



# Best of France & Italy

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## Renault Owners Club of North America

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Currently open. Thanks to Sam Stuckey for doing this for us so many years. He will be missed.

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Bonaime, Matt	Showers, John
Burnett, Jonathan	Waterhouse, John
Croteau, Frank	Weaver, Joseph
Damide, François	Weiner, Sandee
Marx, Daniel	
Palmondon, Tim	
Perryman, Richard	

**December 2013 Member Renewals**

Avery, Dennis	Hacker, Geoffrey
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Polak, Don  
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Purcell, Raymond  
Reed, James  
Showers, John  
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Gross, Thomas  
Ketchpaw, William  
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Mejia, David  
Nicotera, Mark

Nosaka, George  
Olsen, Peter  
Roe, Patrick  
Root, Richard  
Shoen, Paul  
Simpson, Pat  
Verdow, Robert  
Weaver, Joseph



# 4L International

By Marvin McFalls

From July 6th to July 7th 2013 the 4L International meet was held in Thenay, France, a small town about 220km south of Paris. Since 2009 the organizer of the 4L International aims to bring together collectors of Renault in general, the 4L and all its derivatives in particular. The event takes place at, of all places, a Peugeot test facility. It is a multi-acre site that is a perfect location to feature hundreds of R4s

At this year's event Renault Classic, the Historic department of Renault, put together a stand with a special display. My good friend Gerard Gutmann and I represented the Renault Alliance Club Passion along with about twenty other Renault clubs from the FCRA that made up the display. There were more than 100 years of Renaults featured in the display from a 1906 Marne Taxi to the Twingo which was celebrating twenty years and making its first appearance at a Renault Classic event.

The 4L and its offspring (starting with the R3, to the R6 and R5) were all well represented including commercial versions. The majority of the cars displayed were of the 4GL or 4GTL variety. To my knowledge no major or minor off shoot based on the R4 was not included; from the open top Plein Aire and the Gilbury replica British Roadster, to the off road Rodeo, or the JP4 sometimes known as the Frog. They even had a couple examples of the very rare Sovam fiberglass sports car.

For a Renault 4 enthusiast, it was definitely Mecca. Besides all the amazing cars they also had a vendor area where I was able to pick up some original French headlights and taillights for my Mexican model R4. Among all the great vendors, I met Christophe Goujon, who specialized in building R4 pedal cars and other R4 related memorabilia. What a craftsman! If I had a young child, he definitely would be riding in one of Christophe's creations.

After visiting the vendor area Gerard and I were starting to get hungry and were making plans to visit one of the on-site vendors. All the other clubs had built a make shift picnic area and they invited us to join them for a wonderful meal. Wow. I have to say in all the times I have visited France I have had some incredible meals, but this potluck ranked up there with food from some of Paris' finest establishments.

Following the terrific meal, I was able to spend some time with Bernard Dumas from club CAR, one of the biggest classic car clubs in France, as well as Dominique Pascal, a well-known writer of automotive books in France. We discussed various subjects Renault related. Bernard told us the story of being a young executive with Renault sent to do a marketing test for the Renault 5. His bosses had proposed the car be marketed to women and younger drivers. As he was driving around the streets of Detroit, an American redneck (for lack of a better



term) pulled him over in a large pick-up truck and asked him about the car, and where he could buy one. Needless to say, when Bernard reported back to his supervisor his experience they weren't too happy.

This was by far the hottest weather of the year in France, and by early in the afternoon many of the spectators started to slow down, many of the other model Renault owners loaded up their cars and headed for home or headed to the other end of field to the campsites, but for those who remained, the 4L organizers pepped them up with a concert, and the party continued well into the night. As the party finally began to wind down in the wee hours of the morning, I said farewell to my R4 friends and started the drive back to Paris. I had an early flight to England, so I took my time driving back to Paris and made a quick stop at sunrise for a visit to Montlhery circuit, the oldest racetrack in France, before returning to Orly Airport and my flight to London.

The 4L International is not your typical car show. It is part car show, part musical festival. A two day party in celebration of one of the most practical vehicles ever made. There is something for everyone interested in R4 from age 8 to 80, and somehow the organizers make it all work. If you are even in France the first weekend in July in an odd numbered year, take the time to visit Thenay and the 4L International. It is a must do for any Renault enthusiast. 🍷





# Another Ride to the House of France

By Francisco Miranda

**I**t wasn't July 14th (Bastille Day), or even Général Charles De Gaulle's birthday celebration, nor a French holiday: It was just a parade to attract business to the Christmas Bazaar, the House of France organized for the first time this year. Plenty of French products were available, all of first quality, flavor and looks!

We all gathered at the Omega Tower, just in front of the French Embassy at noon. All told we had more than dozen cars including: Citroen, Peugeot, and Renault. Peugeot and Citroen also brought a couple of new models each. After a long wait, the organizers decided to move over to a restaurant nearby, but when we got there, the maitre'd ran outside to meet us, worried they were not available to give us service as they had a "closed doors" service. So, we parked there for a few minutes, took some pictures and off we went on our mini parade through the busy streets of Mexico City in the December season. Many people showed interest in the cars, taking pictures with their phones and giving thumbs up while we drove past them. You can hear people saying things like "my father used to have one of these" or "we went all the way to Tijuana in a car just like that one" It's always nice to bring good memories or nice comments like "I'd love to have one of those small toy-like cars", etc.

Finally we reached our destination and we were greeted with a nice reception by the embassy's organizer and the House of France coordinator, shown in Pedro Mora's beautiful R4F. The R4F and the 2CV were chosen to be parked inside the exhibition area, as true examples of the days when "commerçants français" used these sorts of vehicles to transport their goods to the open markets in France and through Europe.

After a nice lunch with baguettes, dessert, and wine, some of us decided it was time to call it a day and started the way back to our homes, again sorting the heavy traffic of the busy avenues of the city. All in all, we spent a nice day in the company of good friends and beautiful cars.

Santé et bonnes fêtes! Cheers and Happy Holidays! Salud y Felices Fiestas! We wish you all a successful and happy 2014. 🍷







# Alpine Club Awards Presented

By Francisco Miranda

**A**t the last meeting of 2013, the Alpine Club, represented by president Alejandro Cortés, handed out awards to the officers who had been active since the beginning of the club's activities 13 years ago, in recognition of their performance and service.

To Juan Antonio Calvillo and Alberto Gonzalez who acted in different terms as club President, both gave their all of to keep the club in great shape and recognized within the automobile fraternity; To Agustin Sordo, who was the club's treasurer, as well as the importance of all the work he has done through the years. Next came Alberto Gironella (who was not present to receive his award), for the excellence of his automobiles and restorations; last but not least, the award presented to me for the communication and electronic media works done and for inaugurating and designing the club's website and maintaining it from 2000 until the beginning of 2013.

Also during this meeting it was announced that starting in 2014 we will inaugurate the "Roberto Arnstein Award" which will be presented to those members who show their dedication and passion in the work done to their vehicles, as an excellence example to keep the name of Alpine / Dinalpin as well as the club's name at the top as we've done so far for the past 13 years.

Some highlights in Roberto Arnstein's trajectory as a pillar in the auto world, especially in the Renault fraternity: As a winning pilot racing and preparing cars, Director of the Formula 1 Grand Prix races in Mexico from 86 to 92 and even the race control tower of the "Hermanos Rodriguez" the most important race track in Mexico, has been named after him. He has been president of the Federación Mexicana de Automovilismo Deportivo, Head of the Sport Prototype Cars in the early 90's, among many other activities in the professional sport and race cars in Mexico.

We are lucky that Roberto is one of the founding members of our club, but especially and above all, a good friend and advisor. He currently is in charge of the new member's acceptance committee.

Congratulations to all! 🎉



# Dauphine Memories

By Eric Olson

I fell in love with the Renault Dauphine in 1962, the day my dad pulled into our driveway behind the wheel of one. I was twelve years old and already a diehard car guy. I knew all the makes, models and years by sight. All American cars, of course, that's all there was on the road back then; massive metal monsters with scads of chrome. Then this little grey Dauphine putters up our driveway. I'd never seen anything like it, a kid-sized car that looked like something a Munchkin would drive.

The entire front end tipped forward like it was curtsying hello. The lawnmower-size engine was in the rear and could be started with a crank. A crank!! My dad's car had a little sunroof, too, something else I'd never seen before. Dad would throw open the sunroof and we kids would take turns sticking our heads out of it as the car tooted down the road. We didn't have the car for long; dad traded it in for a new 1963 VW bug.

I always had a soft spot in my heart for the Dauphine that turned into a desire to own one when I grew up. Fifty years later while searching eBay for a project I came across a Dauphine for sale that had sat in a barn for 39 years. I bought it sight unseen, rented a trailer and my daughter and I headed to eastern Pennsylvania to pick it up.

The car turned out to be a great find. It was complete, had no rust and the interior was perfect except for the fact that it was filthy and badly faded. Decades in storage preserved much but destroyed much as well; all the wheels were locked up and the gas tank had rotted away as had every rubber part on the car. The engine was seized, too, so that's where I began.

I pulled the engine and disassembled it to discover the pistons, cylinders, bearings, valves and cam gear were all shot. While the block and head were at the machine shop I pulled off the wheels and rebuilt the brakes, slave cylinders and master cylinder and replaced the brake lines and wheel bearings. Once the car was running I spent an entire day rubbing out the original paint including the trunk and engine compartment. The paint was a rock hard enamel with lots of small scratches in it but it buffed out beautifully.

Next I dismantled the interior, painted the headliner and dyed the seats and door panels with vinyl dye. I finished the car up by sandblasting and repainting the wheels and mounting new tires.

I've restored numerous cars in my life. I own an immaculate 1965 Mercedes 220s and am restoring a 1958 Chevrolet I've owned for forty-five years. But no car I've ever driven attracted the attention the Dauphine did. There's something about the shape of the thing that makes people want to cuddle with it.



Like dad, I didn't keep my Dauphine for long since I really only bought it for a restoration project. After driving it for a couple of months I sold it on EBay, recouping every dime I'd spent and then some. Its new home is sunny southern California, far from frigid Indiana where it was reborn.

I have some great photos to remember it by, and of course all those childhood memories of tooling around my hometown with dad behind the wheel and my head sticking out the sunroof, my face stretched out in a wide, goofy grin. ●



# Best of France and Italy 2013

By Marvin McFalls

As fall arrives each year in the East Coast it reminds us that our final show of the year is just around the corner. So most years in an effort to avoid the inevitable, I will travel west to southern California for the Best of France and Italy. We have a tradition on the Friday before the BOF&I, we head to Frazier Park to see Dene and Pat Barrett, as well as Shin Yoshikawa. It isn't too often in a town with less than 2000 people you find two club members.

While we always seem to make it to Frazier Park it seems like there are always hoops to jump through. In years past we have had traffic jams, breakdowns, wrecks, but this year was a new challenge. We had a disgruntled citizen attack a TSA Security checkpoint. Following a shootout, TSA locked down the airport for several hours. When they finally allowed us to leave, there was still no ground transportation, so we forced to walk to the car rental counter about a mile from the airport.

Thankfully, once we picked up our rental car Brent Bartley and I made the 90 minute drive to the mountains without any further incident. Once there we reunited with fellow club member Jonathan Burnette, Jacques Lynn, and Sharon DesPlaines. All the drama from the airport was replaced by car talk, as Pat and Dene hosted a welcome dinner. Before dinner while Jacques plied us with cocktails, Shin Yoshikawa entertained with a piano solo. By the time the music ended Sharon had a wonderful Spaghetti dinner prepared.

After relaxing in the mountains for two days we returned to the city early Sunday morning. As we do every year we met at Jerry's Famous Deli. We were joined by for breakfast by fellow Renault owners Kurt Triffet, Chris Davidson, Michael Heather, Rex Parker, Joe Hernandez, and Jim Miller. Following a quick Breakfast, Chris Davidson and myself headed to Woodley Park.

We joined Jonathan Burnette in the vendor area. Jonathan was selling parts and automotive literature. While Chris and I were selling automotive artwork, and other car related memorabilia. All funds rose by Chris and I were donated to CJ Hoover and his family. CJ is undergoing treatment for Leukemia at Hershey Medical Center, and we did all we could to help out the family.

While we spent most our day at the vendor area, I did get a chance to circulate thru the showfield, where I was able to check out three unique displays of Renaults. First was in the invitational area where Shin's Willys Interlagos Alpine 108 was displayed with Jonathan's Matra Bonnet dJet 5S. While directly to the right of the entrance was a display of Renault 5s, from a run of the mill LeCar to five very nice R5 Turbos. Directly to the Left of the entrance were the remaining Renaults which included two 4CVs, a Dauphine and two



Caravelles. It was another great turnout, just wish all the cars could have been displayed together.

As I was working the charity booth, I was paid a visit by a couple of out of town members, Bruce Hunter from Salt Lake City and Steve Chichester of Seattle Washington, it was nice to see others besides Brent and I fly in for the event. As I later found out Steve and Bruce paid a visit to Michael Heather's place in Pasadena and Steve purchased two of Michael's Renault Caravelles. Would have liked to been on that tour myself.

As the day wore down and the crowd thinned Rex Parker finally made it by the booth. While it would have been nice if Rex had brought his Interlagos, we enjoyed our visit even if he was in his Ferrari. Maybe next year we will see all the Renault reunited on the showfield, who knows hopefully we will see you there as well. It is the first Sunday in November, the weather is usually nice and the conversation generally is skewed towards Renault. Quite a combination.

Also attending the show was another old member, Don Contreras, and a new member from L.A, Benjamin Zinnen, checking out the cars and looking for tips on restoring his newly acquired R8. 🍷







# The Lost Manic

By Glenn Woodcock

In the last issue I wrote about the restoration of my Manic GT. I was the proud owner of my own completely restored 1971 Manic GT. Just a few weeks later, I had taken the Manic out on a fine fall morning to get some final photos and the let the fuel stabilizer circulate through the full gas tank before putting it away for the winter. It was running and handling beautifully.

I was on a lightly travelled country road about five minutes from my home when suddenly I smelled gas. Instinctively I looked in the rear view mirror, and saw smoke pouring from the engine bay's vents. Then I lost power. Quickly I pulled over to the side of the road.

I don't remember undoing my seatbelt or releasing the cable to the rear deck lid, but in a flash I was at the back of the car. When I raised the deck lid the entire engine compartment was a sea of flames. I knew it was already too late for my puny fire extinguisher, so I grabbed my wallet and camera from the glove box and retreated to what I hoped was a safe distance.

It was surreal. Just like the Wicked Witch of the West in the Wizard of Oz, my fiberglass bodied car was melting. I stood there helplessly; on a beautiful autumn day, watching four years of work – and many thousands of dollars – literally go up in flames. But my greatest fear wasn't that I was losing my Manic, but that the long grass next to the burning car would catch fire and spread to the trees lining that side of the road. Luckily the wind was blowing from the right direction and we'd had just enough rain in recent days so the grass was not tinder dry.

When our volunteer fire department arrived, the first off the truck was my next door neighbor. He looked at the fire and looked at me and said "Tell me it isn't the Manic." I wish I could have. They quickly extinguished the blaze, but by then there wasn't much left except the powertrain and the steel platform, roll cage and wheels. The interior, the tires and the entire fiberglass body had burned. The glass had melted; all that was left was a smoking ruin.

Looking back I could remember the day Charlie Appleman and I hauled it back to shop to begin the restoration all those years earlier. When I told Charlie of the disaster, his reaction was tinged with black humour. "Well, I guess we could say easy come, easy go," he said, "but there wasn't anything easy about it."

Since the project began almost five years, I have regularly written about the car's construction/restoration. Its completion to Concours quality which it took first place at the Antique and Classic Car Club of Canada's 49th Concours d'Elegance, was to have been the last chapter in the story of the car I called "The Last Manic" Except now it's "The Lost Manic".





# The History of Seatbelts

By Marvin McFalls

**T**he interesting side note I discovered from my recent conversation with Fernando Zavala about the two new Alliances he purchases that were built in Mexico and as it turns out, all Mexican cars built prior to 1989 didn't require rear seatbelts. So he contacted me about acquiring a set.

This made me wonder about the history of seatbelts here in the US and abroad. So if you are interested in this kind of thing I am going to pass along what I have found. Try not to fall asleep it is a lot like history class from school with lots of names, dates, and places.

As it turns out the first patent for a seat or safety belt was issued to Edward J Claghorn of New York in 1885. United States Patent #312,085 was granted for a Safety-Belt for tourists, painters, firemen, etc. who are being raised or lowered, described in the patent as "designed to be applied to the person, and provided with hooks and other attachments for securing the person to a fixed object."

In 1911, Benjamin Foulois had the cavalry saddle shop fashion a belt for the seat of Wright Flyer Signal Corps 1. He wanted it to hold him firmly in his seat so he could better control his aircraft as he bounded along the rough field used for takeoff and landing. It was not until World War II that seat belts were fully adopted in military aircraft.

Dr. C. Hunter Shelden In the late 1940s and early 1950s studied the high number of head injuries coming through the emergency rooms. Shelden proposed to the automotive industry his idea of retractable seat belts. American car manufacturers Nash (in 1949) was the first to offer seat belts as options. In 1954 the Sports Car Club of America requires competing drivers to wear lap belts.

The first modern three point seat belt which is still used in most consumer vehicles today was patented in 1955 U.S. Patent 2,710,649 by the Americans Roger W. Griswold and Hugh DeHaven, and developed to its modern form by Swedish inventor Nils Bohlin for Swedish manufacturer Volvo—who introduced it in 1959 as standard equipment and in 1963 Volvo were the first standard in the U.S.

As for rear seatbelts in the US, in 1955 (as a 1956 package), Ford offered lap only seat belts in the rear seats as an option. In 1966 U.S. Congress passes P.L. 89-593, establishing National Highway Safety Bureau (now NHTSA) the following year Volvo started to install lap belts in the rear seats of all US models, while US Automakers began to offer Rear seatbelts. Then In 1972, Volvo was the first manufacturer to upgrade the rear seat belts to a three point belt. Throughout the 1970s most European manufactures began to offer Front and Rear 3-point restraints, by 1979 France mandated seat belts in rear: either 3 lap belts or 3-points at outboard positions and lap belt at center.

In 1970 Victoria, Australia was the first government organization to require 3-point belts, front and rear and mandates their use, front and rear, by 1972 it was law in every state in Australia. In 1985 New York makes belt use mandatory, front and rear; by the 1980s many European Nations and Canada were making it mandatory to use whatever seatbelts were in a given vehicle. By 1991 the European Union made it compulsory use of safety belts in all seats, where fitted.

For the last twenty years the biggest debate about seatbelts has been in school buses. In 1987 New York becomes the first state in the nation to require two-point seat belts on large school buses. By 1995 Great Britain requires seat belts on mini buses used in school transportation, the following year the European Union passed a law requiring 3-point seat belts in all seating positions of minibuses (vehicles of less than 3.5 tons) and at least 2-point belts. Still today in the US seat-belt legislation on school buses is handled on a state by state basis, and as of 2010 only six states, California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, and Texas—require seat belts on school buses. The biggest issue is the cost of converting older buses, manufactures are currently developing and testing seatbelt conversion kits for older buses.

I hope you didn't find this to boring, and that you take the advice of Dr. C. Hunter Shelden and wear your seatbelts they can save your life in an accident. ●



# RACP in Bourgogne

By Marvin McFalls

For more than a decade Jesse Patton and myself had attempted to make contact with Renault Alliance Club Passion without any success. A few years ago François Damide, a Frenchman living in New York, was finally able to gain to break thru the glass ceiling and we began to receive a copy of the clubs newsletter. The club was in transition, with Gerard Gutmann as the new President.

In 2012 I proposed attending their annual meet called the Sortie Nationale. This event takes place every year the last week in June. Each year they have around 20 Alliance and a few other US model Renaults. The event is held in different regions in France. My 2012 request wasn't answered, so I figured it was business as usual with the RACP.

Early in 2013 I made contact with the new president through Facebook, and we quickly confirmed plans for this year's event. Unfortunately I was already committed to a charity event the same weekend, but I decided that I would leave that show early and take the overnight flight to France. So I arrived in Paris Orly Airport bright and early on Sunday morning. This was quite a pleasant surprise as most of you know Paris is generally overcast.

I quickly picked up my rental car and was on my way to Bourgogne a couple hours away. Bourgogne is a region mainly known for its wine. In the US we call it Burgundy. I caught up with the RACP at of all places a museum dedicated to the Peugeot 104. The curator gave us a tour and I was treated like a VIP.

Finally I was able to put the faces to names I would read in club publications as well as e-mails. The first person I met was Vlad the local resident and event coordinator. Vlad is very into US model Renaults as he owns four Medallions, a LeCar, an R18i, R10 and his latest edition is a US model Alpine GTA V6.

Next I met François and Sylvia Perea. François had posted photos of previous event on our website for years. François is a teacher and he has two young children. He owns a black GTA convertible. He had a GoPro camera mounted on his car so he was the club's official videographer.

As the noon hour was fast approaching, we headed to Team Cooking. A funny name for a restaurant as it turns out it is a Renault Sport dealership with a restaurant inside. As it turns out there is only one other Showroom/Restaurant in France. It is the l'Atelier Renault on the Champs Elysée in Paris.

It was now time to for the face to face meet with the President Gerard and his lovely wife Nelly. We sat together in Team Cooking and enjoyed a wonderful meal and pleasant conversation. It turns out Gerard owns two Alliances, a



convertible and a 1987 hatchback. He also (like myself) has a passion for the R4, so we planned to get back together the following weekend to attend the R4 International meet.

After eating I had the opportunity to speak to a few more of the members, as it turned out they had travelled from all over France and as far away as Holland to attend the event. Finally I was able to speak with club Secretary and one of the group's best photographers, Philippe Galaup. Philippe's English was very good, and I could tell he was passionate about his Alliances. Philippe has two Alliance convertible a 1986 and a 1987. Also his daily driver is a Renault Super five so we definitely had a lot in common.

The final stop on the tour was the Chateau de Guedelon. This is a unique site where a medieval castle is being built, just as it would have been done hundreds of years ago. No machinery or power tools. It is projected to take 30 years to complete and is open to the public for viewing. I had a friend visit in 2006, and seven years later it seems like they are on target.

I had a wonderful time with RACP, and hope to be attending next year's event. If you are up for it, it will be the last weekend in June. Contact me for more information. 🍷



# Rear-engined Renaults at the 2013 Western Australian French Car Festival

By John Waterhouse

Rain was forecast for 6th October in Perth, following the wettest September for some 40 years. We've had the odd cold and miserable FCF before, but this year the promise was not delivered. Instead, Perth turned on a great day and we were rewarded with a good turn-out of rear-engined Renaults.

Thanks are due to the hard work of Justin Walker and Patricia Verstappen, and many others, of the recently formed French and Fantastic Car Club, for organising and running the day.

The turnout was excellent with one Dauphine Gordini, one Alpine-Renault A110, one R8 Gordini 1300 (recently imported from South Africa), one Caravelle, one round-eye R10, one square-eye R10, the two R8s that crossed the Nullarbor this year for the Muster at Junee and, finally, Syd Middleton's very original R10S.

We haven't seen four 4CV models in one place for a while in Perth, and there may be 2-3 more next year all being well. This was the first appearance of Patricia Verstappen's newly repaired Acton-built car from New Zealand (at the left), giving our 1951 car, beside it, a welcome friend with 6 "moustaches" for the first time in many years. The metallic blue car is "Elektra", in daily use some 5-6 years after her very nice conversion to battery power. Peter Olsen's lovely pale green 4CV was awarded second place in the "People's Choice" category.

It was great to see all three of the Australian R10 variants at the show. The yellow car, R8 Gordini powered and somewhat modified, looks lovely and has come recently from New Zealand with its South African owner, Harry Thiar. He has owned the car for 35 years and this is its third country of residence. Welcome to Perth Harry!

Tom Reilly's R8 Gordini won the "Dealer's Choice" award for the best Renault. That would have been a tight call, given the first appearance in Perth of a newly purchased right hand drive V6 Clio. That car is one of very few of its type in Australia.

There are several Alpine A110 examples in Perth these days and one Dinalpin from Mexico via New Zealand. Tom Reilly brought his lovely one along, and we hope for more next year! It's always a real pleasure to see an Alpine and, as ever, to marvel at how small they are.

So, all in all it was an excellent day. Thanks to all who brought their cars. ●



# Thirty Years of the Alliance

By Jesse Patton

The other day I went about twenty miles to look over an old Austin 10 Landau convertible for an acquaintance who lives in the state of Washington. Upon arriving at my destination, I was greeted by the owner and seller, who rather forgot what I was there for and stared intently at my Alliance convertible while circling it.

As it turned out this fellow owns a junkyard down in West Virginia and as he went on, he informed me that a lot of the wealth he attained was from wrecking and parting out these Renaults. Never mind that they were a decent vehicle and sold very well early on, in the end they were coming in hot and heavy, either in accidents, or folks wanting them off their property after Junior got through a testosterone rush while confronting the accelerator pedal.

It's the same story out on the road. People have shaken their heads at me while standing at the light waiting for it to change. Rarely do you get thumbs up and that from elderly ladies usually. I drive my Alliances daily, and I appreciate these cars for what I perceive as dependability and that because I maintain, loyally, all of my cars.

I have heard through the grapevine that some of the boys attending the annual Renault gathering at Carlisle, PA come in with their Alliances with non-Renault replacement parts under the hood. I wonder if they made it home all right, and hope they did. An example: I have had a lot of starters and alternators rebuilt. Sometimes they were rebuilt with American innards with the end result that I would be stuck on the road. The rebuilders excuse was that the French replacement parts were getting thin, and they thought they could get away with it. I guess the moral of the story is stick with the real magilla if you can get it.

I have never been online, sometimes a friend will find something for me and my cars online but usually I am on the telephone calling all across the country to parts places, dealers, and other Renault Owners Club members. The end result is that I have several garages filled with spares that sport the lovely Renault Diamond in yellow. I have a weird habit of saving the box or packaging after using the part in my car, and take it to the parts counter at my local Chrysler dealer when buying additional parts. What scares me is that I am now 70 years old. What happens when I can no longer look after my vehicles? Believe me I don't like to think about it.

I have a total of ten automobiles to worry about. I have a '53 Mercury, two '56 Chevys and a '57 Buick, but these come out only every so often. The real workhorses are the Alliances, and as long as I am around they will be taken care of like they were my own children, which they are. Vive l'Alliance! 🟢



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# Swing Axles & Camber Compensators

By Peter Davson-Galle

I am an advocate of the use of transverse leaf camber compensators on swing-axle vehicles like rear-engined Renaults & most Alpines. So, does the CC work in performing its intended function of ameliorating the tendency of swing axles to move to positive camber under lateral load &, via a vicious positive feedback system, jack up the transaxle, thus inducing more positive camber & so on? Yes; & before I explain why, I should first point out that the design is a well-established one (mainly from Formula V) & one key reference outlining and recommending them is an American handling Bible "How to make your car handle" by Fred Phun, which I have sitting somewhere (although, irritatingly, Phun doesn't go into why they work).

Note that the curve of the spring is bowing down, not up. It's not as if the ends of the spring are somehow pushing up against the underneath of the axle tubes & thus resisting them drooping (& a good thing too, there are problems with that idea). So how does it do anything against the move to positive camber? A key thing in understanding why it works is realising that the spring is under considerable tension in static mode. Compare the photo of it untensed under my R8 on the hoist & tensed (near flat) under my 4CV (& realise that the latter, replacement, spring has more natural bow than the R8's). Another thing to realise is where (via its straps over the axle tubes) it applies the force of that tension. It's about half way between trunnion & wheel.

These features mean that a vertical force is applied (via the axle tube as a lever) tending to keep the wheel in negative camber. For it to move into +ve camber means raising the axle tube at the point where the straps of the CC go over the tube & that rise is resisted by spring tension. I set the spring tension (via adjusting strap length) using tall beams of wood on jacks under the ends of the spring & having the spring still under tension at full axle droop. The

R8 in the pic above doesn't comply with that but was in the process of having its normal droop straps shortened. A useful feature for cars with shortened coils is that the leaf acts as an auxiliary spring in bumps without contributing to roll stiffness.



Does it cure the faults of swing axles? - No; but it does ameliorate them.

Is it still wise to raise rear pressures, shorten droop straps, lower the rear to lower C.G. & to have 2-3+ degrees of static -ve camber & widen the track with wider wheels & tyres? - Yes, of course; these measures will further ameliorate the faults of the design. I've done all of these things on my 4CV & most on my R8 but I've had the CC springs on each for thirty five years & this was, with the R8,

without any other modifications in the early part of this period (my mother was still alive & driving it). Even then, it made a difference to the smoothness of the transition on the limit - this is a vehicle that I started fanging when it was first bought in '66 (replacing a '65 that I rolled) and was bog-standard except for raised pressures on its horrible 135/80-15 Michelin X, then ZX, tyres.

Could the spring be mounted more compactly on the transaxle? - Perhaps; but it is intended to be mounted such that it can rock so that as one side goes up, the other goes down - thus lessening stress on the spring mounting

bolt hole during (bump) compression. Hence the V shape of the bracket & the rubber bush between spring & bracket. (See the below R8 photo.) I broke the 4CV's original spring by compressing the rubber bush too much.

It is low - especially if one has -ve camber (my 4 CV has 3+°). Why doesn't the lack of clearance matter much? - There are basically two places one can whack something: on the central mount or along the spring.

The spring is mounted to the bracket by a vertical bolt

so it will pivot in a horizontal plane around that axis of the bolt (at least as far as the straps permit). Given that restraint by straps, it's not a huge arc of travel but it seems enough to avoid damage when I have hit things along the spring somewhere. This has happened about a dozen times over the decades (usually a road kill corpse that I haven't been able to avoid - possums, wallabies & once a wombat, which also bent a front lower front A arm).

The way the arms of the bracket are mounted to side bolts on the transaxle mean that if the bracket is thumped, then it swivels up & to the rear. This rotation is nominally resisted by the thin metal locating/retaining strap (see below) that mounts onto the bell housing but it



is designed to sacrificially bend as the bracket pivots back. I have had this happen a few times over the years - again, mostly road kill corpses but once a bulge in the tarmac & recently a transverse dip taken swiftly (the 4CV is quite low). No drama, one simply removes & bends back that rear strap.

As I've said, it's recommended as one of a suite of changes in amelioration of swing axle vices. There are other devices but these are simple to make & fit (Z-bars are great but awkward to mount on Renaults). Why didn't Renault & Alpine fit them? My guess is: ground clearance. 🟢

## Memory Lane

A little pictorial of old photos from our members.



# The Warrior

By Bart Bealmear

**M**cKinley Thompson Jr., an African American industrial designer, was born and raised in New York City. He knew the road he wanted to travel in life one day in October 1934 when he spotted a silver-grey Chrysler DeSoto Airflow "I was never so impressed with anything in all my life. I knew [then] that that's what I wanted to do in life—I wanted to be an automobile designer."

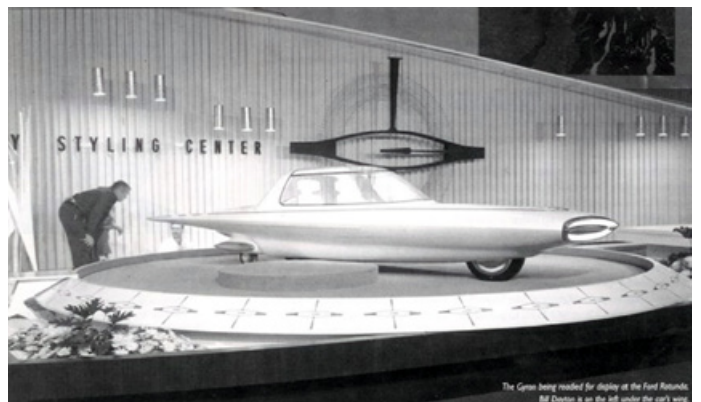
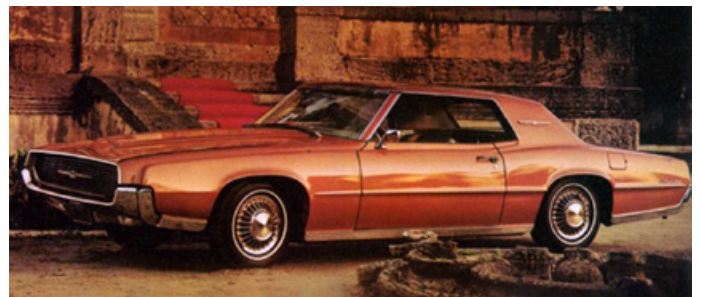
By 1953, Mr. Thompson was a war veteran with a family and a career as an engineering layout coordinator for the Army Signal Corps. He had reached his thirtieth birthday and could have easily settled into a comfortable existence. But he still wanted to be an automobile designer—a life goal he never lost sight of. He decided to enter a contest sponsored by Motor Trend magazine, which he won. He started at the Art Center in Los Angeles that same year, and was the first African American enrolled in their prestigious Transportation Design department. After graduating in 1956, he interviewed for an automotive design position with just one automaker: Ford Motor Company. He got the job becoming the first African American Auto Designer.

He started at Ford's Advanced Studio, where designers worked free from creative restrictions. On his first day, he was told by the Vice President of Ford Design, George Walker, "You can go as far as your talent will take you." Mr. Thompson's early design work included the Light Cab Forward truck, and he contributed sketches for the Mustang and the futuristic Gyron concept car. He also envisioned a forward-thinking project that had the potential to change the world.

In 1965, Mr. Thompson took his innovative idea to Ford: an all-terrain vehicle for the Third World that would have economic and social consequences. He understood that rising countries needed good transportation, and that a vehicle had to satisfy the needs of the population. He knew that like the Model T, his car should be relatively easy to build and maintain, and that production costs must be kept to a bare minimum so he wanted to build the cars where they would be sold. He believed automobile manufacturing would "help develop the economy as it did here in the United States."

The name he chose for the automobile that would make this grand plan possible was "the Warrior." The car was actually intended to be the first in a series of vehicles, including a half-ton pickup truck, a six-passenger bus (an early version of the minivan), as well as boats and containers (buoys, pontoons, etc.). They would be constructed using a strong space age plastic material produced by Uniroyal called Royalex.

Though Ford was very supportive, the company ulti-





mately passed on the project in 1967. Mr. Thompson still believed the car could succeed, and he recruited friends to invest in or assist with developing the vehicle for the African market. One of those friends and investors was Wally Triplett, who had broken a barrier of his own in 1949 as the first African American to play in the National Football League (for the Detroit Lions).

Mr. Thompson rented a garage on Detroit's west side and went about building the Warrior. Still working at Ford during the day, he spent at least six hours a night—plus weekends—on the vehicle. "My family was very good about that. My wife knew how badly I wanted to do this," he recalled. Mr. Triplett assisted, and was the only other individual involved in its construction.

The prototype was modeled on the Renault R-10, a small four-door sedan. Indeed, the Warrior's chassis came directly from a disassembled R-10. Base mechanical components, including the engine, were also incorporated. Renault already had a distribution system overseas, providing a ready-made parts supplier for Mr. Thompson's customers. Mr. Thompson and Mr. Triplett designed and built the tools to form the sections of the body, which were then sent off to Uniroyal, who molded the Royalex plastic.

While major work on the Warrior was complete by 1969, it's likely that modifications were made to the vehicle through the mid-1970s while continued attempts were made to turn the vision into reality. African nations were courted, but instability on the continent derailed those opportunities. As for Ford Motor Company, the automaker—like others—didn't believe the car would sell in large enough numbers to warrant the investment. Mr. Thompson eventually stopped looking for funding, closing up shop on the Warrior in 1979. Still, he kept in touch with his project's supporters, in the event something came up, but alas, "nothing ever came of it."

Nevertheless, Mr. Thompson never lost faith in the Warrior, and kept the car as a leisure vehicle. He took it off-road in Northern Michigan's sand dunes, and drove the car on family vacations. He even used it for running errands, usually attracting a fair amount of attention. Though the Warrior was never mass-produced, Mr. Thompson's many years of driving the prototype proved it was a sound vehicle. The car got a respectable 35-40 miles per gallon on the highway and 25-27 in the city. Maximum speed was 75-80 mph. The Warrior is now a part of The Henry Ford collection.

The Warrior project was ahead of its time in design and philosophy. The use of plastic, so common today, was revolutionary at the time.

Sadly, Mr. Thompson suffered from Parkinson's disease later in life. McKinley Thompson Jr. passed away in 2006 at the age of 83. 🍷



# My Renault Collection, Big and Small!

By Sandee Weiner

I thought I was pretty special having TWO LeCars ... but soon after joining the Renault Owners Club of North America, I figured out it would take a lot more to impress this crowd!

Firstly, we're not here to impress each other or show off at all - we're here because we share a passion for the marque - Renault. Secondly, "collections" come in all sizes - a 2 car garage with 4 LeCars (Clayton Hoover!), and spoken to plenty of other members who have cars tucked away in their friend's garages! My collection includes about 6 or so shelves of toy LeCars, buttons, patches and even jewelry (just a few examples shown here)! I'll never forget seeing my 2 life-size "toys" roll in on the flatbed / in tow. No matter what the size, color or condition - it's pretty special to own even one!

Lastly, I'd like to thank those ROCoNA members who contributed to the CJ Fund last year. I fortunate enough to meet the Hoover family and play a small part in the charity effort - my prize 1983 Renault LeCar Sport once belonged to Clayton, CJ's dad. It doesn't surprise in the least - our community, while passionate about cars, we're compassionate toward those in need.

And, more about me (and my toys) ... [quickie video of my Toy Room](#), 2 articles published in Just a Car Geek about my LeCar restoration project, [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

~ Sandee Weiner, 1982 + 1983 Renault LeCar Sport 🇨🇦



# Sam Stuckey

By Jesse Patton

**O**n February 3, 2014 William Cooper "Sam" Stuckey passed away at the age of 65. He was born in Knoxville, TN, graduated from Powell High School in 1966. His first Job was at Clayton Motors where he was a wiz at repairing Renaults. Over the years I got to know our technical Advisor "Sam the Mechanic", I grew to appreciate his wisdom and knowledge of the Renault automobile. And just how helpful he was when you had a problem with your car.

Besides our interest in Renaults there was another close bond between us as we both served during the War in Vietnam, two tours for me '63-'66, and Sam in '69-'70. I flew rotary wing for the First Cavalry and Sam served in heavy artillery, caliber 175mm, in point of fact.

His crew was firing on a regular basis over into the Laotian border where a series of the Ho Chi Minh trails ran. The firing must have been doing damage because the LZ (landing zone) that Sam served in was overrun by the Vietcong forces. Part of my old outfit, the First Cav, was half a mile away and their attack along with the remains of Sam's unit drove out what was left of the enemy. Sam, being hunkered down and hidden on the battlefield, survived.

That experience and the demons it created never left Sam the same. Sam was service connected due to that action at 100% just like myself. We would talk for hours about how lucky we were. We became close.

Lastly, we both grew up with similar backgrounds. Our Family roots were Southern. Sam's family was part of the Stuckey pecan empire in South Georgia. Close relatives owned the Stuckey Candy Company and the Stuckey's Restaurants that dotted the Eastern U.S. Highways in '60s and '70s. That old boy was a proud Southerner. I'll miss him as all of us who knew and dealt with him will.

Sail on Sam, and soar up high. We will definitely meet again. ●



# The Back Page

Assembly line for the Dauphine, 1959



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