture of our car in it! I have just subscribed to the Spitfire/GT6 magazine.
Andy and Deb Shoemaker
1971 Spitfire, Sorgho Kentucky

Andy,
I am glad you like the magazine. It was nice meeting you and Deb. Hope to see you this summer at more events.

Howard~

SUPERCHARGED SPITFIRE

Dear Editor,

I enjoy subscribing to the Spitfire Magazine, and own a few little British cars ('64 Healey 3000 Mk III, '78 Spitfire, '74 TR6, '74 MGB w/AC, '74 Midget, all with overdrive). In the past I've owned a '58 Healey 100-6 and a '71 B w/air). I always loved the looks and handling of the Spitfire's, from an early age. At age 16 a buddy let me drive his '68 Spitfire, and later that year a buddy took me to the SCCA races in his '73 GT6 (this was back in the 70's).

The Spitfire has recently taken the lead as my favorite car out of all the ones I've owned and currently own, after Bennet French installed his well-designed Supercharger to my stock '78 engine with about 59,000 miles on it. I can start in 2nd and pull out in front of a truck/traffic and blaze ahead if needed, the car can race up a hill in 3rd or 4th, even going down to 1000 rpm's or so, and still it pulls my 175 pound carcass up a hill without shuddering. It now has become what was advertised in the 70's - a great sportscar with a high-torque, high-revving engine. This is what Spitfire motoring should be! and what it was always supposed to be. Bennet offers several performance upgrades to British cars. He is also the current president of the British Car Club of Western North Carolina. I highly recommend the supercharger upgrade - your Spitfire will become the performer it has always appeared to be. No longer will you need to read about the underpowered Spitfire versus the Miata's or today's engines. The car even has passing power in overdrive top gear at 60 mph! It is a total blast and a great experience. It's a 'gotta-get-one' in my book.

I enjoyed the article on compression on page 35 in the last edition of the magazine. I do highly suggest trying this method - the supercharger is bolt-on major power, purrs like a kitten, cranks right up, and takes little modification (you move the bonnet support bar slightly and use a different battery). Can't recommend this highly enough!

Gratefully and sincerely yours,
Dave Snider
Mills River, NC
1978 Triumph Spitfire owner
Big fan of the Spitfire and GT6 Magazine

Dave,
Thanks for your letter. We had already received a tip about Bennet French's Supercharger, and have included it in the Industry News section (on page 7). I am sure some readers will be very interested in this new addition to the Spitfire arsenal of equipment.
Perhaps you could convince Bennet to purchase some advertising space in upcoming issues of Spit/GT6 to reach more readers on a continual basis. ☻
Howard~

INDUSTRY NEWS

This section is designed to inform readers of news, announcements and new products involved in our hobby.
Send announcements to: P.O. Box 30806, Knoxville, TN 37930 or info@triumphspitfire.com

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Triumph Spitfire Supercharger Kit / MP45 Eaton US$2,849.00

What we have here is an Eaton MP45 fourth generation blower which has been carefully and craftily adapted for use on the Triumph Spitfire late 1300 or 1500cc engine. Carburetion is handled by a brand new SU HIF38 carburetor with a K&N air filter. The drive system is a series of 6 groove serpentine pulleys and single belt. Note; the original alternator or generator may be retained if outfitted with a new serpentine pulley which is supplied. Fuel is delivered via the original mechanical fuel pump however you may want to install the optional electric fuel pump for improved reliability. For earlier cars with mechanical throttle linkage the kit is equipped with new linkage. For later cars the carburetor will be actuated via a throttle cable (provided).

This kit is meant to enhance the performance of and be installed on an otherwise healthy engine. On a healthy but otherwise stock engine you should expect to see gains of around 25 to 30% at the rear wheels. Actual gains in performance will vary depending upon the condition and state of tune of your engine. I have designed this kit to be able to be installed by any reasonably mechanically inclined enthusiast in his driveway or garage. The installation should not take more than 8 hours. While the installation is relatively straight forward the tuning of the unit will require a more in depth understanding of how an engine works and how a supercharger works. Access to a "rolling road" AKA chassis dynamometer is very helpful. If you have any doubts about your ability to tune the carburetor and ignition timing , I highly recommend you entrust this work to a more knowledgeable person. You do not want to run your engine too lean nor do you want to give into the urge to give the engine too much advance on the ignition timing. A complete set of instructions is provided and will provide you with a step by step installation procedure and tuning tips will be provided.

Because of the high performance nature of this product I can not be responsible for any problem or catastrophe that may occur to your engine, car or you as a result of installation. I will however stand behind the components of the kit itself. The bearings and rotors of the MP45 are covered against premature wear or failure for a period of three years. All other components are warranted against defects in materials and workmanship for a period of 12 months from date of purchase.

Before buying this kit please contact me first! I want to make sure you understand what you are buying. Please be aware also, there is typically a four week lead time from date of purchase till delivery as the actual blowers (MP45's) are ordered on an as needed basis. I am sorry for this inconvenience but I just don't have the bankroll right now to keep many of these blowers in stock at a time. ●

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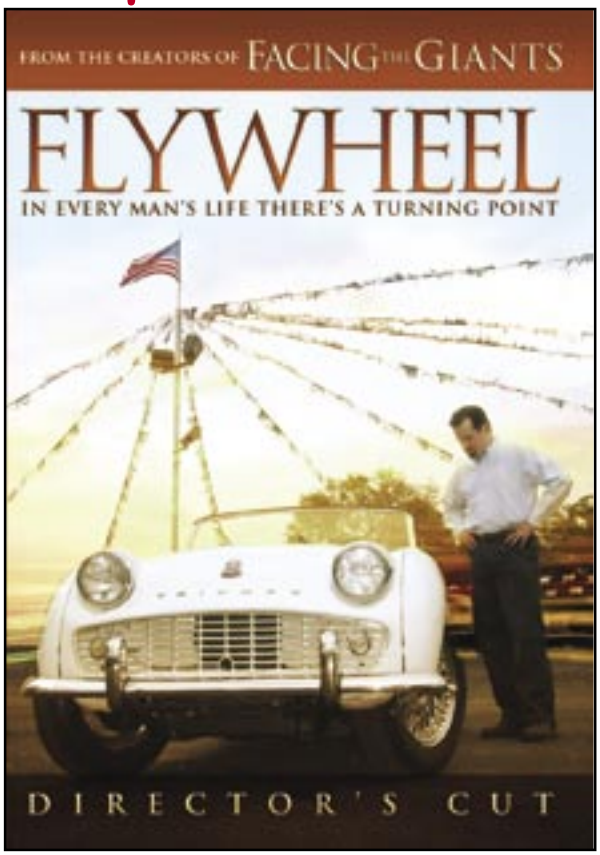
"Reely" Weird, Wacky & Wonderful!

Triumphs in the Movies....



PROVIDENT FILMS and SONY PICTURES HOME ENTERTAINMENT RELEASE "FLYWHEEL: DIRECTOR'S CUT" DVD

First Film from "Facing the Giants" Creators, New and Re-Mastered

Albany GA, August 18, 2007 – Following the 2006 success of "Facing the Giants," Provident Films, in partnership with Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, is releasing a re-mastered version of "Flywheel," Sherwood Pictures' first feature film (www.flywheelthemovie.com). With improved color, audio, and edited scenes, "Flywheel: Director's Cut" delivers Sherwood's signature drama and humor in a modern-day parable of a used car salesman whose life reaches a turning point.

"Flywheel: Director's Cut" releases Nov. 13, 2007, in the CBA through Provident-Integrity and in the general market though Sony Pictures Home Entertainment.

"Facing the Giants" was produced on location in Albany with an all-volunteer cast for $100,000; and it played in more than 1,000 theaters. "Flywheel," previously self-distributed by Sherwood Pictures, already has sold 85,000 DVDs. Post-"Giants" demand has surged and sales of "Flywheel: Director's Cut" are expected to be brisk.

Besides the movie, "Director's Cut" will add a new director's commentary, a teaser for Sherwood's next feature film, French and Spanish subtitles; other special features include hilarious outtakes and deleted scenes.

"Flywheel" was conceived in spring 2002 the Kendrick brothers, Alex and Stephen, saw a Barna survey saying movies and televisions are more influential in American culture than the church. "We decided to step out on faith and produce a full-length feature film," said Alex Kendrick associate pastor at Sherwood Baptist Church. Not long after that, Alex bought a car and thought to himself, "What if a minister was conned at a car dealer and then prayed, 'Lord, treat him like he treated me.'"

The "Flywheel" plot thickened as Alex and Stephen began to write. Along the way, the movie acquired its name, $20,000 in unsolicited donations, and a prayed-for Canon XL2s with the P+S Technick mini 35 adapter! The all-volunteer players were cast from Sherwood members and production continued through early 2003. On April 9, 2003, it debuted in a local Carmike Theater and ran for staggering six weeks, at times outselling Hollywood films on adjoining screens.

"We have a phrase: whoever wants the next generation the most will get them. Flannel graphs and chalk talks won't reach a student who has an Xbox in his room," Sherwood Senior Pastor Michael Catt said. "The arts of today can be used for good or evil. We can complain about how movies corrupt our children and culture. Or we can say, 'Let's get in the middle and make a difference.'"

Formal recognition of "Flywheel" includes four seals from the Dove Foundation, airing on TBN, strong reviews from MovieGuide magazine, Best Feature at San Francisco's WYSIWYG Film Festival, the chosen favorite of festival attendees at the Saboath International Film Festival in Milan, Italy, and more.

"'Flywheel' is the reason [University of Georgia Head Football Coach] Mark Richt agreed to the cameo in 'Facing the Giants.'" Stephen Kendrick said. "In fact, he lists it alongside 'Braveheart' as one of his favorite movies. We get amazing feedback from around the world."

Like "Facing the Giants," "Flywheel" can be licensed for church viewings—a program that showed "Giants" in more than 6,500 churches to more than 1.5 million viewers.

"Flywheel" was produced by Sherwood Pictures of Albany GA. "Flywheel: Director's Cut" will be marketed by Provident Films and distributed by Sony Pictures. Sherwood Pictures operates under the leadership team of Senior Pastor Michael Catt; Executive Pastor Jim McBride; and Associate Pastors Alex Kendrick and Stephen Kendrick.

For more information, visit ***www.flywheelthemovie.com*** •

Got something Weird, Wacky or Wonderful?
Send it to info@triumphspitfire.com or P.O. Box 30806, Knoxville, TN 37930

You write the caption

This photo was sent to us by several readers. However, we have not received the real story behind it.

Next issue...

This photo was sent to us by Nick Moseley, B.C. Canada

Send your caption suggestions to info@triumphspitfire.com or P.O. Box 30806, Knoxville, TN 37930-0806

Last issue and on TriumphSpitfire.com, we asked readers to send us suggestions for a caption for the photo to the left. Listed below are some of the responses.

the captions

YABBADABBADOOO!
Flintstones...Meet the Flintstones...
How did the Flintstones do it?
W I L M A !!!!!!!
DOWNSHIFT WILMA, DOWNSHIFT!!!!!!!!
Come on Wilma can't you go any faster
Who's this Wilma chic people keep mistaking me for?
As Fred sleeps Pebbles sneaks out with the car
Pebbles and Bam Bam enjoy the quiet life in Florida
Pebbles Flintstone takes Dad's Spitfire for a hot lap around the gravel pit parking lot
Wilma Flintstone takes the Spitfire for a spin around Bedrock.
Hey Fred, looks like Wilma is taking the car again!"
No lodge meeting tonight Barney, Wilma took the car
You get back here, Fred Flintsone....I can't drive this thing on my own!
The last Bedrock ever saw of Wilma since Fred bought her a sports car.
Wilma thought the Flintmobile was too stone age
It sure looked easy when Fred and Barney took off in it.
Classic Triumph Spitfire with the Flintstone option package
The new UK fashions require a bit more of a runway this year
Oh no, there goes another heel
60-0 in one pair of sandals, one pair sneakers and one pair of boots, whew!!!!!
Gets great gas mileage, hard on brakes
Announcing the newest "green" alternative, the Self Propelled Spitfire
Great gas mileage but the brakes suck!
In your trusty Spitty, feet to the street beats pedal to the metal
I cut 10 ft off my braking distance since I switched to Crocs!
Feet don't fail me now!
Oh $#@&, I broke a heel
Yeah...but I get 60 miles per sandal.
Told you this thing need new brakes
With just one person, brakes pull to the left.
Wow! she's using the eh-eh-eh brakes.
One Horse Power Brakes
We thought there was something missing...
Oh so this is what minor rusted floorboards means
So Nail-Bond won't hold in the floors?
Wow these floor boards feel hot
Well you did say to stop you have to put your foot to the ground!
Doin' fine hon', just one more block...
This Spit tops out at 2 ft/lbs of torque!
I guess Tin Foil is not a suitable sub for a real floor pan replacement
Shes got legs and she knows how to use them!
Mary, shows off her heel & toe technique
You just can't stop a Triumph enthusiast
Seen on Ebay: "Small holes in floorboard"
Whooo-nelly

And FINALLY...
Nothing like the wind in your hair, and the breeze between your toes!

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More Weird, Wacky & Wonderful!

And the Snail Wins

You might have been wondering why some issues of the Spit/GT6 magazine and letters seem to take forever in the mail. Michal Szybalski of Warsaw, Poland, has come up with the answer, at least for the mail in Poland.

A priority letter was mailed to Szybalski on December 20th, 2007, and he finally received it on January 3rd, 2008. Szybalski, an IT worker, calculated that a snail would have made the same trip even faster than his letter did. It took about 294 hours for the priority letter to arrive at his home, and the distance between the sender and Szybalski's house was 11.1 kilometers. Given the time and distance, the priority letter's speed was 0.03775 kilometers per hour.

Szybalski calculated that an ordinary garden snail travels about 0.048 kilometers per hour.

So next time you are outside and see a snail passing by, please step aside and let it pass. It may be carrying a rush delivery letter for your neighbor!

No Shaving While Driving

Drivers in Monterrey Mexico that are caught shaving, applying lipstick, or carrying a pet on their lap will now receive hefty fines as local police try to reduce the number of accidents. Shaving or putting on make-up while they drive will cause drivers to pay fines up to 346 pesos ($32) in the northern city of Torreon.

Fines have also been increased for common traffic offenses such as speeding, talking on a cell phone without a headset, and driving while intoxicated, and new misdemeanors have been added for driving with another person or animal on the driver's lap, and throwing trash out of your car.

The judicial system all across Mexico is toughening the traffic laws because motorists in Mexico routinely ignore stop lights, carry passengers in the back of pick-ups, and drive drunk with children in the front seats. Fatal accidents have steadily increased in Mexico and officials hope the new and stricter laws will lower those numbers dramatically.

A Petrol-Pumping Robot?

In Emmeloord, Netherlands motorists nostalgic for the time they could stay in their cars while attendants braved the elements to fill their fuel tanks may see those days return, by means of a Dutch robot.

Inventors in the Netherlands introduced a car-fuelling robot that they claim is the first of its kind. The robot recognizes cars upon arrival, then matches the make and model to a database of fuel cap designs and fuel types. The robotic arm fitted with multiple sensors extends from a regular gas pump. It carefully opens the car's flap, unscrews the cap, picks up the fuel nozzle and moves it toward the tank opening, just like a human arm would do.

Developer and petrol station operator Nico van Staveren said, "I was on a farm and I saw a robotic arm milking a cow. If a robot can do that then why can't it fill a car tank, I thought. Drivers needn't get dirty hands or smell of petrol again."

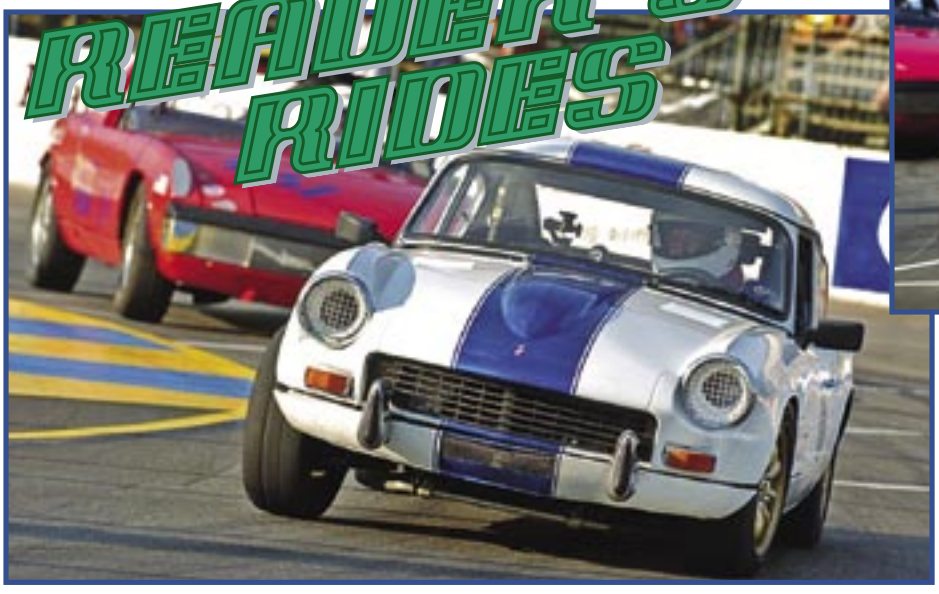
He hopes to unveil the "Tankpitstop" robot in a few of Dutch stations by the end of the year. It works on any car whose tank can be opened without a key, and whose contours and dimensions have been recorded previously to avoid scratching the paint.

While filling his black Alfa Romeo at a nearby petrol station, Jelger De Kroon was asked whether he would trust his car to a robotic fuel attendant. Jelger said: "Why not? I guess I could keep my hands free and clean, but I'd hope they have good insurance."

The cost for this robotic wonder, an estimated €75,000 Euro ($111,100 US)

Do you think the Spitfire, GT6, and other models of Triumphs will be included in their database?

READER'S RIDES



◄▲1967 GT6 Mk1 GP racer
Owned by Kevin Lynch
Lakewood, Colorado
At the 2004 Denver Grand Prix
Photos by Cliff Lawson Photography

▲1977 Spitfire color "Flamenco Red" Mark Campos, Santa Cruz, California
On February 24, 2008, Mark Campos and his 1977 Spitfire were awarded the weekly trophy at Vern Caron's "No Show Car Show," an informal neighborhood auto aficionado event held Sunday mornings at the local coffee shop. Being a miserable rainy morning, the Spitfire won "by default" - as the only worthy car that showed up. How's that for dedication?

▲1979 Spitfire
Douglas Kirkley, Vance Alabama

▲I missed my Spit so much that I made one with snow.
Michel Des Lauriers, Laval, Qc, Canada - SnowWhite Spitfire…

▼1978 Spitfire
Craig Holmes, Louisville, Kentucky

To have your car featured in the next issue and on the TriumphSpitfire.com website, e-mail us at info@triumphspitfire.com or mail to: P.O. Box 30806, Knoxville, TN 37930 USA

◄▼ SCCA #57
HP Spitfire 1500
#362573
Scott Cypher
Reading,
Pennsylvania

▲1972 MkIV Spitfire
Mike Eaves
Beaumont, Texas

◄▲▼1971 Spitfire MkIV &
Triumph Support Vehicle
Ricardo Prado & son
San Paulo, Brazil
Co-founder of the
South American Spitfire Squadron

▼1970 Triumph Herald 13/60
Christian H Jensen, Denmark
Photo taken after RDRR 2007

▼1979 Spitfire 1500
Bill & Marie Tilford, Louisville, Kentucky

▲1970 GT6+ Newly acquired by
Brett Johnson, Indianapolis, Indiana

▲►Newly Restored Early Mk1 Racer
Robert MacKenzie, Cedar Park, Texas

▲1975 Spitfire Ed Channon, Beaverton, Oregon

▲1975 Spitfire
Sven Mom, Holland, Amsterdam

▼ 1980 Spitfire 1500 Brooklands Green,
Harry Scanlan, Ontario, Canada
This the same car that was featured in issue #1
of our magazine (New Spitfire)

▼1966 Spitfire with 2.8L Chevy V6 Engine & T5 Transmission
Mike Campbell, Arlington, Texas

America's First Documented Automobile Race

The starting line-up at Jackson Park, Chicago Illinois

If it can run, they will race it. You know what I mean, guys will race anything, horses, buggies, mules, so why would things be any different when the first cars were built in the U.S.?

Henry Ford is remembered most for developing the car in the US, but there were some before him. In some historical journals John Lambert is listed as the first auto builder, successfully testing and driving a three-wheeled, surrey-topped, gasoline-powered runabout of his own design in 1891. The Duryea brothers from Illinois are credited with being the first Americans to produce a four-wheeled gasoline-powered "horseless carriage" in 1893. The Duryea brothers, like the Wright brothers, started out as bicycle mechanics, but had a passion for something more. Frank and Charles Duryea moved from Illinois to Springfield, MA in 1889 and by the fall of 1893 rolled out their invention onto the streets for testing. This horseless carriage was equipped with a one cylinder engine, a three speed transmission and was installed in a used horse carriage. The top speed was 7.5 miles per hour.

Frank Duryea developed a second automobile the following year with more power, a two cylinder engine. This was the car destined to compete in the America's first recorded automobile race on November 2, 1895. The race was the brainchild of H. H. Kohlsaat and the writing staff at the Chicago Times-Herald newspaper. The Times-Herald sponsored the event setting the course from downtown Chicago to Evanston Illinois and back.

When November second arrived, after shipping the Duryea car out by rail, Frank was disappointed in finding there was only one competitor that was ready to compete, the Mueller Benz from Germany. It was decided to postpone the race to give other cars a chance to compete. The new date was Thanksgiving Day, November 28, 1895. On this day, amid snowy conditions six cars lined up for the start of the first automobile race out of nearly one hundred entries.

Those six cars consisted of two electric cars, one from Morris & Salom of Philadelphia, and one from Sturgis of Chicago. Three of the starters were imported German Benz automobiles, supplied by H. Mueller & Co. of Decatur, IL; R.H. Macy & Co. of New York; and The De la Vergne Refrigeration Machine Co. of New York. The sixth and final car at the starting line was the only American built gasoline powered car that was able to start in those cold morning conditions. It was the Duryea carriage of the Duryea Motor Wagon Co. from Springfield, PA with Frank Duryea at the controls of his two cylinder creation.

At 8:55am the race was started and the Duryea was the first car out. To insure that no shortcuts were taken, an umpire rode with each driver. Frank Duryea's umpire was Arthur W. White of Toronto Ontario. The less traveled roads were soft and unpacked, easy to maneuver his carriage through, but the busier roads were covered with ruts and ice chunks, throwing the carriage from side to side. While still in the lead, Frank's left

Continued on page 15, second column

Shop Doors

Most of us have heard of people building boats in their basements or shops only to find out when they finished the project that it would not fit out the door. I have yet to hear about a Spitfire or GT6 being built with the same problem. Most of us are too sharp to ever do anything like that. Right?!?!

Henry Ford is well remembered in automotive history for his assembly line production of the Model T and other models of early Fords. Some say he was a true genius. Well, even a genius can have their set-backs. Henry completed his first automobile at 2 in the morning on June 6, 1896. As he proceeded to roll it outside for a road test, he shockingly discovered that the door to his workshop was too narrow to allow his new creation to pass through. It took over an hour to remove bricks from the doorway before the hole was large enough for his car to be rolled out of the shop. Once outside, Henry took the car for a successful road test, and the rest, is history... ●

No Brakes

On September 20. 1893, after a great deal of tinkering with their designs, Frank Duryea was ready to test drive the motor wagon. The test run was held on the outskirts of Springfield, Massachusetts on a farm owned by Howard Bemis. Witnesses at the event included Howard Bemis, Erwin Markham, an investor in the project, and Rudy MacPhee, a reporter for the Springfield Evening-Union. The test was ready to begin and Frank Duryea took his place at the tiller of the carriage. Howard, Erwin, and Rudy pushed the carriage until the motor sputtered into operation. The vehicle moved under its own power for about 200 feet. Frank then realized one serious flaw with his motor wagon, no brakes. He steered the carriage into a pile of dirt to halt its progress. The test was considered a success, even with the crude stopping method. ●

America's First Recorded Automobile Accident

Frank & Charles Duryea started selling their production vehicles in March of 1896. Only two short months later, on May 30th in New York City, the Cosmopolitan magazine sponsored a race. Frank Duryea came in first in a '96 Duryea, Charles Duryea came in second in another '96 Duryea. Henry Wells of Springfield, Mass. was driving a third '96 Duryea and after turning a corner and losing control he collided with a bicyclist. The cyclist, Miss Evylyn Thomas was knocked unconscious and her leg fractured. Miss Thomas was taken to the Manhattan Hospital, where she recovered from her injuries. Wells spent the night in jail for the accident and was thus recorded as America's first traffic accident. Oddly enough, another driver took Henry's car and finished the race. ●

Frank Duryea and umpire, after Duryea regained the lead in Evanston.

front wheel struck a bad rut with such force that the steering arm broke off. Frank removed the broken parts, located a nearby blacksmith and soon they forged a replacement arm.

While making the repair, the Macy Benz passed Frank and kept the lead to Evanston. In Evanston Frank managed to catch up and pass the Benz and headed back toward Chicago for the final leg of the race. As he neared Chicago's Humboldt Park, one of the two cylinders fouled out, leaving him running on one cylinder. After an hour roadside repair, Duryea was off again, sure that he was no longer in the lead. The snow was heavy through the remainder of the trip, but the Duryea machine pushed on. Frank had to make a stop for gasoline before arriving at the finish line at Jackson Park at 7:18pm. Frank Duryea learned he had won the race. At 8:53pm the only other car to finish the race, the Mueller Benz, crossed the finish line driven by that cars' umpire, as the owner/driver has collapsed from fatigue.

The total mileage traveled in the race was 54 miles and Frank averaged 7.3mph. For his first place finish, Frank was award a prize of $2000. The sponsor, the Chicago Times-Herald declared, "Persons who are inclined to decry the development of the horseless carriage will be forced to recognize it as an admitted mechanical achievement, highly adapted to some of the most urgent needs of our civilization."

The Duryea brothers returned victorious to Springfield and set about building an improved model of Duryea automobile. In 1896 the Duryea Motor Wagon Company hand assembled and sold 13 identical gasoline-powered vehicles.

In May of 1896 Frank and Charles entered Duryea autos in the New York Cosmopolitan Race, placing first and second. Due to ongoing arguments between the brothers, the Duryea Motor Wagon Company only remained open for three years. Charles tried twice to start another automobile manufacturing company but failed at both attempts. Frank however, worked on refining his designed and sought a partner for his venture. In 1901, Frank made a deal with the Massachusetts-based J. Stevens Arms and Tool Company to build automobiles. In 1904 the Stevens-Duryea Company was formed to manufacture Stevens-Duryea automobiles. That company had moderate success initially, but it closed its doors in 1915 after building about 14,000 vehicles. The Duryea brothers became the first Americans to build and sell automobiles for a profit. That was the beginning of the American automobile industry, spurred on by the first American automobile race.

Number 5, the winner, F. Duryea, driver (L), A. White, umpire (R).

Jim & Patty's Spitfire Racer

by Jim Norlin, Oregon

June 1966. My friend Bill Wilson and I had just graduated from high school and decided to go watch the Rose Cup Sports Car Races at West Delta Park (later to become Portland International Raceway) in Portland, Oregon. We were both thrilled and intimidated by what we experienced. No way could we ever have the guts to drive that fast and that close together. Over the next few years, we attended lots of races at Portland, Pacific Raceways in Kent, Washington and at Laguna Seca in California. We saw one of the last United States Road Racing Championship races (USRRC, the predecessor to the Can-Am series). We also saw Trans-Am, Can-Am and lots of amateur racing.

We finally decided to get involved as corner workers, but in those days, membership in the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) was by invitation. You needed references from an existing member and we didn't know anyone involved. That changed in 1969 when I found that one of the guys in my dorm at Oregon State University was a member. We got the paperwork signed, joined up and started working corners.

Late that summer, the SCCA had a work party at the Portland track. Bill and I struck up a conversation with Mark Matsler who owned and raced the 1963 Triumph Spitfire that is the subject of this story. Mark was a Mechanical Engineering student at OSU, same as I was, but he was a year behind me. Mark did not have a crew to help him with the racecar. Bill (who was a machinist by this time) and I didn't hesitate to offer our totally inexperienced help, and the race team was formed.

Surprisingly, we had a fair amount of success in 1970, our first season of racing together. We won a regional race at Portland one of our first times out. The first photo shows the team after that win. I'm leaning against the front fender of the Anglia, Bill's against the door, and Mark is sitting on the ground.

▲ First season of racing together, 1970 with a win at the regional race at Portland. I'm leaning against the front fender of the Anglia, Bill's against the door, and Mark is sitting on the ground.

▲October, 1970 at Laguna Seca.
From right to left, it's Bill, me, Mark and Dennis Clark.

For the local races, Mark used to flat tow the Spitfire behind his Anglia. Talk about low budget. We didn't know much about what we were doing, but we sure learned a lot about cars and ourselves.

In October that year, we took the car to Laguna Seca to race a regional race in support of the Can-Am Series. We borrowed a trailer for the long tow. Mark and I were back in school, and we wanted to make sure the car was tuned as well as it could be for our big race in California. We towed the car out to a flat farm road where the only ones we would bother were cows, and proceeded to make acceleration runs to set the timing. I sat in the passenger seat and timed how fast we would go from 4000-6000 rpm in third gear. We'd make a change and do it again. Early chassis dyno testing. From right to left, it's Bill, me, Mark and Dennis Clark.

I remember there was one stretch of races where we were having a terrible time with broken rocker arms. We finally figured out that there wasn't enough oil getting to the top of the engine but didn't know why. We pulled the motor and put it on a workbench with the oil pan off. We stuck the suction tube from the oil pump into a bucket of oil and spun the pump. Looking up into the engine, we discovered that the oil was not going past the cam journals. This engine did not have cam bearings. We added an external oil line as a quick fix and ran a few more races until the next engine rebuild. Those external oil lines are now readily available at most Spitfire parts houses.

The first time I got to drive the Spitfire was at an autocross. I was the very first car on the track. The car got sideways too easily and then coming onto the main straight, the rear end locked up and I spun in the middle of the track. A bolt holding the ring gear onto the differential had come loose and broken through the housing, freezing the rear end. We left feeling really bad that there was a pool of 90 weight gear oil right on the racing line. After I graduated from college in 1971, Mark let me take the car through my first driver's school.

In 1972, Bill bought another white racing Spitfire and we were now a two-car team. By 1973, Mark had traded the Spitfire for a Lotus 51 Formula Ford, and I had purchased a Titan Mk5 Formula Ford. We raced as a three-car team for several years in the mid-70's.

In 1978, my Titan was undergoing a rebuild and for some reason, Bill wasn't racing his Spitfire. He told me I could race it if I put it back together, a deal too good to pass up. For the first race, I put a stock, open differential in the car. What a mistake. Coming out of turn 2 at Portland at over 60 mph, I would spin the inside rear tire for nearly 100 feet. Who would ever have thought that the little 1147cc motor had that kind of power? For the next race, I had installed a locked, welded differential. It took a full 3 seconds off my lap times. I ended that season by taking Bill's Spitfire to the first Pacific Coast Runoffs at Sears Point.

By 1982, I had built a C Sports Racer out of a Formula Ford. Mark had quit racing, but Bill and his brother Ron Wilson both had racing Spitfires. Marks old Spit had been through a few owners and now belonged to Rich and Gail Blessinger, good racing friends of ours. My wife, Patty wanted to find out why I enjoyed the racing so much. She

had been working corners and timing and scoring, but wanted to try a driver's school. We rented the old Spitfire from Rich and Gail for her first school. Judging from the smile on her face, I think she enjoyed the experience.

She did so well that she rented Ron's Spitfire for a second school. In 1984, Ron took a job working as a professional mechanic on a Trans Am team. That meant a lot of travel and no Spitfire racing. He told us that if we provided garage space for his Spitfire, Patty could race it. So, we were now a two-racecar family with the C Sports Racer and a Spitfire. Patty ran many races in Ron's Spitfire with a highlight win in an SCCA National at Seattle International Raceway. It was the Memorial Day weekend that Danny Sullivan spun and won at Indy, and Patty did the same at Seattle.

By 1988, all the racecars were gone and we suspended racing for a few years. However, the desire to get back into racing was still there. In 1991, I finally got my race shop built. I had acquired a 1960 Sprite and two 1973 MG Midgets and was thinking about putting one of the MGs on the track when I found out that Mark's old Spitfire was for sale. In 1993, I purchased the Spitfire and brought home the car and a pickup load of mostly broken parts.

The car was really rough. It didn't have any rust, but years of racing and neglect had taken a toll. Virtually every body panel was dented and the frame and firewall had been cut to accommodate a Datsun 1200 engine and gearbox. Looking through the car's logbooks, I found that it had run well over 100 races and been driven by over a dozen different people. I would have been smarter to find another racecar or start with a streetcar. However, this Spitfire has a wonderful racing history and we have a unique family history with it. I just couldn't let it go to the crusher.

My goal was to make a dual-purpose racecar. I wanted the car to look vintage with an all steel body, no fender flares and the vintage suspension and drive train. However, I wanted to be able to race it as a current SCCA Production car so this meant a modern roll cage, fuel cell, gutted interior, fire system and the like. The only downside to this approach is that the car is too modern to be allowed to run with some of the vintage racing organizations.

The car was completely torn apart and the body and frame were chemically stripped. Patch panels were welded back into the frame and strengthened to repair the damages from the Datsun installation. Once the frame was repaired, the lengthy task of bodywork began. I hate bodywork, but I did my best. The panels were so damaged, that replacement was far easier than repair. Floorboards, rocker panels, rear fenders, the rear valance and the door skins are all new panels. The damaged trunk floor was cut out and a new sub frame was fabricated to hold the new fuel cell. I couldn't believe it when I discovered that the old roll cage (installed after Mark sold the car) was made out of water pipe. It was discarded and a new cage was fabricated. Interior panels including a new transmission cover were fabricated from aluminum. Once the body got close, I enlisted the help of a professional body man and painter to fix my messes and paint the car.

▲My wife, Patty in the old Spitfire from Rich and Gail for her first racing school.

▲1993, newly purchased Spitfire and a load of mostly broken parts.

▲Spitfire completely torn apart and the body and frame chemically stripped. Patch panels were welded back.

▲Fall 2005, car was finally race ready. Engine was a mildly prepared 1147cc and a stock wide ratio gearbox.

The car was finally race ready in the fall of 2005. The engine was a mildly prepared 1147 and the gearbox a stock wide ratio. The differential is welded solid and the housing is the one that was welded up after that bolt went through it at the autocross 35 years ago. The car has the same custom built rear axles and rear spring that we used in the 1970's.

We had a fair amount of success with the car in the Spring of 2006 winning one race and finishing well in several others. Then we suffered a pair of major engine failures. I fired my engine builder (me) and had a 1300 engine professional prepared. I also installed a close ratio GT6 gearbox. The new engine has substantially more power than the 1147 so I hope we can do well against the myriad of MG's and Sprites. Our plans for the 2008 season is for Patty to drive the car in the local SCCA Vintage races and I will drive it in the Pacific Northwest SCCA National races.

When we were first involved with racing Spitfires, they were nearly as popular as Miatas are today. Now, our Spitfire is the only one that's been seen around here in a long time. We could have been racing a restored Formula Ford for a lot less money and effort than we've got in the Spitfire. But, it's all been worth it. The car's debut was at the 2005 Portland All British Field Meet. I wore my voice out talking to an incredible number of very appreciative folks including two of the men that owned the car after Mark sold it.

If you are interested in seeing this car in action, there is a video posted on YouTube. It's unique since I was able to blend together the video from my car with the video from the Austin Healey Sprite that I was racing against. The 1275 Sprite could pull my 1147 on the straights, but the Spitfire sure brakes and handles a lot better. You can view it at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG5NuHYJow8

My Race Car IS NOT Cute

by Robert Beaulieu, Massachusetts

Since upgrading my G-Production MGA in1979 to (at least then) to more competitive MKII Spitfire, I've often had to face a dilemma that bruises my ego, hurts my feelings and just plain embarrasses me.

Women, young, old, in between, whether neighbors.. or strolling by while parked at a rest stop on I-80- affectionately calls my race car as "CUTE". Cute!.. How the heck does a race car become cute. This is not a purse puppy! This is a signature of my masculinity, my daring, my ego.. my testosterone After all, how many people really have the opportunity to travel and compete in such famous venues as Bridgehampton, Watkins Glen, Mid Ohio, NHIS, Limerock to test their skills and verve on race tracks made famous by names such as Andretti, Moss, Unser, Clark and more… and then to call my car—CUTE!. I even had a burley-type Busch North NASCAR driver look at my car and ask if a girl drove it!!!

I've discussed this with some of my fellow production racers, and they to, have suffered the same malady...I really think it applies to the smaller British cars such as the Spitfires, Sprites, Midgets. etc. Once up in the MGB, TR-4/6 category, fellow racers claim no such issue…Must be our diminutive size.. Kind of a mini me. Needless to say, this immediately relates to one of those infamous racing stories, well, in this case a trailering story, which are always much more harrowing.

It was back in 93 after competiting in the NARRC runoffs at Lime Rock Park. That particular weekend I brought my 12-year old son, and his good friend. So it was a very special weekend introducing the kids to racing and being crew members. Since my race was in the morning, (I think I finished second.) we got an early start for our way home. Being a one of those special fall afternoons in New England in the Berkshires, and with a little time on our hands, I took the kids to the Norman Rockwell museum which is just a slight detour on out return trip. Nothing like giving the experience of a little culture in combination with the racing. This proved entertaining and I hope interesting for the kids…but all my good intentions were for naught.

We still got a good start and were on the Mass Pike by 4 PM. Heading East pulling my spitfire on its trailer, our '84 chevy wagon tow vehicle chugged along as always, laboring somewhat on the hills. (Even with a 305, the chevy always seemed a little underpowered for towing... thanks to 80's technology) as we climbed the hill outside of Sturbridge, I noticed a fine mist of water on the windshield… Really didn't take any notice. Couldn't be a minute later, the red light for the temperature came on. Damn the torpedoes, I'm almost over this hill, and I will coast and cool the engine on the way done…NOT.

The engine literally tightened right up on me and I coasted to the side of the road. Well on the Mass pike, this means, one narrow break down lane as the Saturday evening traffic whizzed by you at 70+. Cautiously I went out opened the hood and of course what water was left was bubbling furiously in the overfill tank. Lets wait and let it cool down. Within minutes, a few fellow racers stopped by to offer their assistance. Additional water was put in the radiator, but I had cooked it. The starter couldn't even turn the engine over. Man I had done it this time.

In the meantime, a State police cruiser stopped behind my stranded vehicle and put on its full display of warning lights. Waiting for the usual high-booted military looking police officer to start issuing demands, instead, a very attractive woman officer looking exceptionally smart in her States official attire stepped forward.

Kindly, as though she were offering us a second cup of coffee asked if there was anything she could do, and of course, we were all hanging over the engine, with empty plastic jugs of water waiting for the proverbial miracle to happen. "No mam, were on top of this best we can…" which really meant we couldn't really do anything. She patiently waited for us to test the vehicle.

Once we gave up, she radioed in for a tow vehicle to take us off the pike. This took some time as well, and she still stood guard over our stranded entourage. A little small talk ensued, where do we live, where were we racing and she made sure the kids stayed behind the Armco barrier. The usual banter you would have while stranded on a major interstate with a good looking female police officer beside you!

Our salvation finally arrived after an hour a half, and we were hooked up and towed off the pike to the nearest exit. Nothing like a tow vehicle, hooked up to your tow vehicle, pulling a trailer with a race car on top… I thanked here profusely for her assistance and help. The ease of having her there certainly reduced the anxiety of the situation.

She in turn wished us luck, and started walking back to her cruiser… until about halfway back to her cruiser, she turned around, and said… "Oh, By the Way, I think your race car is cute…"

AArrrrggghhhhhh… it's a good thing I have a thing about woman in uniform!!!!

A Spitfire Driver in Ferrari's Pits (with apologies to Mark Twain)

by George Parker, Virginia

"So what kind of racing experience do you have?" he asked. "Well," I replied, "I've auto-crossed my Spitfire a lot, and I helped a friend with his Chevy Monza improved touring car at Watkins Glen…" As it turned out, I had grossly underestimated the level of competition in the Ferrari Challenge, and could just count myself fortunate to become an inexperienced Spitfire driver in a pro-level racing team.

I had been a minor car enthusiast for a number of years. Because of my Dad's restoration of a couple of vintage Jags, I really wanted one of those. But after checking out a lot of different cars, I found that the Italian-styled Spitfire was almost as attractive, plenty fun to drive, and far more affordable for a guy just out of college. I'd get the Jag later. Then I found Ferraris.

Like most young guys, I was well aware of Ferrari. More so, perhaps, since Dad had owned a special one (a one-off Vignale coupe – built specially for, and shown by Luigi Chinetti at, the 1954 NY Auto Show) back just before I was born. What I didn't realize at the time was the Italian connection with the Spitfire. I soon learned that the Spitfire, like many Ferrari's of the 1950's (my Dad's car included), was designed by Giovanni Micholotti.

As soon as I joined the team, I found one huge similarity between auto-crossing, restoring vintage Jags, and racing – Preparation! Of course, I knew this already, but seeing how it's done from the inside certainly brings it into much finer focus. For example, the temperature-sending unit was replaced on a regular basis – for reliability. Much thought was even given to the fuel pumps for reliability, longevity, and efficiency. And the chassis was routinely given a "nut and bolt" check. I can't honestly say I've done the same in preparation for auto-crossing the Spit!

I'd like to say that many Ferrari racing drivers got their start the way I got my start as a crew member – but I just don't think it would be true. Most get started because they can afford to and have the passion – it's not for the feint of heart or the feint of wallet! David Seibert, noted Ferrari historian and Ferrari Historic Challenge series coordinator, did have a couple of special Triumphs pass through his hands – the Macau Spitfire and a very early GT6 (see sidebar), and these were even after the Ferraris.

When I joined the team, the series we competed in was the Ferrari Challenge – an amateur owner-driver series. Basically, as crew chief Glenn Marquis put it, the Ferrari Challenge series was amateur racing with a professional level budget. Ferrari North America organized this series for customers who were interested in racing their Ferrari 348 (then F355, then 360 Modena, and now F430) cars. Ferrari also included their customers with older cars with the Ferrari Historic Challenge. This series was open to Pre-War Scuderia Ferrari Alfa Romeos (when Enzo ran Alfa's Grand Prix team) and select Maseratis (once Ferrari owned Maserati), and post-war Ferrari sports and GT cars. The owner of our team (Allie Ash, co-owner and GM at Ferrari of Washington) campaigned (in addition to his "regular" Ferrari Challenge car) a 1961 250 GT SWB, a factory built racer once raced by one Count Giovanni Volpi di Misurata (or simply "Count Volpi" as he is more popularly known) and his Scuderia Serenissima. And make no mistake – as anyone who's seen vintage racing knows, these drivers do not pussy-foot the cars around the track. But most of the drivers are all too well versed in the costs to repair these vintage cars, so they tend to play much nicer on the track. Other cars often seen on the racetrack include an Alfa Monza P3 once driven by Tazio Nuvolari, "pontoon-fendered" 250 Testa Rossas, and 512BB-LMs.

In January 1996, the team was brand new. They had raced with technicians from the service shop, but then the service shop shut down each time there was a race. And some of the techs did not want to go racing. By bringing on volunteers like me, they kept their service shop open, and had a crew at the track that at least wanted to be there. And I do mean "volunteer" in the truest sense – we were not paid, though we did get the benefit of traveling to the races and working on – and occasionally driving around the paddock – some pretty cool cars! All of our travel expenses were paid by the team, and we were given a small per diem to cover food for the weekend. Fortunately, we rarely had to spend that per diem money, so mine went to some small expenses (like lawn service) as well as some big ones (like most of my Spitfire engine rebuild, and a good chunk of my 308's engine rebuild).

When Glenn was first searching for specialties for each of us, because I had shown some of my Ferrari model cars, one of my tasks was decaling the cars. This allowed me to give a bit of a "personal touch" to the cars – though not too much as many of the sponsor decals were to be applied in specific locations on the car. But it was a good contribution I could make because it left more time for the more technically oriented folks to care for the cars.

At the track, I got to put some of my light mechanical skills to use. I had already successfully completed a brake system overhaul on my Spitfire, so changing brake pads and bleeding the system was an easy thing to pick up, even with the higher-tech ABS system. Other tasks included occasional spring or shock changes, as well as taking chassis alignment measurements (ride height, toe, and camber) and making changes as directed by Glenn.

I also discovered what level of effort was required to become successful. Our days usually began with a 7 am arrival at the track. We'd have to be sure the car was prepared for the first session of the day, usually around 9 or 9:30 in the morning (except for F1 weekends, but they're a whole different animal in every regard). In between on-track sessions, we'd have to make any changes requested or suggested by the driver, the race engineer (who spent his time crunching data), and/or Glenn, the crew chief. And that's assuming no damage to the car. At the end of the day, the car would be prepped and cleaned for the next day's sessions, and we'd also work on improvements or changes. We often considered ourselves lucky to be leaving the track before 10pm. And then up and at the track again the next day by 7am to do it all again. Without exaggeration, I worked harder during race weekends than at any other time – EVER!

As the team grew – in numbers of driver/car combinations more so than crewmembers – it became more critical for the crewmembers to specialize. I took on the responsibility of managing the tires for all of our cars (the "tire honcho" – ok, some of the guys used another word in place of "honcho", but this is a family magazine!), as many as 6 or 8 at a time. This tasking brought plenty of stress, but also plenty of benefits. The hard part of the job usually occurred during the middle/end of the day. It allowed me time for early morning photo sessions (as the "unofficial semi-official team photographer"), and, when we went to Indianapolis to be the Sunday morning support race for the F1 US Grand Prix, time for a tour of the track and photo sessions with my wife and I standing right on the "yard of bricks". It also put me in the position of coordinating the pit set-up for our Indy sessions, since I also had to haul the tire racks out to the pit lane. Setting up with the Ferrari F1 garages right behind us was an experience not to be forgotten. [As a trivial aside, this also afforded certain "brushes with greatness" – Ferrari F1 boss Jean Todt, IMS owner Tony George, and F1 drivers such as Johnny Herbert, Jarno Trulli, David Coulthard, and Michael Schumacher!] Indy wasn't the only F1 experience – Ferrari Challenge was also the Sunday morning support race for the Montreal Grands Prix for 5 or 6 years. One of the great experiences from those races is driving the F355 Challenge car the wrong way down the front straight at Montreal after our race.

Indy Pits 2000 Formula One

photo by G. Parker

Indy Pits 2001 F1 - Michael Schumacher, Tony George

photo by G. Parker

photo by M. Clark

Indy Pits 2001 F1 - George Parker

In 2002, after 6 years of successful racing (several race wins and a couple of championships) in the Ferrari Challenge, it was time to step up. Through a number of smart acquisitions, Glenn acquired enough parts to construct a car to Grand American Road Racing's GT specs. From the Ferrari Challenge team, I was selected to be the fuel manager and refueler (another guy was brought in to be the tire manager).

On our first attempt, we completed the endurance classic, Rolex 24 at Daytona. We had a tire cut early in the race, and had to change a gearbox in the middle of the night, but we did finish! Our drivers for that race included an Italian hot-shoe, Daytona 500 winner Derrick Cope, regular BMW driver Bill Auberlen, and sports car ace (and former Ferrari Challenge champion) Cort Wagner, the latter two becoming our season-long regular drivers.

After 3 races, the tire manager found the pace to be too grueling, so I assumed the duties of tire manager, in addition to my refueling job. This was more complicated than in the Ferrari Challenge series, because in the Challenge series, there were only two tire choices – wet or dry. All I had to do was ensure the tires were mounted, and the pressures set for each car. Now in the GT series, there were not only compound choices, but also tire sizes (our BBS 3 piece rims could be rebuilt to different widths). Thankfully, the team got that mostly worked out with the tire guy before me doing most of the hard work. I only had to change rim widths once (though rims were often rebuilt for reliability).

Another complication was the pressures. In the Spitfire autocross days, all I had to worry about was my front and rear pressures. In the GT series, with pro drivers, we set pressures to 1/10th of a pound (yes, approximations were made), and different pressures on each corner of the car. We were also much more stringent in controlling the pressures – taking measurements early in the morning and then watching the pressures through the day. We also began watching tire wear much more closely – even slick tires have "tread depth" indicators. A rainy race made my job much simpler – wet tires were of one compound and all I had to watch was the pressures. Ironically, wet tires that, to the layman, might look like great tires (lots of tread remaining), might not, in fact, be good for racing. In wet weather tires, tread depth is not the only measure of usefulness, you also have to watch how they are worn (is there still a sharp edge on the tread blocks?).

In the Pit Stop photo, I'm the guy in red. Errr, the red helmet, that is....

Half way through the 2002 season, we got a brand new, factory-built GT car and won our first race at Watkins Glen. We went on to win 4 more (at that time, a new GT record for consecutive race wins) and the GT class championship and driver's championships.

For 2003, we continued where we left off – winning races (though still not the Rolex 24 – which we were unable to finish). Bill Auberlen did not return to the team and was replaced by Brent Martini, who was moving up from the Porsche Cup series. Brent brought us one of our most memorable and exciting finishes.

We had been battling hard with a BMW M3 for the lead of the GT class. In Phoenix, we were following the M3 into the final laps with Brent at the wheel. On the last lap, we could see the cars through part of the infield and onto the back part of the oval. Thinking that we'd have to settle for second, we were amazed to see the Ferrari come onto the main straight and win the drag race with the BMW to the checkered flag. It was the only time in eight years of racing that I literally jumped off the ground in excitement!

We again finished '03 winning the GT class championship, the driver's championship, and the Manufacturer's championship for

Ferrari. In '04, we switched to a Maserati Trofeo Light, which was not as successful of a racecar as the Ferrari was. It seemed to work much better in the wet, than in the dry, unfortunately, it was a fairly dry season! For 2005, the team underwent significant changes in both management and sponsorship, with a total turnover in the crew. But for me, it was a great ride while it lasted.

I got to go to many famous racetracks, meet many famous and interesting people (including Derek Bell, Brian Redman, Mario Andretti, and Piero Ferrari), attend the Ferrari Challenge International Final in Italy, and be part of a championship-winning race team. And it all started with a small, Italian-styled British car!

I'm still the only volunteer crewmember who has actually owned a Ferrari, but as Dan Hermann pointed out following his visit to our house on his 48-state capital tour, I sold the Ferrari but kept the Spitfire! People often ask me why, since I used to own the Ferrari and work on the Ferrari race team, I only own a Spitfire. I think the answer is about the same for me as it is for many Spitfire owners – as I said at the beginning, it's a good looking little car, loads of fun to drive, not too common, and very affordable. And in my case, this car has been a part of the family for so long now, that even when I'm frustrated in trying to do seemingly simple things like resetting valve timing, I still don't consider parting with it. At least not for long!

David Seibert & the Macau Spitfire

Story by George Parker, Photos courtesy David Seibert

David Seibert, noted Ferrari historian and Ferrari Historic Challenge series coordinator, has quite possibly had more Ferraris, now considered both "vintage" and "priceless", pass through his hands than anyone else. But he's also had a couple of very interesting Triumphs pass through. The photos show the Macau Spitfire and a very early GT6.

In David's own words: "The first photo is in 1967, I think -- I had one of the first GT6s in the Southeast, and this was the first one delivered in New Orleans. It had short front springs, camber compensator, and a few other touches. The other car is the Triumph Macau, which I owned in the 1980s. It was built from the backup car for the Spitfire LeMans effort for the Triumph Far East distributor, who raced it at the Macau GP. It went to Kas Kastner, who was the Triumph Competition Manager in the U.S. (On right in photo below) It was originally raced in SCCA G Modified with the original highly-modified four cylinder by Kas' driver, Charlie Gates (on left). Kas installed a two-liter six (from a Vitesse, I think) as a prototype for his GT6 race cars. In this guise, with three Webers and lots of other neat stuff, it won the D Modified National Championship in 1967. It went to a Triumph dealer in Lake Charles, Louisiana -- I saw it at various times. I bought it in the early 1980s from Steve Forristall, raced it a few times, then restored it (back to original gray-black colors -- Kas had painted it white, as all his race cars were white). I raced it a few more times, then finally sold it. I understand it went to Germany."

Now the Macau Spitfire is back in Coventry England, since 2001. Canley Classics owns it and has it running again.

LeMans Spitfire Coupe

photos & story by Bob Spruck, MotorMouth/south

Tim Slater, of West Palm Beach, Florida is a British British Car Nut. No, that's not a typo. Tim is originally from England and, of course, loves British cars. He also has an authentic British accent that is a pleasure to listen to. He even has a British look about him. And, he currently races four Spitfires. This is the story of a very interesting Brit and one of his very interesting British cars.

THE MAN

Tim's current situation relative to cars can be attributed to his early years as a child in the north of England. Tim's father raced and rallied Jaguar XK120s with some famous drivers of the time, specifically, Ian Appleyard and Peter Bolton. These Yorkshire area car dealers and sportsmen were heavily involved in the most popular sports activities of the area, after fox hunting and pub-crawling, of course.

Bolton is well documented in automotive literature as a factory driver for Triumph as well as being associated with David Hobbs. Less well known but equally impressive is that Bolton is Tim's godfather and sold him his first Spitfire. Another local boy from just down the lane also did well with cars. You may have heard of him, his name is Brian Redman. What's a boy to do, surrounded by these kinds of people and friends, and these kinds of activities? Could have been soccer, or golf, or fox hunting, even the afore-mentioned pub-crawling. Having grown up around car competition, more than forty years hence, Tim is still at it in a big way.

When he came to the US in 1982, Tim naturally continued what he calls "the car thing". In addition to accumulating a number of cars and being involved in a multitude of car related activities, he formed the Gold Coast Triumph Club in 1987 with noted Triumph enthusiast and Vintage Drivers Club of America major domo Mike Jackson and race friend Glenn Efinger. Although Tim has owned and raced many British cars over the years, his present stable includes four Spitfires. The blue 1962 1147 cc model he raced in the Production class with SCCA in the '80s is his current vintage racecar. He also has a yellow 1147 of 1964 vintage that is his current SCCA H Production and SCCA Vintage racer. The green LeMans car featured here makes three. The fourth Spitfire is a soon-to-be-completed 1964 Macau Spitfire that the late Roy Wilton raced in the 80s. Can't wait to see that one! Tim competes at 12 to 14 SCCA and Vintage events a year with his wife and crewperson, Susan. His National license lets him race with SCCA while his vintage racing credentials satisfy the requirements of VDCA, SVRA, VSCDA, and others.

THE STORY

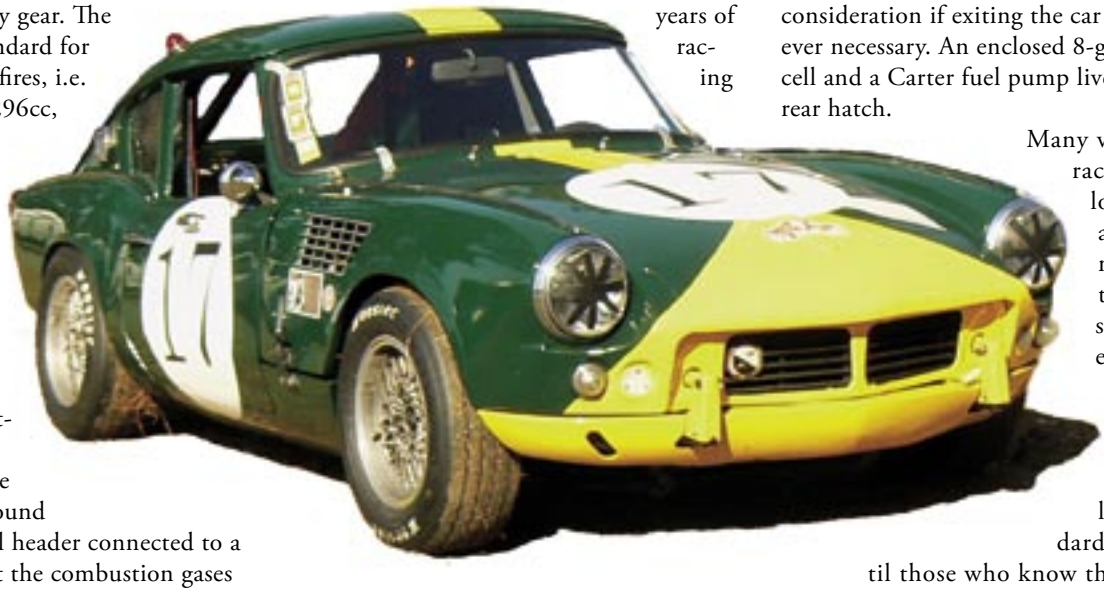
The car you see here is more (or less) than it appears. It may look like a GT6 but it is in all actuality, a Spitfire roadster with a GT6 roof grafted on. That's right! A hard way to go about things, but a nice piece of work in any event. We can't blame Tim Slater for this aberration. It wasn't his idea and the originator remains unknown. But, Tim recognized the uniqueness and acquired the car in 1986. It appears the car is a very early Spitfire chassis and running

gear, but with a 1300 cc motor. GT6 sheet metal was attached to the roadster body from the windshield header and "B" pillars back. A thick bead of weld runs across the transmission tunnel and floor from 'A' pillar to 'A' pillar. Perhaps it should be named Franken-fire, Spit-stein, or GT Sick. Perhaps the need to create this combination was the result of a horrific accident. Or a challenge made by some racing friends at a notorious post-race beer bash. Other than that big ugly weld, it looks just like a normal and attractive GT6, not some cobbled together, weird monster. So, we'll call it simply a Spitfire Coupe and a job well done.

However it came to be, the car seems to have either been raced or planned to be raced. When Tim acquired the car, it had holes in the floor pans and chassis for a roll bar but had no roll bar. It also had a fuel cell in the boot. Rather than drive the notoriously hot enclosed car in the South Florida heat, Tim decided to finish the job of making a LeMans/Sebring replica by upgrading the suspension, wheel/tires, drive train, and paint scheme. It was pretty much done by 1987 when Tim's new wife and lifestyle demanded that it find another owner. The next owner did race it, with some proof of success in the Palm Beach Grand Prix in 1988 and 89 as well as SVRA events and the Pittsburg Grand Prix in the early 90s. It sat unused for many years until Tim bought it back in the late 90s and started a frame off restoration that lasted until 2006. Last year was one of sorting and configuring at VDCA and SCCA Vintage events. Tim even brought it to the SVRA races at the 12 Hours of Sebring. He plans a tour to the North and Mid-West this year to race at some new venues with both his blue Spit roadster and the Spitfire Coupe.

THE CAR

Since Tim considered the car to be a previous owner's attempt at a replica of the factory cars entered in the Sebring and LeMans races, he decided to continue the effort and finish the car. Therefore, he did not want to overdevelop the car with more contemporary gear. The engine is fairly standard for vintage racing Spitfires, i.e. displacement of 1296cc, twin 1.5 " SUs, 11.5:1 compression ratio, and a ported and polished head. A mid range vintage race cam, Pauter connecting rods, Cosworth pistons, and a lightened flywheel with a stock clutch make things inside go 'round pretty well. A Stahl header connected to a 2" exhaust pipe get the combustion gases out quickly. Arrangements in the engine bay include a 13 row oil cooler, a fuel distribution block and pressure regulator to keep the carbs happy, a radiator shroud to direct the maximum amount of cooling air to the radiator, and one of the fancy and very efficient Oberg oil filters. For safety purposes and reliability, all oil lines are braided stainless steel. As in many low-buck vintage race cars, (mine included) Tim runs a completely stock transmission. He uses the poor man's limited slip differential, a welded, locked, stock 4.11 unit (just like mine). Because of the additional power and notorious Spitfire rear end, he does use Summers rear axles. The suspension is tweaked a little, consistent with the improvements he has found after many years of racing



Spitfires. Both the front and rear have been lowered to decrease the center of gravity. Spax shocks are used all around and the trailing arms have been made adjustable and moved inboard. To stop this powerhouse, the car has GT6 brakes on the front with Hawk Blue pads and stock Spitfire brakes on the rear. Tim also converted the hubs to 7/16-inch studs. Wheels are 6 inch wide Compomotives wrapped with A70-13 bias ply Hoosier Street TDs. The control room has a 5-point cage made of 2" tubing, a Kirkey race seat, the usual six-point harness and seat belt system, a full compliment of gauges, a Halon fire system, and an Accusump oil accumulator. A detachable 13" steering wheel provides some comfort in entering and exiting as well as a safety consideration if exiting the car quickly is ever necessary. An enclosed 8-gallon fuel cell and a Carter fuel pump live under the rear hatch.

Many vintage race cars look like a normal model with the requisite race equipment added. Tim Slater's car looks like a standard GT6 until those who know this model notice some rather unusual differences. Or, until you talk to the owner and ask some innocent questions and get some interesting answers. Tim has done a great job in replicating the Factory cars of a bygone era and has built a reliable and reasonably quick machine. Look for future updates in this space as he really gets it dialed in this racing season. Better yet, look for Tim and Susan at a vintage race near you and be sure to ask him about his Spitfire Coupe.

Jerry the Race-aholic

by Jerry Dykhuisen, Southern Florida

My name is Jerry, and I'm a race-aholic. Even worse, much of my habit has centered around British cars. With the exception of some time in an SCCA Spec Racer *(back when they were Renault-engined)* and a stint in motorcycle-engined sports racers, it's all been under the shadow of the Union Jack.

My first major purchase after graduating college *(much to the chagrin of my then fiancé)* was a race car. The year was 1970 and I became the proud owner of an F Production Sunbeam Alpine *(all it cost me was $400 and lots of non-complaining compensatory time at the mall)*. Mercifully, though it was not terribly competitive, it was an extremely well prepared car. My level of knowledge was considerably below my level of commitment and the car was reliable in spite of me, not because of me. Picture this: working on the racecar in the parking lot of my apartment complex where it sat under a tarp between races.

Things in the early 70's were considerably different than they are today. I, and lots of others, flat towed the car to the track, i.e. no trailer. ("**No, officer, I didn't know that since the tires are touching the street it needed a license plate even though it's not being driven.**") Stock passenger seats, interior door panels, and headlight buckets were required to stay in place. Fiberglass body panels were unheard of. Most of the mechanicals could be modified, but for the most part could not be replaced. The standard unwritten rule of thumb was that the only things you could replace were the things that always broke on British cars, e.g. pistons, ring & pinion.

Before exposing myself to the demands of SCCA racing, I decided to run Midwestern Council for a year. "Council Racing" was a little less intense, though equally competitive *(read – we didn't take ourselves nearly as seriously)*. My first driver school convinced me that I had made the right decision, fiancé or no fiancé. To this day I remember the feeling driving off the track after the first practice session with a grin so big that my face muscles hurt. I was hooked. And, since that time, except for brief interludes between cars, I have never been without a race car. I often think of how wealthy I might be if I had taken all the dollars spent of racing and invested them prudently. But, then again, the fact that I race British cars makes the concept of "prudence" a very foreign concept.

But (and I've not forgotten) this is a Triumph magazine. "Jerry, feign wouldst thou tell us of your experiences with this esteemed marque."

I've raced several Triumphs including my present F Production Spitfire. I've also had any number of them as daily drivers including a 1977 Spitfire 1500 which I currently drive. *(Yes, I am a glutton for punishment, but then again since I race one, I have an almost unlimited supply of spare parts.)* But, we are concentrating on racing stuff today, so I guess the street stories *(and there are many of those as well)* will have to wait for another day.

The first new car I ever purchased was a 1969 Triumph GT6+. I had driven it as my street car for about a year and a half when a drunk tried to drive over it as I was stopped at a traffic light. The rear end was crumpled to the middle of the doors. In spite of its being a current model, certain parts were hard to come by *(specifically the heated rear window)*, so it sat in the body shop for six months before it was finished. The battery newly charged, we cranked it over to start it for the first time and promptly stripped the thrust washers out of the block. The clutch, consequently, would not disengage *(strange how things don't work quite right when the crankshaft is moving rather than the clutch plate forks)*. The body shop towed it to the local Triumph dealer *(Yes, Virginia, there really were once such things)* to rebuild the engine.

Obviously, the main bearing cap that held in the thrust washers was now junk. Equally obvious we discovered was the fact that one could not just buy a single main bearing cap from the factory. Ah, but I had a plan! I called Lee "Mother" Mueller in California. He drove for the Kastner-Brophy West Coast Triumph factory team. He told me they had plenty of the aforementioned main caps from blown engines laying around and he'd be happy to send me one. *(Patience, my children, we'll soon get to the race portions of the tale.)*

After getting it put back together, I reached the decision that between the crash and the engine issues, it might not be a wise idea to keep the car. I sold it to a co-worker for cash and a Honda 90 motorcycle. ***(The co-worker turned out some time later to be wife number two, but that's another story.)***

In the meantime, I had sold the Sunbeam and purchased a Lotus 11 C Sports Racer. It had an 1100cc Coventry Climax engine, a DiDion rear axle, and, of all things, a trailer!

About a year and a half later, the problems that I had hoped to avoid with the GT6 manifested themselves for the purchaser and the engine came apart. The purchaser (not yet at that time my spouse) was willing to part with the car real cheap. I got the brilliant idea that I could turn it into a race car. First big mistake!

I sold the Lotus to a collector ***(somehow it seems I sell most of my race cars to collectors)***, bought the competition manual for the GT6, and dove right in. Autoweek back then was a weekly tabloid that was more or less the bible of sports car racing in the U.S. They had a classified section which I started to peruse religiously. I found a set of ex-Group 44 front springs. I knew that stiffening the rear spring was a good idea, so I pulled it off and took it to the local spring shop, run by a German guy I could almost understand. I told him I wanted a couple of extra leaves put in the spring. He muttered something that sounded like, "no, nur un leff odervise too mush negtiff camber." I smiled, nodded, and told him to go ahead and do whatever it was he said.

I installed my newly stiffened rear spring. Keep in mind now, that I had put the Group 44 front springs on which lowered the front end about three inches. Putting the stock rear spring back on with its extra leaves made the car look like a cat in heat. One race of having the rear end come around every time I applied the brakes was more than enough. Out came the spring and back I drove to my little Bavarian friend. He de-arched the spring. I reinstalled it. Better, but still not good. After three chapters of the same story, Hans told me, "I hett dis spring. Tek avay und neffer brink beck." I headed back to the garage with the idea that this is what was going on the car whether it worked or not. Luckily, by sheer luck, we happened to get it right the last time.

As you can tell, my level of knowledge had increased exponentially since my Sunbeam days. I knew enough by then to know that I knew very little. Back on the phone to Mother Mueller. Our conversation went something like this:

"Lee, it's Jerry Dykhuisen. I'm going to race a GT6 and I want to go fast."

"How fast you get to go depends on how much you've got to spend," said he.

I told him how much I had to spend and he told me I wasn't going to go very fast.

Little by little, however, the car came around and I got a little faster each time out. In the early days, I did learn something about the Theory of Relativity, however. Energy can be neither created nor destroyed. Things on my developing race car would break. I would fix them so that they'd never break again. The stress would be transferred somewhere else and a different part would break. I fix that piece so it wouldn't break again. The stress gets transferred… Oh, well, I'm sure you get the idea by now.

The reigning guru of Triumph racing at that time was Group 44. Sponsored by Quaker State Oil and under the guidance of Bob Tullius, they were what we all aspired to be. Brian Furstenau, their engineer and the guy who drove the GT6, spoke at the Chicago Region SCCA Annual Banquet one year. Cornering him during the cocktail hour, I was determined to find out the secret of their success.

"You car doesn't sound at all like mine. How high do you wind it?" I asked.

"Oh, usually about nine grand," he said calmly.

I, who held my breath any time the tach needle passed 6,000 RPM"s, said ***"How are you able to do that?"*** as I tried to brush off the beer I had just spit all over his jacket.

"Well, we straighten the crank after every race and put in a new one every three races."

I nodded knowingly, suddenly aware of the difference between pros and amateurs.

Eventually, the car got to be pretty reliable and even reasonably fast. I never managed to win any national races, but scored my share of points including a Midwest Council D Production championship in 1978. I did especially well in the rain. The car was underpowered and being in the wet was an equalizer. Besides, the windshield and wiper were worth at least two seconds a lap.

I remember one year I ran an event called the "Young America Grand Prix". It was sponsored by the Milwaukee Sentinel newspaper and was run at State Fair Park. We used both the oval and the infield

course for the road races. The event filled the stands with 20,000 screaming teenagers and was designed to give them a broad exposure to motorsports. Consequently, in addition to the road races, there were stock car races of various kinds, demo derbies, and show cars. The format was to run one road race, one other event, and then another road race.

During the course of my race, I managed to get a flat tire in the infield. Under normal circumstances, I'd have just taken a **DNF**, but this was late in the season and I was still in the running for a class championship. Since the rules say no one can work on the car but the driver, I ran back to the paddock, grabbed the jack and one of the rain tires, and headed back to the course to change the tire.

As I was working, the checkered flag had dropped on my race. The tire on, I climbed in and headed around toward the start/finish line. With all the events they were running, you can imagine that the schedule was tight. Also keep in mind that road racing runs clockwise and oval racing runs counter clockwise. I think you're probably getting the picture. As I come around the final turn of the oval, the green flag is just dropping on the six-cylinder "Socker Stocker" race **AND THEY WERE ALL HEADED STRAIGHT AT ME!** Forty house-painted Chevies, Fords, Dodges, and Buicks… **AND THEY ARE ALL HEADED STRAIGHT AT ME!**

Now I don't know how acquainted you are with this type of racing, but the truth is that they run into each other… **A LOT!** I figure the racing weight of the GT6 was about 2,000 pounds (remember, no fiberglass in those days). I figured the wheels and tires alone of the cars coming at me weighed at least that much. I tucked as far inside as I could and held my breath as the herd thundered by.

It appears, however, as if I had done my job too well. Upon checking the results, I noticed I was classified as a **DNF**. I figured that I had tucked so close to the pit wall that the Timing & Scoring people had not seen me cross the finish line. I was making my case, without much success, when the twelve-year-old son of the fellow with whom I was contesting class championship stepped up and affirmed that I had indeed come by. He had seen me. I was eventually classified as a finisher and awarded the points. (***I figure dad's probably still got him confined to his room at age 42.***)

I raced the GT6 for about five years before being bitten by the sports racer bug. I sold it and bought a McLaren Mk. 6B (***Obviously, I believe in doing things gradually***). I'm told the GT6 is still racing vintage races in the Chicago area.

Fast forward to today. In the interim, besides the McLaren, I went through a Chevron B-19 C Sports Racer, a Spec Racer, and a couple of motorcycle engined D Sports Racers. I still think sports racers are the sex machines of road racing, but the finances of the genre have passed me by, e.g. in 1992 I held the D Sports lap record at Sebring. In 2000 I was six seconds a lap faster and was running in the back of the pack. One guy in the class bought five different cars that year! Every time something new came on the market and went fast, he bought it. I'm sorry, as a high school guidance counselor, those are very lofty heights at which I can't compete.

I decided it was time to go back to my roots. I found an F Production Spitfire in Sports Car Magazine. Things had sure changed since the old days. Lots of fiberglass, coil-over rear shocks, rear disk brakes, almost the whole shooting match. I talked with the owner at some length, looked at some photos, and we worked out a deal. The car had two engines, both in need of rebuilds. One had a spun bearing and the other, he indicated, had sheared an oil pump drive. ***"I shut it down right away he assured me. I don't think there's any major damage."*** I'm only glad he didn't offer to sell me some swamp land in Florida, because I would likely have believed that, too.

I borrowed an open trailer and headed for Connecticut between Christmas and New Year's to pick up the car. It was a gorgeous vehicle and I headed back to Florida, convinced I'd made a great deal.

I was wrong. The first engine did indeed have a spun bearing, but it had damaged the crank beyond repair. I put the second engine

on the stand and turned it over to pull off the oil pan. The sound I heard was something on the order of throwing a bunch of nails into a metal bucket. My bank account flashed before my eyes. The engine had broken the number three connecting rod which had apparently flailed around knocking off pieces for some time before being shut down. The only things salvageable were the head and valve gear and the aforementioned oil pan. To ventilate, I did mail some of the pieces to the guy I bought it from with a nasty note. I can only hope he opened the package over a white silk table cloth.

Starting from scratch seemed to be a better idea than trying to cobble something together from the bits and pieces I had. Though Lee Mueller had long since gone to the road racing paddock in the sky, I did manage to hook up with another former Triumph factory driver from the West Coast. He built me an engine that, though I'll probably never win another national race, is fast and reliable. I can score a few national points every year and it's very competitive on a regional level. It's got the rest of the stuff to bring the car to state-of-the-art: dry sump; roller rockers; crank fire ignition; Carillo rods; etc. I added a close ratio GT6 gearbox and was happy as a clam.

Just when you think things are going well, however, the bluebird of happiness comes and does that thing to your birthday cake. The car is sorted. It's running well. I'm going faster every weekend and feeling more and more comfortable in the car. When you think things are too good to be true… you're probably right.

It's the January, 2005 National Race at Sebring. First practice on Saturday. After a few laps to get things warmed up it's time to turn up the wick. Turn One at the Sebring long course is a bumpy, very high speed (4th gear) 90 degree sweeping left. By the time you get to the braking zone for Turn Two, a slow 3rd gear 90 degree left, the car is bumping off the rev limiter in top gear.

(**I now have to acknowledge that the next few sentences have been related to me by others. I have no memory of these events.**) Something apparently let go on the right rear of the car. I ride up the back of another car and become airborne. One of the drivers in another open car tells me he ducked to keep from being hit as I flew over. Keep in mind that everyone else is hard on the binders -- and I'm not slowing down at all. I apparently do a 180 and, as one of the other drivers described it, ***"you hit the tire wall harder than I've ever seen anyone hit it."***

My first memory is sitting past the apex of the turn perpendicular to the flow of traffic, debating whether or not to undo my harness. Undoing it will allow me to get out quicker, but I certainly want it buckled if somebody runs into me. To make a long story short, I got out all right with just a concussion.

Afterward, I discovered that the flange on the right rear axle had broken. I surmise that allowed the tire to wobble to the point that it tore off the rear brake line. I only ran a single master cylinder then and so once the line was severed, I had no brakes.

(I feel obligated to tell you at this point that I had brought a woman I was dating to the race with me. It was the first time she'd ever

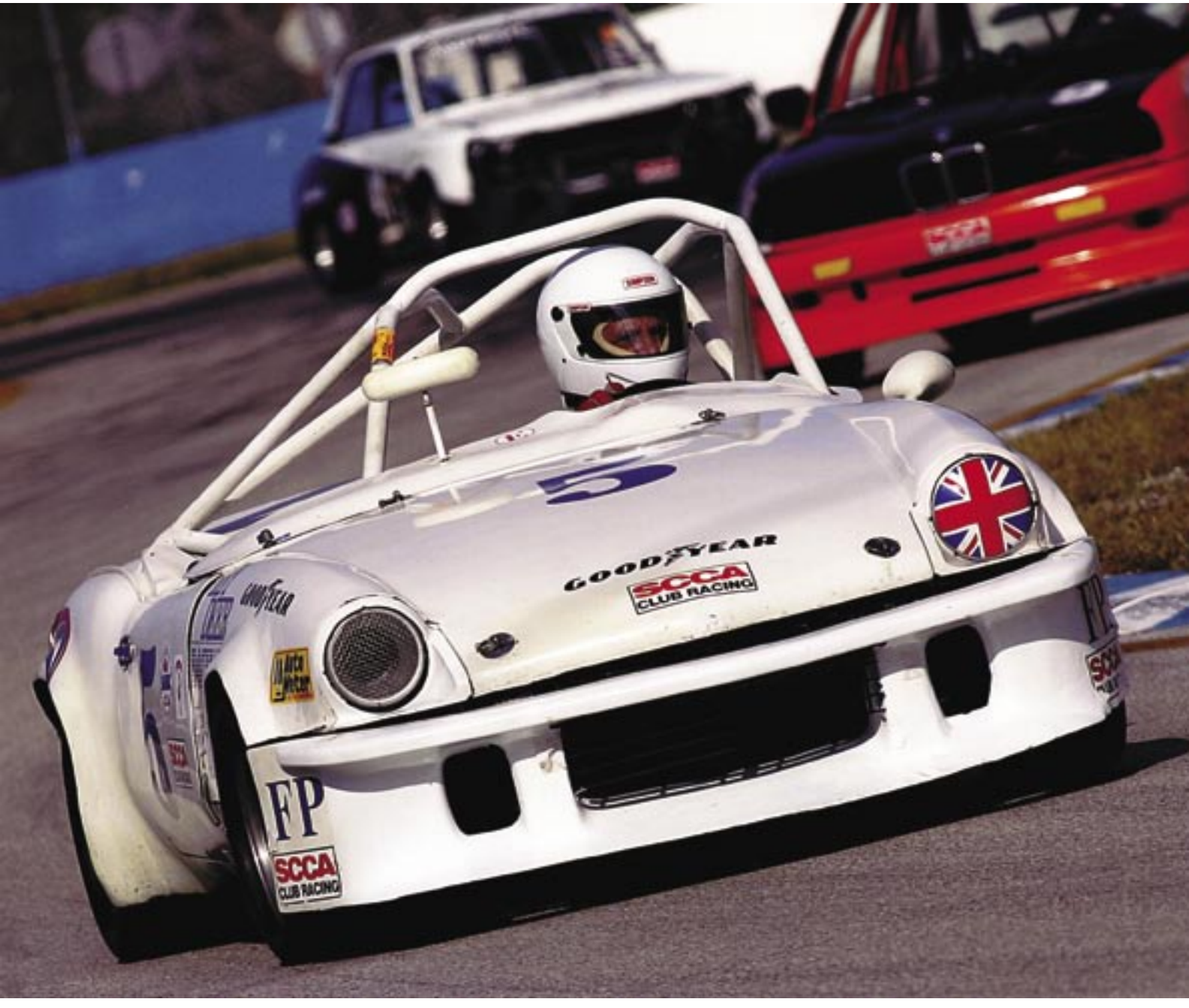
been to a sports car race and since this all happened on my first hot lap of the weekend, she didn't realize that this wasn't a normal occurrence. For all she knew, this happened every time. She later confided to me that while this was all going on, she really thought I had a very strange idea of a good time.)

In any case, the tub was history, so I pulled all the working pieces off it and went shopping. Steve Sargis (whose Spitfire race cars and whose driving ability are from another galaxy) had a chassis from which he had stripped pretty much all the same pieces I had saved from my car, so, borrowing another open trailer, it was off to Chicago in March. (**I reckon I may be the only person in the country who never sees snow except when pulling a car hauler.**) Bolting it all back on, we've been running with reasonable success since then.

Mercifully, the last couple of years have been much less eventful than that incident. I manage to run about six to eight races a year from down here at the end of the universe. Being from Florida has the advantage that we get to run year round, so it's easy to space things out to keep it pretty low pressure. The Production Car guys are a good group who, even though they fuss at one another, will always go out of their way to help out if needed.

So, for nearly forty years, through racing I've successfully managed to eliminate pretty much all my disposable income. I even carry a picture of my race car in my wallet. ***(Hey, no one ever asks me what my girlfriend looks like.)***

And, did I tell you? My name is Jerry, and I'm a race-aholic.



Jaxon Motorsports

Triumph Spitfire Racing Team

by Jay Creel, Connecticut

Jaxon Motorsports is a family racing "adventure" that began back in the late sixties, when my father, Jack Creel was taking me to the track in a back-pack style baby carrier. It was at this time that my dad passed along the addiction that is racing. To complicate the disease, my dad was and continues to be a Triumph enthusiast. Throughout my childhood my father raced a TR-3 and TR-4 with the SCCA winning the E-Production North Atlantic Road Racing Championship (NARRC) in 1978 and being invited to the SCCA runoffs in 1977-78 while driving his 1962 TR-4.

Over the years, we spent a lot of time as various race tracks in the northeast. And as I grew up, I became just as passionate as my father for the beautiful little Triumph sports cars. During the mid-to-late 1980's, my father stepped away from racing to pursue his passion for wooden boats restoring a gorgeous 1958 Chris Craft and racing Ice Boats in the winter months.

In 1999, I read an article in the sports car magazine ***Grassroots Motorsports*** about a high flying Triumph Spitfire from Florida. This car was beautiful, fast and well prepared. After reading the article, I knew that it was now the time to purchase a Triumph of my own and my Triumph of choice was the 1147 Spitfire. A couple months later, I purchased a basket case of a car. In fact, the car was a "parts" car for a family friend who had been successfully running a competitive Spitfire at the regional level with the SCCA. It didn't matter that

photo credit Joel Cook Motorsports Photography - www.joelcookphoto.com

the car didn't have a floor or trunk or that the body had so much bondo it would take hours of grinding to find bare metal. This car had been run hard over the years including runs at the SCCA Runoffs from 1975-77. I was 31 years old and had visions of running on the same tracks that Dad, and the Group 44 Triumph's had run in years past. This was a project thought by many friends, fabricators and family to be a complete waste of time and money. It did not matter about the condition of my new project I was going to go racing. I had a dream and a goal.

During the restoration of my Spitfire, I had spent many hours learning about Triumph's from my father. As the project neared completion, I reached out and asked my father to be my crew chief in the years to come. The wheels were in motion and the next generation of Creel, a Triumph racer was going to race to win the SCCA North Atlantic Road Racing Championship (NARRC) and then move on to compete for a GP National Championship.

Jack & Jay Creel, father & son racing team
photo credit Jay R. Creel

Jack & Jay Creel, father & son
photo credit Joel Cook Motorsports Photography - www.joelcookphoto.com

Jack Creel
photo credit Joel Cook Motorsports Photography - www.joelcookphoto.com

Jay R. Creel
photo credit Joel Cook Motorsports Photography - www.joelcookphoto.com

photo credit Roz Rosintoski - www.rozphoto.com

Jay & Jack Creel
photo credit Joel Cook-Motorsports Photography - www.joelcookphoto.com

The funny thing about my family is that plans change very quickly and while attending an SCCA National race at Lime Rock Park in 2003, some fellow Spitfire racers had informed us that they had a "sister" car that was going to be coming available at the end of the 2003 racing season. So in November of 2003, the Jaxon Motorsports (named for Jack & son and shortened to "Jaxon") racing effort was now going to be a two (2) car team.

In 2004, while the restoration project awaited more work, Dad and I took the newly acquired Spitfire to driver's school. Dad was re-licensed and quickly became competitive. The efforts of the 2004 season resulted in another NARRC championship, this time in G-production. In 2005, the new Spitfire approached completion, and the sister car continued to run strong. Several changes made the car more reliable and once again, the Jaxon Motorsports Triumph Spitfire and pilot Jack Creel were G-Production NARRC champions. That is two (2) championships in 2 seasons for the recently purchased 1147 Spitfire. All the while the finishing touches were being completed on the once basket case now known as "sweetness". The debut of the new car was in August 2005 at New Hampshire International Speedway. It was a proud accomplishment to have the SCCA technical inspector stamp the newly completed roll cage with the official stamp and issue me the first log book for the car since the late 1980's. The first race was less than perfect as "sweetness" encountered some engine gremlins, but we were pleased with the direction of the project and the racing team continued to experience success. The close of the 2005 season saw Jaxon Motorsports retain the G-Production crown once again as well as the unveiling of the new Spitfire named "Sweetness". What was in store for the 2006 racing season…

In 2006, Jaxon Motorsports ran several races at Lime Rock Park and New Hampshire International Speedway and the end result was another G-Production NARRC championship. For the team it was, the third-in-three years. Only this time, the son and "Sweetness" were the recipients of the award. It was a very proud moment for my father and me as the final points ended up a 1-2 for son then father. And not only had we won the championship 3-years in a row, but with pending changes to the rules within the SCCA, (the 1147 spitfire was being reclassified to H-Production for 2007). This championship in 2006 would be the last ever for an 1147 Spitfire in G-Production competition.

The 2006 season finale at Lime Rock Park was full of drama and anticipation. I had a slim points lead over a very fast BMW MINI and Dad was positioned just behind the mini. At the start of the

Jack Creel #4
photo credit Doug Koza - www.the16v.com

Jay R. Creel #44
photo credit Roz Rosintoski - www.rozphoto.com

weekend, we knew that I needed a finish to win the championship and Dad needed a win to move into second place. Over the latter part of the 2006 season, I had begun to experience several tire issues when running at Lime Rock Park, later attributed to excessive camber, and knowing that a finish was needed to secure the third championship for the team, I decided to dismount one of my rain tires and I mounted an extra racing slick, just in case.

The race started out fast and furious with Dad taking the lead. Dad paced the G-Production field for several laps and I took some time to get the feel of the car and the conditions of the track. At this time, it had been communicated to me that the MINI was not on grid at the time of the race and the championship was essentially in my hands. But at the moment, the championship did not matter, I was embroiled in a father-son fight for the lead under fantastic weather conditions at one of the most exciting racing events of the SCCA northeast regional racing season on one of the most enjoyable racing circuits in the country. On lap 8, I dove inside "pop" at the braking zone for the big bend. I held the lead for several laps and while driving the fast line, Dad repaid the favor, taking back the lead at the exact same place. As there was over half of the race left, I did not press the issue and was content to tuck under the boot of his 1147 Spitfire and follow for awhile.

Unfortunately as I began to dive into the second apex and exit of big bend, the left rear tire decided to "leave the building". Another flat tire for "Sweetness"!!! This was the last event of the 2006 season, and I was racing for the win of a lifetime against my father and I had a spare tire in the paddock. I hobbled the car back to the pits, jumped out of the car, chased down the tire and jack, changed the tire and was back on track. I had only lost 3 laps. No chance to win but I wanted to continue racing. I timed my exit perfectly as Dad was flying down the front straightaway as I blended back onto the racing line. When the checkered flag flew, it was official. A 1-2 championship finish for the Jaxon Motorsports racing team. As is customary with SCCA races the race winner for each class has the opportunity to take a lap of honor with the checkered flag. On this day, Dad and I were fortunate enough to take a victory lap together. Two Spitfires, side-by-side, each holding a checkered flag to celebrate the success of the day and the season. It was a magical moment that will never be duplicated and a moment that will never be forgotten by either of us.

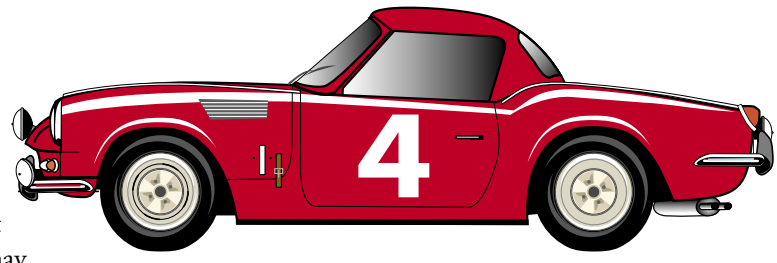
Racing has a created a bond between my father and I that I cherish very dearly. It is through racing, competing and the desire to learn about racing Triumphs that has made the experience priceless. I hope to pass the same level of knowledge to my 6-year old son someday. For now, I have much more to learn and fortunately Dad has more he would like to teach me though he has said that he will not be as willing to share on track racing tactics with me as he would like to keep his racing advantage a little bit longer.

2007 was not nearly as successful of a season. Both cars experienced engine difficulties that took the majority of the season to resolve. The season ended on a positive note with a 2nd place finish for Dad.

For 2008, the season brings on some exciting new challenges with some new engines and go fast bits and the development of the North-Atlantic Production Car Challenge. The challenge series is an SCCA production car only series that I have developed to be run in conjunction with the NARRC series and is designed to increase on-track competition among the regional production car racers in the northeast division of the SCCA. The series is focused around the historically significant classes of E-Production, F-Production, G-Production, H-Production and GT Lite. The series will run at Watkins Glen, Lime Rock Park, New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Pocono Raceway and the newly constructed New Jersey Motorsports Park. There will be a fast TR-3 contesting for the E-Production crown and four Spitfires racing for the H-Production title, (3) 1147's and a 1296 with some Spridgets, VW's and Mini's H-Production should be a class to watch. Details regarding the North-Atlantic Production Car Challenge are available at ***www.production-car.com*** Bring those Spitfires out and race. See you at the track.

Jaxon Motorsports would like to thank the following for their support, insight and enthusiasm; Bruce @ Simsbury Precision, Rick @ Crankshafts, Inc., Joel Cook Motorsports Photography, Alexis & Danielle @ Frascone's Italian Deli, Rick @ Sign Wiz, Kevin Allen, Ron Krantz @ REK Racing, Rick Cline, Duane Bailey @ West Michigan Imports, Aaron Johnson, Dick Barlow, Rick @ Northern Fabrication, Chris Crisenberry, Mike Harmuth and most of all our crew - George, Jim, Craig, Mom, and my wife, Shelley.

Vintage Racing
How to Get Started
Part Two of a Four Part Series
by Bob Spruck, MotorMouth South

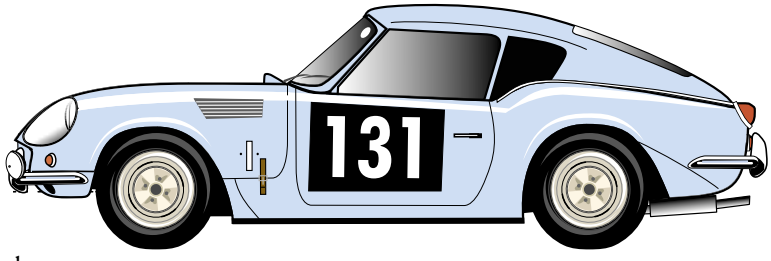


So, you think racing vintage sports cars looks like fun? Want to get involved? Here are some useful tips to consider that may help you make your dream come true.

DEFINE YOUR GOALS carefully and completely. Ask yourself why do you want to do this? Must you have the biggest, baddest, fastest, loudest car out there, or will you be satisfied just racing a beautiful car you built yourself, being proud of all you've accomplished, enjoying the track time, and having a ball? How much do you want to be involved? Can you do everything yourself, or with help from your crew, or do you have to (or want to) pay someone else to do all the work while you just arrive and drive? Is all that work part of what you call fun? Will you enjoy working on the car between races, fixing things that went wrong or improving things so they go better next time. How about the dirty, time pressured work at the track in the paddock without all the comforts of home and with the right tool or part left on your workbench in the garage, and everybody giving you conflicting advice as to what you should do. And the next track session due to start long before you'll finish the job. And darkness quickly approaching. And the rain getting heavier and running in rivulets under your car exactly where you need to lie. What do you want to get out of this whole thing? Self-satisfaction? Recognition by your peers? How committed are you to the time, the money, and the dedication? Do you have the intestinal fortitude to race at more than 100 MPH, or inches away from the other guy, or up and down hills, or turning left and right, or in turns you can see as well as blind ones you can't, passing and being passed, or in a car that is forty years old and amongst strangers who are older than that? How about all these at the same time?

ATTEND SOME RACES and instead of acting like a spectator, pretend you are one of the participants. Observe what's occurring. Watch the cars on the track. Can you see yourself doing that? See what goes on in the paddock. Can you do that? Find someone who looks approachable and who has a car and rig that you think you could handle. Don't hang around the 18-wheeler with the Porsche 906, Birdcage Maserati, and Ferrari 250GT SWB and the glamorous paddock groupies if you are thinking of racing a Spitfire with your brother-in-law. Find somebody with a set-up similar to what you think you want. Really understand the implications of the epithet about champagne tastes and a beer budget. Take pictures. Nothing makes a racer prouder than you thinking enough of his pride and joy to want to take pictures of it. The photos will also help you when you build your own car. Take shots of the features you like from all the cars you see. This way your car will be an amalgamation of the best features of all those cars. If you show some interest and don't get in the way, most racers will be glad to talk to you and offer all sorts of advice. Play your cards right and one or two may even take you under their wing. Ask questions, but do wait for the right time. Don't interrupt a driver while he is preparing to go back on the track or while he is repairing something that just broke. He's likely to be too excited and focused on other things besides you. Or, he's liable to be too upset about his problems or pressed for time to get them fixed before the next track session. Wait until after the races are over. At a more relaxed moment, you will probably even be offered a beer or two. Better yet - create the moment and bring the beer yourself. That's just about guaranteed to get you noticed and remembered by any real racer.

INVESTIGATE RACE ORGANIZATIONS that you think you might want to race with. Learn their philosophy about racing, car preparation, and safety. Some vintage race groups will let you race almost anything you can drag to the track as long as you pay the entry fee. Other groups are sticklers for authenticity and provenance. Be comfortable with the group. Don't gripe later because you have differences of opinion about classes, costs, and what they serve at the parties. Talk to the group's leaders at the track or later on the phone. Check out their web site. Ask some of the racers themselves about the group. If the group's racing philosophy is reasonably close to yours, find out where they race and how often. What do you get for your entry fee? Does it include the Endurance races? Parties? (very important!) Race momentos? Or nothing but continual hassles? You might decide to join a group regardless of their philosophy



or personnel just because it is the only one that races at a track near you. Traveling to distant tracks is fun, but expensive and time consuming. Can you handle that or can you only race at the closest track to you, and, if so, does the number of times a year the group races there coincide with how many times a year you want to race?

DECIDE ON A CAR AND CLASS if you don't already have a car. Building a racecar from a junker is different than building a racecar from a streetcar, which is different than buying a racecar "ready to race". Pick something you can manage, considering size, horsepower, simplicity, maintainability, and both initial and recurring costs. Generally, the bigger and faster the car, the more money is involved and the more help you'll need. If you've never raced before, think small, cheap, manageable, and comfortable, especially to start out with. You can always upgrade later once you are really convinced you can handle more. The bigger and heavier the racecar, the bigger and more expensive other things need to be, like tires, tow vehicle, and trailer. Racing a high strung car like a Lotus or an unknown like a Swallow-Doretti will be considerably different than racing the ubiquitous Spitfire or GT6. Don't assume just because you have a high opinion of yourself that you can handle a big Mustang Trans Am car or a Formula 5000 on a racetrack with the big boys who have infinitely more experience and money than you.

photo credit Cliff Lawson

VOLUNTEER to be a crewmember for a racer who races a car like you want to race. You'll learn about the specific car and its unique characteristics. You'll get familiar with the competition, the guys you'll be racing with when you finally get on the track. And, equally important, they will get to know you. These contacts will be a valuable source for parts and advice later on. You'll also get a feel for race and paddock protocol and the race weekend activities. Volunteer to help the race organizers by working the grid or in timing and scoring. Get all the exposure and experience you can.

FIND SOME FRIENDS to help you with your project. Preferably ones you can trust to work on the car and not drink too much of your beer and then only after the races are over each day. Good crewmen are valuable assets to any racer. Crewing for you may be one of the phases in their own plan to eventually build their own racecar and join you on the track. If you treat them right, they may even out race you some day.

LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN, as fast as you can. Ask questions. Subscribe to magazines like Vintage Motorsport, Victory Lane, Grassroots Motorsport, or a marque publication such as The Vintage Triumph. Get free catalogs from all the appropriate vendors. They provide a great education and besides, you'll need them some day anyway when something breaks on your car or you win the Lottery and can buy that killer motor that will enable you to finally beat your competition. Sign up for the numerous marque and racing List Servers on the Internet. Learn from others. Learn together. Learn a lot. Then help somebody else learn.

ROB A BANK - it's about the only way you'll be able to afford the hobby. Don't make a budget. You'll always be over it anyway. But be reasonable and continually re-appraise your goals. Consider the most likely results of spending money on your racecar instead of your wife. Can she (and you) live with that? Don't forgo the kids' college funds, either. Wait 'til after they've graduated. And, get your family involved. Don't keep all the fun to yourself. If they are part of your team, the money and time you spend on racing will seem less selfish. You can go about this whole thing with minimal costs as one of your goals, but never scrimp on safety equipment or take shortcuts in the preparation of your car.

HAVE FUN! Hopefully, I have not discouraged you from thinking about or even getting started in Vintage Racing. The intent of this article is to encourage you. What you have read above is basically how I got started more than ten years ago (except for the part about the Bank, of course). These steps worked extremely well for me. There are other ways that could work for you. However, I have seen many people come into the sport and many people leave it, and for a myriad of reasons. There are always racecars for sale. Some racers suggest that it is quicker, easier, cheaper, and safer to buy a car that has already been raced rather than start from scratch. Then improve it to your standards and budget. Racecars for sale should be viewed as opportunities for you, not as deterrents. And never forget: keep smiling, and keep the greasy side down.

VDCA Season Finalé

by Bob Spruck, MotorMouth South

2007 was another successful season for the Vintage Drivers Club of America and their (and the nation's) last race of the year was a grand success as well. The annual Season Finale' is held at Roebling Road Raceway just west of Savannah, GA, this year on December 7-9th. The tradition of good racing, safe racing, fun racing, and lots of racing was upheld for yet another year.

Over 100 cars pre-registered and while only a few didn't show, there were numerous walk-ups that brought the total to approximately 100. That's about the VDCA average and just about the optimal number to provide the low-key style of racing that VDCA has become known for. Additionally, that number also allows for large amounts of planned track time and has the hidden advantage of few incidents, which means that events went off as scheduled. Only some early morning fog on Sunday slowed things down a bit. Since the track was shared with the BMWCCA and their 50 some cars, keeping on schedule was quite an accomplishment. This symbiotic arrangement has been going on for a few years with great results.

In addition to the usual two half-hour practice sessions for each of the five vintage groups and four sessions for the various BMW classes on Friday, VDCA held their very popular and fun Gimmick Race at the close of the day.

Johnny Johnson's '64 is a basic Vintage Spitfire racer

Saturday was a full day, too, with each of the Vintage Groups having one practice session and a Qualifying Race and the BMW guys and gals having two practice sessions, an Enduro Qualifying session, and the big (53 cars on the grid) one-hour Enduro Race. The traditional Pig Pickin' and Oyster Roast followed the on-track activities.

The Vintage Enduro was held Sunday morning, after the two Vintage and one BMW warm-up sessions and before Quiet Time. Forty-Four cars started the scheduled 1-hour race and the winner circled the 2.02-mile track 40 times before the race was called. Larry Wilson not only looked swift in his B Sports Racing Royale RP-17, but he was actually pretty swift on the track, too, winning the race by a lap over Tom Bungay's Swift DB2 S2000 and Max Rubin and Peter Krause in the Lola T-596 S2000. That car posted the BTOD of 1:13.9. The enduro provided lots of spectator thrills, lots of racing, and the opportunity for some to hone their engine building and sheet metal repair skills over the winter. Only two of the five registered Spitfires entered the Enduro but they were the two fastest of the marque. Pittsburgh's Fred Danovitz in his red '64 is always fast, but then again, so is Rob Stewart from Norcross, GA in his blue and white'67. Fred may have placed ahead of Rob (13th versus 14th) but Rob had a better time (1:26.116 versus 1:27.236). Both cars are in the vintage F Production Class and are always close competitors.

The final BMW race and five Vintage Feature races started right after the lunch break and lasted until just about everybody ran out of car, tires, and energy.

Production cars seemed to dominate this years Season Finale'. Group I was the largest group with almost 40 cars, including nine Formula Vees. The Vee racers are a neat bunch of guys. All the Vees gridded and started behind the production cars in order to enable them to race together and not bother, intimidate, or harass the cars with fenders. Despite this, Mike Jackson, who started on the FV pole, behind 17 production cars, would up 5th overall, WAY ahead of Paul Buttrose in the next fastest Vee. We need to get tech to check his valve covers and see if it says Porsche on them! If that wasn't exciting enough, Rob Stewart in his always fast 1967 Triumph Spitfire 1296 and Alan Casavant in his 1959 1220cc Lotus 7 continued their thrilling weekend-long battle right up to the end. Alan had a qualifying time that was .4 quicker than Rob, so he started on pole. Alan pulled away by three or four car lengths but Rob stuck with him. You could tell by the little Rob gained each lap that a pass would be possible shortly. Since the feature races were 14 laps, there was plenty of action as the two traded the lead many, many times, mostly on the entrance to turn one but also apparently on the back of the track as well. Rob made his last pass with three laps to go and posted his fastest time on the penultimate lap as he had to in order to keep ahead of Alan. Us spectators at the start/finish line were breathless the entire time. I can imagine how it was for the guys doing all the work!

Rob placed 1st overall and 1st in Class FP with a best lap time of 1:24.656. Next Spitfire was Tim Slater from West Palm Beach, FL in his blue roadster 7th OA and 2nd in GP with a best time of 1:31.434. Johnny Johnson, from Tifton, GA, in a 1964 Spitfire was a DNF after 6 laps, while Fred and Mark Craig were DNS. Mark went out early in the weekend with a blown clutch. Tim Slater debuted his new GT6, er, Spitfire, er GT6. Well, it looks like a GT6 but is really a Spitfire with a GT6 top welded on, from the top of the windshield to the transmission tunnel and back to the hatch. It is a replica of the factory Sebring/LeMans cars. The previous owner might have saved a lot of work by just switching entire bodies, but I'm sure there is a story there. We'll try to get it next time.

The pre-War cars constitute Group 9 but they were relatively sparse this year, after many years of great turnout. Next race Group up was 3 & 4, the larger displacement Production cars and the smaller sports racers. Formula Fords and Sports 2000s dominated the next race, for Groups 2, 5, and 7. Not surprising, the S2000s dominated the FFs. The last race of the day was the combined Group 6 and 8 for the big cars. Is a 308 cu.in. GTO big enough for you? It was certainly loud enough for most of us. Dennis Moser drove it to 2nd OA behind the Lola 644 of Miles Whitlock.

Just about everybody left on a racing high, once again. VDCA provides the kind of racing experience many people want. That's why the grids are getting bigger, more unique cars are appearing, and the members are staying satisfied. What a way to finish a season of vintage racing!

Rob Stewart's 1967 is clean and simple and a big winner

Windscreen Trim

by Paul Tegler, Maryland

Excuse the drawing, but this is the approximate cross sectional view of the windshield rubber gasket. The orange, is the chrome trim that is such a pain to install. Hopefully this info will give you a bit of insight and reveal a few tricks to getting the trim in.

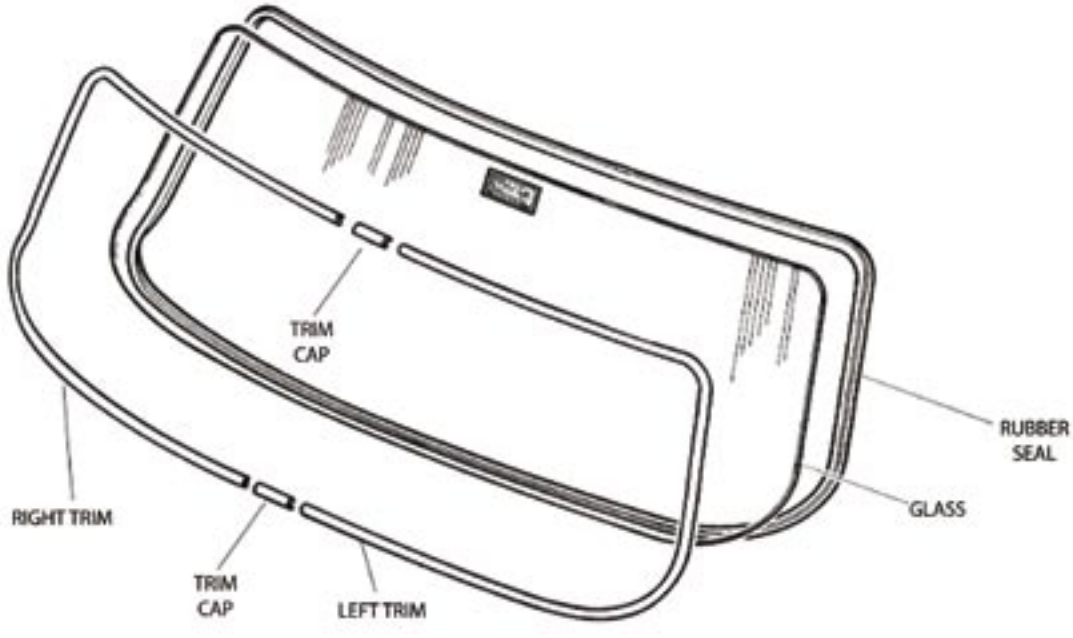
I was extremely happy to recently stumble on a set of REAL stainless steel trim pieces at a recent car show (Bowie, MD B.C.D. 2001). Although they'll never shrink like the commonly available plastic trim pieces, The lack of flexibility of the stainless steel, made them even more of a pain to install. The problem is trying to get the little lip of the windshield trim to stick up, and get it into the 'C' of the trim to snap it into place.

My tricks, and the real reason to even bother typing up this info, were two fold. The first 'assistant' came about on my third attempt at getting it installed. I found a piece of cable TV coax cable was the right diameter to stuff down into the groove to lift up the flap and hold it in a workable position.

I found starting in the middle of the vertical run up the side of the windshield worked best. Work first towards the upper corner. Then work in the top, then work the bottom corner, finally across the bottom.

THE 'tool'...the secret weapon. A chunk of coat hanger bent up to make a miniature crowbar. About a 1/2" wide at the foot, with the 'flip' being roughly the same. The handle, designed to choice. The real criteria of this is a 'blunt' edge to the tip of the crowbar. This shape will be stuffed under the trim, and the 'foot' used to shove the lip of the molding back and up under and into the groove in the C shaped trim molding.

A few times a screw driver had to be used as a wedge to hold the molding up to get the crowbar (coat hanger) under the molding. Once you get a section of the lip up into the groove from underneath, press against the molding while pulling the coax wire out from under the molding. Give the molding a bit of a whack with the heel of your hand and you'll almost hear it 'snap' into place.

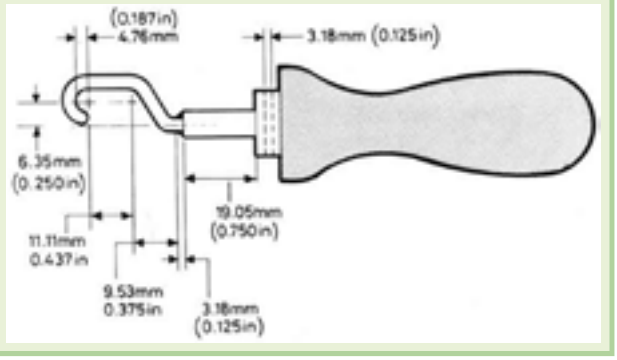


This is what the Bentley and Factory Workshop Manuals say about the process:

1. Using the "special tool", locate the tool in the recess with open end uppermost and in a vertical position.

2. Keeping the hook firmly engaged in the recess, draw the tool along to engage the inner flange of the weatherstrip with the finisher.

The homemade "special tool" should be made from mild steel rod. The tip should be rounded and free of rough edges.



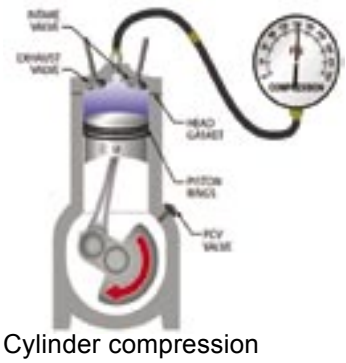
Compression

Where do you get it? - What do we do with it?

by Ted Schumacher, TSI, Pandora, Ohio

Last time we went through the basics of compression. Now let's see what we do with all this newfound information. Even if you don't want more power or performance, it is still important to understand what compression does. Simply put, the higher the compression in an engine, the bigger the bang when the fuel mixture is ignited. But, you say, I don't want a high performance engine. Nothing wrong with that, but if you have a stock engine and the compression decline from a burned valve or bad rings you no longer have the power your engine should have. Poor acceleration, bad fuel mileage, hard starting. All can be caused by low compression. So compression is vital to every engine from stock to WOW!

Now for the boring tech stuff, (here is a chance to justify buying more tools). Compression test measures the amount of pressure created in each cylinder. Go buy a good compression gauge, probably about $30. The compression gauges threads into the spark plug hole. (Yes, I do need a plug wrench!) With the coil wire disconnected, crank the engine over with the key. Do this for 7 turns of the engine. Anything less will not give a full reading. Any more doesn't gain anything. Write down the reading for each cylinder. When you are done with the test, the readings should not vary over 15% between the highest and lowest reading. Let's say the high reading was 140 psi. The lowest reading should be no less than 120 psi. What will this tell us? If you have a four cylinder and 3 readings are 135 to 140 and one reading is 80, you have a problem. The problem is you have only 3 working cylinders and one taking up space. But, with our new trusty gauge, we may be able to diagnose the problem. Low compression comes from the pressure created by the up and down movement of the piston in the cylinder being able to leak out of the combustion chamber. It can escape by one of two methods. One is a bad valve or valves. The valve no longer seals the combustion chamber when closed. Solution is to remove the cylinder head and have a valve grind performed. The other leak situation is caused by worn or broken piston rings. Pressure in the combustion chamber can leak past the rings. This is not good. Time for an engine rebuild (commercial message – yes, we do build engines). Question is, which situation we have in the cylinder with low pressure. Answer is found with a squirt can of oil and your new gauge. With a trigger operated squirt can of oil, squirt 3 shots of oil into the cylinder. Immediately retest with the compression gauge. If the reading stays low, you have a bad valve. If the reading comes way up, you have bad rings. All right, how did we know this? If the valve is bad, the pressure is escaping past the valve. The oil you squirted into the cylinder is lying on top of the piston but the pressure is going past the valve. Picture the head of the valve as a circle. If the valve is worn, the circle now has a pie-shaped piece missing and pressure is leaking through this notch. But, if the pressure increased by a bunch, the rings are worn. The oil you introduced into the cylinder temporarily sealed the rings. This is why the pressure increased dramatically.



Cylinder compression

So, even in a stock engine, compression plays a vital part of how the car performs. Now, for the fun stuff. Last time we said you could learn how to determine compression ratio. In either of the 2 examples from above, the cylinder head is coming off. With the head removed and lying upside down on your work bench, kitchen table or dog house roof., take a small level and prop up the head so it is level. (Small blocks of wood work fine) Now, it's time for another tool. Go to the drugstore and buy a pipette graduated in cc's. Preferably a 50cc capacity. Fill the pipette with acetone. Then pour the acetone into the combustion chamber until the chamber is full. Be sure to keep track of how many cc's it took to fill the chamber. Just fill the chamber until surface tension is keeping the chamber from overflowing. This is the V2 number used in the formula for compression ratio in the last article. You need to add about 5 cc's to this number to account for the volume of space in the head gasket (or you can cc the head gasket is you wish). Then figure the volume for V1. Boring formula time – Volume = 3.14 (pi) x R {square} (1/2 the diameter of the cylinder) x H. "H" is the stroke of the engine. Bore and stroke will be in your workshop manual. Remember to convert the answer to cc's. There you have it. You diagnosed a problem, figured out what was needed and got started on improving engine performance – all for about $50 worth of tools.

And now to answer the question, compression – what do we do with it? We have fun like ***Tim the Tool Man*** says – "***more power AAHHRR, AHHRR, AHHRR***".

Now, if having a responsive engine that really does something when you step on the "loud pedal" (old hot rod term) is of interest. You are here. If that does not interest you, take the information from these articles and be a more informed owner.

Remember in article 1, we mentioned keeping compression ratio to 9.5 to 1 range. This is because of higher fuel burn temperatures with today's fuel. Higher burn temps help eliminate unburned gasses gong out the tail pipe. There are 2 exceptions to this rule. One would be a car with an all aluminum engine such as TR8 or Rover. The aluminum engines dissipate heat much faster than cast iron engines. Therefore, you can run higher compression without getting into trouble. The other exception is using forged pistons. Forged pistons are much stronger than stock "cast" pistons used in our cars. They can stand much more pressure so compression can be much higher. Race engines using forged pistons are in the 13 or 14 to 1 range. The downside is cost. Forged pistons are custom made, low volume items. For our cars, these run $150 or so per piston. For comparison, cast pistons for a Spitfire are about $175/ set of 4.

Raising compression on our cars is relatively easy. If your car had dish top pistons, such as a late model Spitfire, MGB, TR7, TR8, etc., replace the pistons with either flattops in the case of the Spitfire/TR6 or shallow dish for the MGB, TR7, etc. A simple and cost effective method. Then finish compression increase by milling the head to gain the final compression value. To this basic package, add a good cam. The cam should be one that produces power in the rpm range where you need it. For example, a cam that produces peak power from 5000 – 7000 rpm is not useful in an engine that spends most of its life between 2500 and 4500 rpm. The majority of cams we supply make power in the mid-range power. As the emission restrictions increased in '70's, the power went away. A '67 Spitfire or MG Midget was about 75 – 78 hp. By 1977, the same car had about 56 hp. Take the same mid-'70's engine, raise compression, add a mid-range cam and convert back to the twin SU's the car came with in the 1960's and you have 90 – 95 hp. This seems like a major power increase, but all we really are doing is taking the car back to pre-emission power, then kick it up a notch. Simple, reliable nd a lot more fun. And, you got to buy some more tools.

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British Car Day

September 16, 2007
by Greg Hertel, Ontario Canada

The Little British Car gods smiled once again, as another picture-perfect late summer day was the setting for the Toronto Triumph Club's yearly gathering of the British motoring clans, at Bronte Creek Provincial Park in Oakville Ontario.

Nearly one thousand British cars from all over Southern Ontario, Michigan and New York states, congregated for the largest one-day gathering of old British iron in Canada.

A Scottish pipe band, vendors of goods from U.K. shops, parts suppliers, automotive detaling salespeople, die-cast model sellers, automotive book sellers and curmudgeonly eccentric sellers of really old and junky British car parts, all graced the marketplace, providing a mercantile distraction for spectators weary at looking at the nostalgic automotive jewels on display.

For Spitfire aficionados, over sixty models, mostly Mk III's, IV's and 1500's lined the two long rows dedicated to the marque. Custom red leather interiors, painted bumpers matching body colour, toy monkeys holding wrenches on valve covers and a Java Green 1500 aptly named Gumby (displaying a wee model of Gumby on its' dashboard), all illustrated the pleasure Spitfire owners take at making their cars individual. (Since Pokey was a horse, what kind of creature was Gumby?)

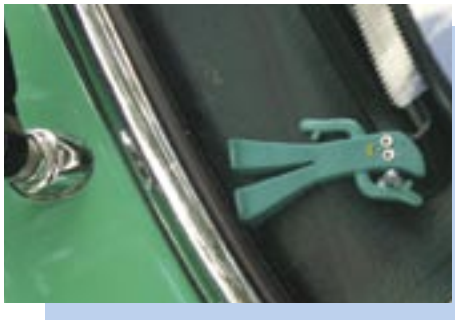
For Spitfire purists, a couple of Mk I nut and bolt restorations drew large crowds of viewers. Drawing most of the attention was Richard Dujenski's impeccably restored and perfectly presented powder blue 1964 Mk1. Mr. Dujenski, who hails from Middleport N.Y., owns a stunning time machine that appears to have just come off the assembly line at Canley. Spectators heartily agreed as for the third year running, this baby was a winner in its class.

2008 will be the silver anniversary of B.C.D. and everyone at the Toronto Triumph Club is looking to making it the most memorable British car event ever. Details of the event will be available at ***www.torontotriumph.com*** early in 2008.

Richard Dujenski - Middleport N.Y. - 1964 Mk1 Powder Blue

Sports
1500

BBMP 558



What were they thinking ???

We have all seen them, those conversions that make you ask: "**WHAT WERE THEY THINKING ???**" This page is dedicated to those slightly different conversions, the ones you either love or hate. If you have seen them at a show, or for sale of the web, send them in to us, and we will include them in WWTT???

Ebay was the source for all three WWTT entries this time.

▶

This hot number has been offered for sale on Ebay and on various classified sites. It was located in Baltimore Maryland, July 2002

▶

Triumph Spitfire Pro Street / Race Car. One of a kind, nothing else like it. Stretched 26" with a 105" wheel base. Double frame rail chassis with A arms in front and a solid mounted 8 3/4 Mopar rear with 488 gears. GM LS6 454 with tunnel ram backed by a turbo 400. Street driven regularly, a real head turner. Price - $15,000 or best offer.

▲▼▶ *Offered on Ebay July 2002 V8 and stretched chassis. Oh yeah, custom grill work!!*

▲▼ *This beauty was spotted in April of 2003, selling in the UK. This was a 1969 TRIUMPH SPITFIRE MK3, Fitted with very unusual and rare DUTTON FIBREGLASS CONVERSION KIT, front and rear. A FIBRE GLASS HARD TOP was also included.*

Have you spotted a Spitfire, GT6, or other Triumph conversion that you feel is worthy of some public scrutiny? If so, send your submissions to the magazine at: Spitfire & GT6 Magazine, PO Box 30806, Knoxville, TN, USA, 37930 or by email to: editor@triumphspitfire.com

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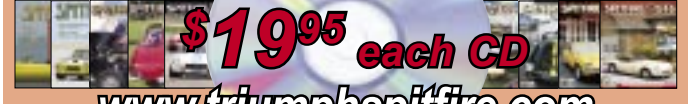

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