

Renault News

109
Fall/Winter
2014

Gala del Automovil 2014



In this Issue

New Members	3	2014 Western Australian French Car Festival	17
Self-Drive Cars and You	4	Wanted: A LeCar with Glee	18
Brief Parade	8	Work in Progress	19
Clio 2014	9	Voitures Anciennes de Granby	21
Best of France & Italy 2014	10	Breaking the Guinness Record	23
Ed's Jolly	11	Forgotten Fiberglass -SWM Gordini	26
Gala del Automovil 2014	13	Back Page	28

Renault Owners Club of North America

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November 2014 Member Renewals

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December 2014 Member Renewals

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Weaver, Joe

Renault at RCA, Mexico

Photo courtesy Francisco Miranda



Self-Drive Cars and You: A History Longer than You Think

By Gijbert-Paul Berk



Playing scrabble while your car is driving itself on the Turnpike. As early as 1956 the Central Power and Light Company, inserted this 'inspired' advertisement in leading US newspapers. Under the intriguing heading 'Electricity may be the driver', its text read: 'One day your car may speed along an electric super-highway, its speed and steering automatically controlled by electronic devices embedded in the road. Highways will be made safe – by electricity! No traffic jams ... no collisions ... no driver fatigue'.



At its 'Futurama' exhibit in the 1939 New York World Fair General Motors gave the public their first peek at the possibilities of self-driving cars. Visitors were seated in rows above a three-dimensional display showing a futuristic city center with a traffic flow of radio controlled electric automobiles. The 'dedicated' roads with integrated electric cables provided electromagnetic field transmitted the power to propel the cars.

The idea of driverless or autonomous driving automobiles is not new. As early as the mid-1920s inventors experimented with remote controlled radio systems. In 1939 General Motors showed their Futurama exhibit at the New York World Fair to millions of visitors. A major display featured the possibilities of autonomous driving in crowded city centers with electric cars that were powered by circuits embedded in the road surface and controlled by radio waves.



Overview of the mock-up made for the General Motors presentation at the 1939 New York World Fair gives some idea how the exhibit looked. But as this close-up shows, the animation at the Fair was far more life-like. Norman Bel Geddes designed GM's Futurama pavilion.

During the years just before and after WWII, research on self-driving cars mainly concentrated on establishing 'communication' between 'dedicated' roads, equipped with electromagnetic circuits and the cars being driven on them.

As part of such an experiment, in 1958 the Nebraska Department of Roads fitted electric circuits in the pavement of a 400-foot long section of a public highway just outside Lincoln, to allow life size tests and demonstrations with a guiding system developed by RCA in collaboration with General Motors.



A 1958 Chevrolet like the one on the preceding page was probably the first self-driving car in the US. It participated in an experiment carried out that year on a specially prepared new intersection on the outskirts of Lincoln, Neb. Two of these Chevrolet passenger cars were equipped with special RCA (radio Corporation of America) radio receivers and audible and visual warning devices that could activate the steering mechanism, acceleration and braking. Detector circuits buried in the road surface by the Nebraska Department of Roads and a series of lights along the edge of the road determined the place and speed of the vehicles on the pavement and transmitted radio impulses to guide the cars. It was proven that the system worked well.



During the 1960s, the United Kingdom's Transport and Road Research Laboratory did a series of tests with a driverless Citroën DS that interacted with magnetic cables embedded in the road surface of the test track. The test-car was driven at speeds up to 80 mph (130 km/h) in different weather and wind conditions, without any deviation of direction.

During the 1950s research for autonomous driving was mainly concentrated on systems that would allow roads to influence the behavior of cars and so eliminate driver errors. Here we see a display to demonstrate how such a system could work. In 1958 at the initiative of L.M. Hancock, traffic engineer and his director L. N. Ress of the Nebraska Department of Roads, this company molded electric circuits in the pavement of a 400-foot long section of a public highway just outside Lincoln. This made life-size tests and demonstrations possible with a guiding system developed by RCA in collaboration with General Motors.

But the scope of the research changed. The engineers were switching from developing dedicated (or intelligent) road systems to designing robots for dedicated (intelligent) automobiles. This had several reasons: Transforming existing road networks with electromagnetic detecting circuits would involve astronomical costs and few governments could afford

such investments; the incredible advance of computer and robot technology allowed researchers to create small devices that could be fitted on normal production cars; governments and industry joined forces to help and finance R&D centers and universities to realize new ideas.

“Prometheus” funded realistic projects in Europe

With a grant comparable to 749 million of today's Euros, the European Commission was one of the main sponsors of the Eureka/Prometheus (PROgramme for a European Traffic of Highest Efficiency and Unprecedented Safety) project. Both universities and the industry contributed in this project to research of new forms of automated driving that took place between 1987 and 1995.

At the Bundeswehr Universität in Munich, Germany, in 1980 Ernst Dickmanns and his team developed a vision-based robotic guiding system. It was installed in a driverless Mercedes-Benz van and tested on city streets that were closed for other cars. The Mercedes respected all the traffic lights and still averaged 63 km/h (39 mph).



The incredible autonomous-driving VaMP and VITA-2 which the team at the Bundeswehr Universität constructed were based on Mercedes-Benz 500 SEL sedan. From the outside no one could distinguish them from a standard Mercedes. This was a great advantage when testing the cars on public roads. Other traffic was not aware that they were being overtaken by driverless cars.

The next achievement of Dickmanns' team was even more impressive. It was code named VaMP and is considered to be one of the first perfect functioning robot cars, as they were called at that time. In 1994, the VaMP and its twin the VITA-2 (both based on Mercedes-Benz 500 SEL sedan cars) drove autonomously more than thousand kilometers on the Autoroute A1, the dual-lane motorway to the Paris, Charles de Gaulle airport in France.

During their long distance tests VaMP and VITA-2 encountered all kind of traffic conditions and sometimes reached speeds up to 130 km/h. The cars drove autonomously in convoy and separately and waved in and out of traffic lanes, overtaking of other cars, without anyone touching the steering wheel or pedals.



The 'Mille Miglia Automatico'



Here we see the self-driving ARGOS Lancia Thema on an Autostrada in northern Italy, doing the well-publicized 'Mille Miglia Automatico'. This was run at an average speed of 90 km/h (56 mph). But the journey took six days because the team stopped in every city to allow the public a peek at the car and its advanced equipment.

In 1996 as part of the Eureka/Prometheus project, a team at the University of Parma, Italy, led by Professor Bianco and Alberto Broggi (now also a Professor) developed ARGO. This system used two low-cost black-and-white video cameras and stereoscopic vision algorithms that made it possible to 'understand' the 'surroundings' of a car. A slightly modified Lancia Thema, equipped with ARGO technology proved to be able to follow normal (painted) lane markings on unmodified roads. In 1998 collaborators of the University demonstrated its potential during the well publicized 1900 kilometers (1200 miles) long 'Mille Miglia Automatico' on the Autostradas of northern Italy. The car drove with an average speed of 90 km/h (56 mph) over a distance of 1900 kilometers (1200 miles) and during 94% of the distance it operated in a fully autonomous mode.

The US Army Steps In



No it's not Martians landing on earth. This is one of the early self-driving vehicles that participated in the Grand Challenges organized by DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Project), the Pentagon's research agency. During the first of these Grand Challenges, none of the robot cars completed the course. But in the last, held in 2007, six cars made it. By then the course included driving through urban areas and the autonomous-driving vehicles were more or less looking like normal cars. First place was heavily contested between the teams of the Carnegie Mellon University from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Stanford University from Palo Alto, California, the winners of the previous challenge. But after 4 hours 10 minutes and 20 seconds, the robot car of Carnegie Mellon beat them with a lead of 19 minutes and 9 seconds.

In the mid-2000s the US government set the ball rolling again by funding a number of military tests. This allowed DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Project), the Pentagon's research agency, to organize three Grand Challenges, Demo I, Demo II and Demo III. Originally only organizations that had links with the army were allowed to participate but as this excluded universities the rules were changed. Important money prizes (first prize was \$2 million, second \$1 million and third \$500,000) were awarded for unmanned ground vehicles that succeeded to navigate miles of difficult off-road terrain, avoiding obstacles such as rocks and trees. The vehicles also had to follow the indicated route in the shortest possible time. One can very well understand the strategic value of such experiments for the military forces.





Recently Mark Reuss, Chief of Product Development at General Motors, confided to journalists that if Google pursued its development of ADAs (autonomous-driving automobiles), it could become a “serious competitive threat”.

Reuss’s statements were a reaction to Google’s announcement last May that it is building and testing 100 fully autonomous vehicles. These little Google two-seat cars have no steering wheel, a crash-impact proof body and a top speed of 25 miles (40 kilometers) per hour. Google has confided the production of these robot cars will be done by Roush Industries, a specialist company in Allen Park Michigan. Roush manufactures “automotive performance products and alternative fuel systems for fleet vehicle applications,” Up till now Google tested its technology in Lexus and Toyota Prius automobiles.

Not only GM and Google but practically all the major car makers such as Audi, BMW, Ford, Geely, Honda, Mazda,

Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi, PSA (Peugeot/Citroën), Renault-Nissan, Toyota, Volkswagen, and Volvo have announced they are testing and developing ADAs. So are a numbers of leading equipment manufacturers such as Bosch, Valeo, Continental, Michelin and others. Only Chrysler (Fiat) so far seems reluctant to follow the herd. Chrysler’s Dodge division even produced a commercial stating; “We will never let computers drive our cars”.

Protagonists of ADAs believe that they will be the most important revolution of the motorcar industry since Henry Ford introduced his Model T, which gave such a tremendous impulse in the popularization of the use of automobiles. They are convinced that modern technology, which permits planes to fly without a pilot on board (drones) and locomotives to run without a driver, can also take over the functions of the car drivers. This seems logical. However, commercial aircraft, even if fitted with the most advanced automatic pilot system, still requires a captain and co-pilot in the cockpit. In addition, those planes travel through fly zones or corridors that are constantly monitored by air traffic controllers on the ground. Drones as well as driverless locomotives are always operated by remote control from command posts manned by humans.

Egil Juliussen, an analyst at the global information company IHS, predicts that by 2035 there will be 11.8 million self-driving cars on the roads. He expects that in 2050, almost all cars have become self-driving. Lux Research, another independent research and advisory firm, has published a report predicting that by 2030 the total market for ADAs will be worth \$87 billion. The Chinese market alone will then account for \$24 billion. Are these predictions too optimistic?

Whatever the market, it may be the legal hurdles that slow the process down. ➡

Time Passages



A Brief Parade

By Francisco Miranda

The annual House of France Antique Car Parade took place on December 13th. This year was not as busy as in previous years, as it was a last minute confirmation; therefore many people were not able to attend. Nevertheless, we were present with three cars, Alejandro Cortés' 1969 Dinalpin Berlinette A110 and my 1972 Dinalpin A110 GT4 and 1962 Dauphine Gordini. Lorenzo Sendra with his 1959 Peugeot 403 (he is the second owner), German Uribe with a very original R18 1600 cc engine, factory original and Mr. Serge "N" (sorry, didn't catch his last name) with another Peugeot disguised as a French 60's taxi. German Uribe bought this 1981 R18 new for his wife and it was delivered directly at Renault's factory in Ciudad Sahagún. They had kept it all these years mostly original, as he had to replace the automatic transmission for a manual one.

Once in the House of France, Gerardo Zapata, one of the organizers and car enthusiast, was expecting us there, as his car, the 1962 Citroen DS19 does not have yet the antique car license plates and has to observe the government's ecologic regulations and restrictions of circulation. Teodoro Hernández Jr., drove the green Dauphine, as his red GT4 also had to observe the restrictions.

The parade was brief but, as in previous years, nice for the passersby who admire the cars escorted by a patrol car and two motorcycles. All the way you hear nice comments and also many pictures are taken. At arrival, they were holding the entire House of France front reserved for us to park. Last year we parked at the location's parking lot, but this year they enlarged the bazaar as you can see in the pictures. Many French products are for sale, like wines, cheese, health and beauty products, assorted breads and pastries, cakes, etc. A nice opportunity to get some Christmas gifts

They offered us some delicious baguettes and French Beaujolais wine, so we spent a very nice early afternoon sharing with friends. We hope they reach their expectations for the event and hope they keep making it for many years to come. 🇫🇷



Clio 2014

By Francisco Miranda

November 3rd was the much expected date of a new Renault delivery. The new Clio RS.

Alejandro Konstantonis kindly invited me to the public presentation of the new Clio at the Universidad dealer, which incidentally, was the first dealership in the return of Renault to the country back in 2001.

The Clio RS was in doubt it could be sold in Mexico, as the tests were showing some power problems only 7 months before, but luckily, the engineers found a way to solve the initial problems and it's being sold as of that day.

Angel Espinosa, an Alpine Club member was the lucky person to get the very first sale done. As you can see in the pictures, he was very happy indeed with one of the 150 cars set to be sold this year. They were displaying also his vintage Fuego and his Dinalpin Berlinette. After a month's time of ownership, he says he is most delighted with the car's performance and very happy with the comments he receive from friends, comparing the car, for example, with the Golf GTi which is so restricted from the European model as far as accessories and special equipment, so the car does not performs like the European models. Instead the European Clio made in Dieppe, is been sold as any European model, fully equipped.

He is impressed with all the technology the car has, what we are usually get from Renault, great advances at a reasonable price. He likes the sequential automatic gear box, very intelligent especially in the downward gear change, which automatically changes gears to slow down the car. Angel says it is a disguised F1 car! Technology is found everywhere, even in the exhaust diamantado or diamond grinding pipes, that allows you to change the flow of gases, to make it more sport, etc.

Price \$ - 394000.00 MXP (around \$26,500 USD)

During the presentation, Alejandro Konstantonis as a recognized Renault expert, was asked to make questions to get a free t-shirt for the people in the audience. He made sure to ask difficult ones, so only for the real passionate connoisseur won one of the 5 available. Many people entered the contest and surprisingly all questions were answered. 🏆



Best of France and Italy 2014

By Sharon Desplaines

It's time again for another Italian French Car Show update, 2014.

This year Jacques decided he wanted to drive Butterpat his 4CV. Well some of you may remember what has happened on previous trips where I was required to push him and Butterpat up the Grapevine. I even remember once that Jacques and Marvin were both in the car while I was pushing. Well no more, those days are gone.

This year I drove my car and followed Jacques in case of an emergency. Unfortunately we didn't make prearranged stops and except for the one time we did meet up in Corona.

I'll never understand but Jacques made it to Frazier Park before me without any problems. Thank you Jonathan for your mechanical expertise or this would have never happened.

I had talked Jacques into taking a few extra days to get some much-needed R&R at Dene and Pat's. The weather was great compared to the hot San Diego weather we had left behind. I even got to see some much wanted/needed snow on the mountain tops. Unfortunately not anywhere enough for the bad drought they are having.

As usual we had our spaghetti dinner with Shin and Michiko as our guests. It was enjoyed by all.

On Sunday morning we took our rendezvous to Jerry's Deli in Van Nuys and met up with other friends and members for the annual breakfast. It's always good to see everyone. We then headed for Woodley Park and the car show.

As usual there were many great and beautiful cars, even Jay Leno showed up after a two year "NO SHOWS" in a row. I think I can say a good time was had by all.

Hope maybe to see some of our other members new and old at next year's show. The show is held the first Sunday in November and we will try to get the information in the issue prior to the show in 2015. Their site is usually up a few months prior so that you can check out the "Best of France and Italy" Woodley Park in Van Nuys, CA. See you there! 🍷



Ed's Jolly

By hcritz7@gmail.com

I recently started a restoration on a 1961 Resort Car. This is my first Renault restoration, so it will be a learning experience. I have done quite a bit of work on the Citroen based Maserati cars...so not my first French Connection.

After looking at the car and seeing it's condition we decided it was a good candidate for a total restoration and the owner was up for it. It was running... but no brakes... a really badly done paint job... and some less than stellar bodywork on the rear valence and passengers front corner. All in all it's not in bad condition with almost no rust. It appears to have 13,000 miles on the clock and spent most of its life in the Houston, TX area.

I started deconstruction last week and have made pretty good progress. We will go through all the mechanical systems and repair and replace as required. I'll post pictures as it proceeds. At this point the car is pretty much totally disassembled and I've started cleaning up the major components. The gearbox had a bit of noise in first gear so it's getting a close inspection to see if there is any kind of damage there.

On the next page are a few pics of the progress. This is the starting point, a few shots of the deconstruction:

The engine and gearbox were both quite dirty and greasy. I've made the first pass of cleaning.

All the steel parts will get hot dipped and media blasted.

I'm not sure the engine block is the correct color...although I originally thought the blue might have been factory...I did find some of the olive drab color paint on the head...so guess it was repainted at some point.

On the rear firewall under the insulation there was the # 19 hand painted...wondering if this maybe is the 19th one converted?

The trans checked out good...tearing the engine down now for a freshen up...fix a big dent in the oil pan and get it painted back the correct color.

53 years of grease and crud removed...
Got most of the big dent out of the oil pan.
Head torqued and valves adjusted...
Ready for some pretty green paint.

A quick update on the Resort Car...

I'm continuing to make some progress on the little Renault...I have the engine reassembled and painted although I'm not happy with the color...will give that one more shot to see if I can get the color correct.



I dropped off all the suspension parts and other steel bits to be hot tanked...they will go to be media blasted if they need any rust removal. We are still looking for someone to dip the body shell...the guy that was somewhat local no longer does it due to all the EPA and Gov. regs. There are several other options...I'm talking to a guy that does wet blasting with crushed glass. I still afraid of warped metal panels!

I just started to clean up the steering rack and found a bit of fun history...looks as though whoever assembled it put their initials on it in Shellac. LOL C.M. We are guessing it must have been Claude Monet! 🎨



Gala del Automovil 2014

By Francisco Miranda

Once again La Gala del Automovil took place in early November, at Jajalpa. The Federación Mexicana del Automovil Antiquo with Lorenzo Sendra as organizer/ coordinator of the event, did a very fine job, gathering some 400 cars, most of them in great shape from 30 clubs of different makes. Something delightful to enjoy! The official figures mentioned an affluence of 10,000 visitors during the event.

We met a Carlos Calvillo's house early on Saturday to ride together to the location which is around 50 kilometer (31 miles) away. The fun starts there as we cue up to the highway. A funny detail is that at a stop sign, a new Ferrari stopped at the right of Goñi's Berlinette and two passersby were admiring more the old car than the new much more expensive car!

We had a nice parking spot, close to the Gordini and Mexico clubs, right outside the officer's club, so we were constantly visited by many friends of other makes.

This year the club's officers voted for José Miguel Diaz Goñi car. He has been working into it and the car looks very nice and tidy. Unfortunately he was out of the country to receive the honors, but his son was enjoying the ride without any mechanical faults and the big round of applause.

- The Best American was granted to the 1959 convertible Chevrolet Impala.
- The Best European went to the 1957 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint.
- The Best of Show went to the 1939 Mercedes 320D Cabriolet.

All in all, a nice two day car weekend, where tasty German sausages and beer are sold, as well as many other types of food including an international restaurant for the more demanding palates!

The Gala is a nice event that invites us back each year! 🇲🇽









2014 Western Australian French Car Festival

By Paul Markham, Photos by John Waterhouse

Rain was forecasted and man was it delivered. This turned out to be another odd cold and miserable French Car Day in Perth, but despite the wet, windy and wild weather Six 4cvs braved the weather (Special thanks to: Peter O. Tony B. Brian D. Dave W. Stef B. & John W. We haven't seen Six 4CV models in one place for a very long time in Perth, and there may have been a 7th if not for weather.

While good weather was not delivered. Those that braved the conditions were rewarded with a good turn-out of rear-engined Renaults. Besides the 4cvs we also had Four very rare Renaults, Two A110s, a Caravelle, and a South African R10 Alconi. The day finished about 3 hours early. 🌧️



Wanted: A LeCar with Glee

By Marvin McFalls

On a regular basis I get interesting calls, of people looking for Renaults. Generally it is to buy, but occasionally they want to rent one. Either for a wedding or a movie or TV filming. Recently I received one of these calls from a guy name David Gerry he is the Car Coordinator for the TV Show Glee. It turns out in Season One of Glee, The anti-hero Sue Sylvester played by Jane Lynch made mention of having a classic car: a "Le" Car.

I told Davo, as he prefers to be called, that LeCar have become quite rare in California due to the smog law that requires cars to have factory type exhaust components. None the less I knew we had an excellent example at last year's Best of France and Italy show. It was early model round headlight car painted bright yellow, the car screamed 1970s. However no one seemed to know who the owner was. After a little

detective work I found out the car belonged to Michael Harper Smith. Michael is a well-known collector of European cars and motorcycle. In order to maintain his collection he rents them out to movie companies. You can learn more about Michael's collection at www.eurofilmcars.com

Well the long and the short of it I hooked up Davo with Michael and after Hollywood is done, Michael's LeCar will be introduced to a new generation of fans later this season.

However as a side effect, my pleas for help also introduced me to Anthony Connell. It turns out Anthony is another LeCar Freak. He is from Hemet, California. Anthony owns three LeCars both a black and white four-door, and his pride a joy Cozy Coupe replica racer that he uses for LeMons racing. I invited Anthony to bring one or more of his rare birds to the Best of France and Italy this year, so hopefully we will be able to meet Anthony and check out his collection. 🚗



Nome, Alaska, 1965.

I don't think the Eskimo children have noticed that rare Dauphine, might be the photographers car?

Postcard courtesy mcarpedi.com



Work in Progress

By Peter Rogers

I have recently purchased a 1954 Renault 750 and live in Wendouree which is a suburb of Ballarat Victoria Australia. Ballarat is about 100 kilometres north of Melbourne.

My friends know that I have always wanted a 750 since early 1960 when I first saw one. A young panel beater /painter came to St Arnaud my home town to work for the local panel shop. He drove an early 750 with star wheels.

Some months after he arrived he had the misfortune to overheat the engine. A mechanic friend of mine and I overhauled the engine for him one week end. After driving the car on a road test I knew that I would like to have one someday.

After getting married and raising a family all thoughts of getting a 750 were put on hold.

About ten years ago I started looking for one without success. In desperation I purchase a Dauphine Gordini, a great little car but it was not what I wanted so I sold it to a fellow called Bob Watson who in his younger days rallied Renault cars and later drove Super Cars as co-driver to Peter Brock one of Australia's top drivers.

When we first came to Ballarat I noticed this 750 being driven by an older gentleman. I don't think he ever drove it over 30 MPH. After his death a Solicitor purchased the car and used it for club outings.

The new owner had work carried out on the upholstery and the car resprayed, not an excellent job but serviceable.

About ten years ago the car unfortunately suffered an overheating problem and was taken to a local workshop where after dismantling the cylinder head and radiator were sent to specialist shops for repair and new 850 sleeves and pistons were ordered along with a gasket set and kingpins.

Before assembly took place the owner was diagnosed with a serious illness and told the garage proprietor that he did not want to go ahead with the repair. The garage proprietor purchased the car.

At the time I approached him about buying the car, he said it was not for sale as he wanted to restore it for himself. I told him that if you ever change your mind I would be interested.

I called in to his workshop at least once a year to see if he had started work on the car. In July 2014 the garage proprietor rang me and asked if I still wanted the Renault. I was fortunate the owner gave me all the new parts that he had purchased.



The transmission was still in the car so it could be wheeled around easily.

The car was jacked up, transmission out, mud guards off, front suspension dismantled and the big job of cleaning sixty years of grease and dirt from under the car was under way. Painting the under body was completed prior to fitting the kingpins and overhauling the brakes.

The next job was to have the cylinder block modified to accept the 850 sleeves. At the time of writing this the engine and transmission assemble is back in the car.

Fortunately, the upholstery is in good condition, and a shampoo will make it like new. A friend who is a painter is going to wet rub & buff the paint and touch up where necessary. Both bumper bars are in very poor condition. Club member Jacques Lynn is arranging to freight a pair of new one out to me.

This car is equipped with a sun roof which other Renault owners say is unusual for cars shipped to Australia. It also has the genuine suitcase shaped to fit the boot with it.

What more could a worn out retired Motor Mechanic wish for in his retirement than to restore a 750 Renault? The Renault Club of Australia is holding a Muster at Forbes New South Wales at Easter 2015. If all goes to plan, I hope to have it ready to attend.

I would be pleased to communicate with any of your members and exchange information. My email address is :-
Peterrog415@gmail.com



Voitures Anciennes de Granby

By Marvin McFalls

Each year, the last weekend in July the small town of Granby Quebec, host the largest car show in Canada the Granby International. On Saturday and Sunday 3000 cars invade the town about hour east of Quebec. It is open to any vehicles first come first serve when they reach capacity they turn away late comers. So it is important that you arrive early and if you want to display your vehicle with friends or a club you must come together. Organizers try to put cars with similar origins together, but once an area is full it is difficult to fit a late arriver in.

So after much discussion at this year's Carlisle meet we decided that we would attend Granby on Saturday. Matt Cotton drove his R16 up from New Jersey arriving Friday afternoon, and I planned to fly in Friday evening. After several hours being delayed in New York, Matt and Nicolas Rampette Reichenbach picked me up at the airport. After a short but good rest we awoke at 5:30AM to leave for Granby.

Being that it was summer time my good friend Jean-Francois Bourque, who owns a Vespa shop wasn't able to attend, so he lent me his fabulous R16. So off Matt, Nicolas, and myself went in the two R16s, and Nicolas' 1987 R4 former French police car. We made our way thru the sleepy streets of Montreal to Rendezvous with more Renault friend with their cars. At this stop we picked up Four LeCars. The group was led by local Renault mechanic Stephane Larivee and his wife Claire in the R5 Alpine, Nathalie Perreault in her silver LeCar, As well as David Hebert in Vincent Poirier's LeCar. Also along for the ride was Manic GT owner Simon Lavalliere. All of these folks had joined us in Carlisle, but we were also introduced to Andre and their young daughter in the Red LeCar with a sunroof.

So after the introductions we jumped on the freeway and headed for Granby. Just outside of town we stopped at the Hotel Granby where we expected to meet Terrence Gnesko, and Paul Pietrzyk, Terrence in his early US model LeCar and Paul in his Red Alliance GTA convertible. However we were also joined by three more LeCars owned by locals Serge Gingras with the LeCar Sport and Julie Champagne in a red LeCar, The eighth and final LeCar in our group was a blue four door owned by Rene Lupien.

We then convoyed our 12 Renaults thru the streets of Granby lead by Serge. Being a local he took us down several side streets and back alleys, until we came onto the main avenue, just outside the entrance to the show. We quickly made our way into the show and were directed to the import section where we carved out a spot for all our Renaults. After hanging the club banner and taking the group photo, we decided to check out the swap meet area which made up about one third of the show area.

On one of the first rows we went down I saw an electric toy Vespa. Since J-F had lent me his car, I figured this might be a



good gift to display in his shop. After finding out the price, we decided to check out the rest of the swap meet. Terrence, Paul, and I walked for what seemed like hours. Both Paul and Terrence bought steering wheel locks for their Renaults. While I couldn't get the little scooter out of my head, but for now we decided to head back to the cars and have some lunch. When we arrived we saw that the lucky thirteenth Renault had arrived! A beautiful white Fuego Turbo owned by Richard Milot.

After a fabulous meal that Nicolas' father in law had picked up at a Vietnamese deli, Stephane and I decided to go back to the swap meet and try to buy that scooter for J-F. I guess the heat had gotten to the vendor as he was willing to come down on the price, and we were the proud new owners of a Vespa. Steph was so proud he wanted to take her for a spin, but he gained his composure before breaking it.

We spent the next few hours talking Renaults with each other and the public. Our display was constantly covered with spectators, one guy must have spoken to Matt for at least two hours. We met several people that own or had owned Renaults including one guy who had a Manic GT he was getting restored. By 3PM we began to pack up, the day had flown by.

At 3:30 we caravanned out of the show causing quite a stir among the French Canadian crowd. Again we took some side roads back to Serge's house for a BBQ and happy hour. I had brought the bottle of wine I was given when I had visited France the previous summer, this seemed an appropriate time to open and share with French-speaking friends. Serge and his family had put together a marvelous spread, and after we lined up all the cars for a group photo. We had to head back to the city for dinner with J-F and other friends.

After sitting in traffic for a while we finally made it back to the city. Since J-F sells Vespa he met us at a nice Italian restaurant. We were joined by Jocelyn Harvey and his wife. Jocelyn owns a gorgeous 204 Peugeot. After a great dinner we went on a late night driving tour of the city. Matt and myself rode with J-F in the R16, while Nicolas and Jocelyn followed in the R4 and Peugeot. After driving all over the city we headed up to get a scenic view from above. It was a perfect night and what a view.

At this point we said good night to Jocelyn and returned to the Restaurant where Matt picked up his car and J-F had left his Trabant. At this point I said farewell to Matt and Nicolas and I followed J-F to his house. After a good night's rest, J-F and I talked for a few hours before heading back to the airport. It had been a fabulous weekend, just wish I could have spent more time. Next year we are planning to return to Granby hopefully by Renault. It is very accessible from the Tri-state area as well as New England. 🇫🇷



Breaking a Guinness Record

By Francisco Miranda

Sunday October 5: As we mentioned in a previous article, The Antique Car Federation, along with the City's Government and The History Channel, organized an event to break the Guinness Record for a "Classic and Old Car Parade" that held Holland since 2002 with 948 vehicles. As a requirement, cars needed to be at least 30 years old.

A party day for the city's inhabitants (for some, that is) that flanked the 5.6 kilometer long parade (3.5 miles), and as you can see in the picture, thousands of people gathered to have a good time (authorities rate them in 250,000+). Even the weather treated us nicely, as in previous days it had been raining, but that Sunday was sunny enough to have a warm day, but a bit cloudy to enjoy more than 3 hours of the event.

Cars were arranged in different groups, depending in the manufacturing year, and we were assigned to 5 different parking streets (exits) that converged at Paseo de la Reforma, the main city's avenue. This meant that our "Alpine/ Renault/ Others" contingent was separated and incredible so, there were so many cars and people everywhere, that we couldn't see the other group's cars anywhere. Also, it was impossible to photograph the other side of the Avenue, or step down of the car to take more detailed pics.

In an event of such magnitude, the organization was somewhat complex. Many cars were not accounted in the final count, as they ran out of transponder decals. Nevertheless, the record was met and easily surpassed with 1721 cars. The city's mayor gave the news on his twitter account as happened.

How the day started: The club's friends gathered at a Starbucks coffee shop to start from there. This time some decided to drive other makes, like Fernando Maqueo who drove a Ford Maverick, Arturo Arevalo a VW bug, Jose Carlos Méndez an Isetta, José Miguel Goñi a VW Kombi and Guillermo Acosta a Mini. The club's regulars, Carlos Calvillo with a Floride, Teodoro Hernández with a Dinalpin A110L-GT4, Alejandro Cortés with a new two headlight' red A110 Berlinette, Alberto González with an R18 GTX and me, the three Dauphines, driven by Teodoro's son and Jaime Hernández. Alejandro Konstatonis was driving the silver Dauphine, so this time I was able to enjoy the ride from the passenger seat.

During the parade it is gratifying to hear the people's questions and comments on the cars, like admiring the restoration and conservation, or just simply sharing their opinions or the memories they have on the model. On the other hand, other drivers like to make rather loud noises with their engines and funny (?) horns but then again, there are different tastes for such kind of vehicles, usually big modified V8's.

At the end of the parade, we headed south to Colonia Condesa, but traffic was quite heavy anywhere you turned



your head. Of course we were in part responsible for the long traffic jams, but even before the car parade, a runner's race was held in the morning. So most of the day this usually affluent avenue, was kept closed by the authorities. Anyway, we managed to arrive to the restaurant, a nice pizza place, where Mauricio Peña was already dealing with the accommodation of the large party expected. They managed to seat almost everyone at one large table and a few other late comers had to seat in adjacent tables, being such a large group of more than 20 and without reservations on a Sunday! Then at about 7 PM the rain finally fell on us and quite heavy! It was a big storm that caused many problems all-around the city. I left earlier and while riding the freeway, there were moments that I couldn't see anything, as the speed of the wipers, was just not coping with the storm. Another problem was other cars overtaking me, making waves that made me feel as if the Dauphine was floating! Luckily no harm was done and I arrived home safe and sound. A couple of hours later, Teodoro and Jaime arrived and they told me they had to take alternate routes to get to my place, because of the flooding and closed streets.

Mission accomplished... we had a great day, had fun, saw beautiful cars, got to see many friends. On top of this, the World Guinness Record is here in Mexico. Can't wait to see the special TV broadcast on the History Channel. 🇲🇽





Forgotten Fiberglass - The SWM Gordini

By Geoff Hacker

There are so many interesting cars out there to find – and much to the continued surprise of both Rick D’Louhy and myself – these cars keep popping up. Take the SWM Gordini built by the Mannl Brothers of Germany in the 1960s. An interesting story with an American twist.

As we began our research on the name plate – SWM Gordini – not much came up on the radar. In fact, nothing at all. We continued our research and sent out photos to several folks, but it was researcher extraordinaire Erich Schultz who recently put two and two together. “It’s all in the wheels....” he said. Let me explain.

Trying to decompose the car means you begin to look at the sum of its parts – which in this case starts with a custom designed race car body sitting on a Renault based chassis. Apart from the body everything seemed “Renault” which made sense since “Gordini” was a name mostly associated with Renault from the 60s through the 70s.

When we first heard about this car I was fascinated. Most of you know the Renault based Covington Sharks that I’ve had for so many years. But even though I’ve had them so long, Renault is a very rare choice for a custom-built sports car in America and abroad because its born of unibody construction.

Taking the body off isn’t hard – it requires a saw – and lots of time. But what’s left typically needs a great deal of strengthening and it’s just so much easier to start with a car with a frame – then takes the body off and build from there. That’s why most Porsche specials really only have the drivetrain and brake parts. Few cannibalize the chassis as described above. It’s hard and painful to watch.

So, Rick and I jumped at the mystery car and began the research. But we didn’t get far until I shared a bit of info with Erich. See, the wheels were a mystery to me – they’re a four bolt pattern. Renaults always are 3 bolt patterns – at least in the 60s. And when I told Erich that the wheels had the letters BMW on them, it put Erich’s mind and energy into motion. For it was from his initial research that he shared with me, the words SWM BMW and see what you get.” And I did. I guess I still have a lot to learn about research

Just one car was shown via a google search and this was the 1965 SWM BMW Sports Racing Prototype. It had been in an auction, but (thankfully for us), it didn’t sell and the owner, Wolfgang Kraus, was readily reachable. The ultra-rare SWM-BMW is one of six similar sports-racers built by brothers Stefan and Wenzel Mannl in the early/mid-1960s. Featuring a glassfibre body, the SWM was developed for racing on airfields and hill climbs. Powered by a 700cc BMW boxer engine. To the owners knowledge this is the last of the SWMs remaining in ‘complete’ condition.



It turns out that Wolfgang had made contact with the Mannl Brothers when he first acquired his car about 10 years ago. And all of the cars they built (6-7) were custom chassis/BMW powered cars except one – their last one. This one was a special-bodied sports car / race car that was more powerful than their previously powered BMW cars and one that used an existing Renault Eight chassis.

This last car appears to have been an attempt to create a sports/race car that they could put in production – one based on the popular and powerful Renault Gordini drivetrain and something that would allow them to create a small number of identical cars for sale. This prototype features a standard R8 956cc engine.

According to Wolfgang, the bank pulled the plug on financing the project (still researching why) and the final SWM sports/race car built was the SWM Gordini. And soon after the car was completed, the brothers sold the car. It was taken to a market/event to sell and an American serviceman bought it. It was shipped from Germany to America and was never seen again until 2014.

The car surfaced in New Mexico and was made available to Forgotten Fiberglass, at which time research began – and research continues to this day. Last we spoke to Wolfgang, he was going to try and track down the brothers for us. They would be quite elderly now, and he hasn't heard from them in years. One he believes was in Germany and the other in the Canary Islands.

Anyone with any information on the SWM Gordini, please contact us, and if anyone want to help us figure out what the missing windshield came from? There were shards of glass in the cockpit, but that's as far as we've gotten. Hope you enjoyed the story, and until next time.

Glass on gang...

About Geoff Hacker:

Geoff Hacker is an automotive historian and is researching the history of vintage fiberglass cars with his good friend Rick D'Louhy. Both are working on a book called Forgotten Fiberglass. He can be reached at: geoffrey@forgottenfiberglass.com 📧



The Back Page

Why complain about the snow back East when you can have fun in Andorra with a rear-engined Renault Dauphine for a maximum grip! *Postcard courtesy mcarpedi.com*



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