

Renault News

FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN RENAULT ENTHUSIAST | WINTER 2019 | 119



FRANCE & ITALY 2019

Renault Owners
Club

 OF NORTH AMERICA



winter 2019 | **IN THIS ISSUE**

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Best of France and Italy 2019

by Kurt Triffet



It was a beautiful November day for this year's annual Best of France and Italy, at Woodley Park in Van Nuys, CA. We met up for our traditional club breakfast at Jerry's Deli attended by yours truly, Dene & Pat Barrett, Jock Lynn, Sharon Desplaines, Brett Bartley & Denise Shiveley, Rex Parker, Chris Davidson, Allen Meyer, Jordan, and Bruce (sorry about no last names). We probably had a few strangers that just sat at our table for the free breakfast.

Once at the show, our massive Renault area filled up with a whopping two cars, certainly not attended as well as previous years. My Caravelle needed a little TLC for the drive, so could not make it this year.

There were two Alpines there, but the owner (not a club member) chose to show his cars in a special "Vintage Car" area (well, excuse me). Ironic, since 90% of the cars at the show were vintage. Super nice cars, so worth the hike over to that area.

Don Contreras brought his 1967 Caravelle, which always nice to see because his family bought it new. He does a little more to it every year. We also had a very nice R10 this year (and once again, my failing memory prevents me from remembering the owner). A Dauphine was rumored to have been in the parking lot (to avoid paying the show fee), but I didn't see it until later in the day when it was speeding (if you can call it that) away. In fact, the overflowing parking lot was filled with many classic cars.

The R5 Turbo people always have a few cars here, and this year was no exception. They, too remained in their own enclave, away from the ROCONA plebeians.

Despite the dearth of club Renaults, this was an amazing show with some great cars. Comedian and car guy Jay Leno showed up, as he always does, in something old, odd, and fun that made a lot of noise. Did not catch the make and marque of that beast (and it's not shown on his collection list), but perhaps one of you can identify it.

Enjoy the pix! 📷











French Revolution 2019

by Marvin McFalls, photos: David C. Holzman

Each summer, as the high temperatures persist in Tennessee, I begin looking forward to the last weekend in September, and my annual pilgrimage to Boston, Massachusetts. Boston is like a home away from home, as I have family from and have traveled there my entire life. For the first time last year, I attended the Boston Cup Car Show on the Boston Common surrounding the Parkman Bandstand. The Boston Cup is a car show open to all marques and years but primarily caters to European cars. The best spots are first come first serve and when the outer ring is full additional cars are forced to park behind until they reach capacity. So it is important that you arrive early on. Organizers try to classify cars with similar origins together, but once an area is full it is difficult to fit in a late arrival. Last year, local Renault guru Nick Dimopoulos, joined me at the show and we discussed the idea of putting together a display for next year's event.

Back before Carlisle, Nick and I had hoped to work out the details for the first ever Renault Club Gathering in New England. However, we failed to work out all of the details in time so we decided to make the event open to all French cars. Nick traveled to the Citroen Rendezvous in New York in June to encourage participation in this inaugural event. Nick put his nose to the grindstone and overcame all the hurdles to get the word out about the French Revolution Car Show of New England. I flew into Boston, Thursday, September 26th, Nick and George Dimopoulos picked me up at the airport and brought me to their house in Danvers. George lent me his Renault Encore and I headed into the city to visit with family.

After only a few hours rest, I returned to Danvers and met up with Nick, as we had to work out the final details for the Saturday afternoon drive to the New Hampshire beaches, as well as pick up all the food for Saturday's picnic. We then went back to Nick's house to meet up with his son George and loaded up everything in his truck for Saturday's main event.

After another short but good rest I awoke at 5:30AM. By 7:00AM I had arrived at Endicott Park back in Danvers. I was soon joined by Nick in his 1972 R17 TS, and George driving the 1983 LeCar in R5 Alpine trim Also joining them was Nick's Wife Kathy driving his truck, and Sandy Lea who drove his five door Encore up from New Jersey. Sandy had stopped for coffee and it was quite popular as we waited for the park ranger to open

the main gate. By 7:30 we were starting to wonder, but the ranger soon arrived to open the gates. We did not have to wait too long until another volunteer arrived, as Nick Chennell had made the drive in his GTA convertible from New York. We quickly laid out the show area, then began setting up the registration table, which was operated by Nick's daughter Felicia. While we were working on that, Sandy returned to the park entrance to put up event signs to guide attendees to our location.

It was not long before all of Nick's hard work paid off, as cars from all over New England and beyond started rolling in with French cars. States represented in the show included: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Rhode Island. Nonetheless, this event could not be contained to only the United States, as we had an international group from Quebec which was led by Mr. Renault Quebec, Stephane Larivee. He was driving an incredible Renault 16, along with Nicolas Reichenbach in his retired Gendarmarie Renault 4l, as well as Jean-Benoit Couture driving his Renault Alliance Convertible. Other Renaults displayed included Jon Bourque's Fuego from Maine and Charles Gould brought his 4F delivery van in Michelin trim from nearby Newton.

Also in the Other French class were two Renault powered vehicles. Eddie Palaghita from New York brought his Dacia 1300 and the Eagle Premier of Garrick Costa and Jody Carahan traveled the furthest from Canton, Ohio. The Breakdown of other French marques goes as follows: Eight Citroens including: four 2cv, and two each DS and CX, as well as four Peugeots including two 505 Wagons, as well as a pair of convertibles, one a 404 and the other a 504.

As the owners of all the different French marques intermingled, Nick and Kathy worked on getting the BBQ ready. As they did that I helped everyone with filling out and collecting the people's choice car show ballots. Following a great feast with nearly fifty guests, we sat around eating Renault shaped cookies made by Kathy and Felicia. With everyone's stomachs full, it was now time for the awards. The results were as follows:

- **Best Renault** – Renault 16 – Stephane Larivee - Mirabel, QC, Canada
- **Best Peugeot** – Peugeot 504 Cabriolet - Mark Di-amond – Arlington, MA
- **Best Citroen** – Citroen 2CV – Peter and Joyce-



West Newbury, MA

- **Best Other French** – Eagle Premier – Garrick Costa and Jody Carahan – Canton, OH
- **Best Original** – Citroen CX Ambulance – Jeff Brown – Delmar, NY
- **Best In Show** – Citroen DS Decapitable – Lance & Michaela Hellman – Portsmouth, NH/Boston, MA

Next, all the Renault Owners made the short drive to Nick's family's former Renault dealership less than a mile away. We had stopped by the previous day and learned that nearly a century ago the building was a factory for the Romer Motors Corp. Then half a century ago, it became the local Renault dealer, so we attempted to turn it into a Renault dealer once again by parking all our cars in front of the building. With a little help from Photoshop we covered up the current owner's body shop and put a period Renault sign on the building. While the whole operation was a little disorganized, the results speak for themselves.

With the photo opportunity completed we next went for a second dessert at a local Ice Cream shop, then started the forty-five minute drive to New Hampshire. Our first stop was in Hampton Beach. Then we made our way to the more upscale Rye, where we lined up all our cars along the ocean for another great photo opportunity, then we returned to Hampton Beach to explore the boardwalk and have a nice dinner before calling it a day.

Sunday again started at 5:30AM for me. I had a much shorter drive to the Boston Common so I went in early to line up all the cars. We had two displays; the main was inside the fenced off area around the Parkman Bandstand and the other was near the summit of the hill where most spectators entered the show. In the official display were Nick's Renault 17 TS, as well as Eddie's Dacia and Garrick and Jody's Eagle Premier. Also prominently displayed were Lance & Michaela's Citroen DS convertible and Jean Pierre's Citroen Traction Avant. In the outside display were Nick's LeCar, George and Sandy's Encores, and Jeff's Citroen CX Ambulance.

With picture perfect early fall New England weather, nearly 25,000 people attended this year's Boston Cup, including my aunt Janice Neudorfer, who spent the afternoon with me and my car friends. As the awards time neared, we were hopeful that the French Cars would do well in the Special Interest Class they were entered in. Happily, the class winners were Lance & Michaela's DS convertible and runner-up went to Jean Pierre's Traction Avant. So we all left the Common in a very good mood. Plans for next year's French Revolution Car Show of New England are already underway, hopefully you can join us then. 🏆

Dad's Jolly

Dedicated to Dad (David Harrell) by his son, Mark

The story of my Dad's Renault Jolly, but first a little history of the Jolly:

The "official" model name for the Renault 4CV beach car is the Renault 4CV Resort Special. In 1960, fifty 4CVs were dispatched from the Renault Billancourt factory in France to Ghia in Italy to be built as Resort Specials. There was only the single batch of fifty cars built, with all of the finished vehicles originally being sent to the States. Unfortunately, the Resort in Florida was never developed and apparently only twelve or so of them are now thought to have survived.

I was about eight years old when I remember my Dad driving up to the house in his semi-truck home from another trip. This time from Texas. The rest of the kids and I rushed out to greet him back home as always. This time he said he had something with him. He walked to the back of the trailer and we all ran with him to see what he could have inside. He played many tricks on us when he came home. Once, he had one of the older kids go inside of the trailer (we did not know this) and he said there was an animal inside and if we banged on the trailer it would bang back. Of course, we hit the trailer and something banged on the walls back at us. It was very scary at first, but then funny when we found out it was really one of the kids. We could only imagine what could be in the trailer this time. As he opened it, I could see it was a little white car. As he backed it down from the trailer, I thought it was the funniest thing I had seen. It was very little, no top on the car, and no doors. It was definitely something I had not seen before. Dad only knew that the car was a Renault and a very interesting car. The car had been in an accident that damaged the front driver's fender, but everything else seemed ok. Dad worked on the car in his spare time from driving truck.

My eldest brother Mike was interested in the car so he asked Dad if he could buy it from him and continue working on it. Dad said for \$400 he could have it, for that was what he paid. Mike worked on the car for a few summers and decided it was too much work so he sold it back to Dad for \$400. It sat a long time in the garage when my other brother Danny started working on the engine since it sat so long it was in tuff shape. He worked on the car for some time and it again sat in the garage collecting dirt and being a catch all for old parts and junk.

Many years had passed and when I was ready to get





married, I asked Dad what he was going to do with the Renault. He did not know, so I asked him if I could buy it and how much would it cost me. The usual number came up. You guessed it, \$400. The car was not running now and many of the parts were missing and the body was still pretty rough.

A couple years later I would join the Army and for the next 22 years it would be stored once again in garages and barns until my military retirement in 2013. My wife and I had saved money to try and get the Renault working. We started to look for information about the car by putting pictures of it on the internet and emailing Renault enthusiasts. One day I received an email from Jacque, of Jacques Rear Engine Renault. He told me I was the owner of one of the rarest cars Renault built. With Jacque's help and the help of many many others, with parts, and guidance, after almost three years of a complete nut and bolt, and at times frustrating restoration by John L. Draxler, owner of Nostalgic Auto Crafters. We finally brought this Jolly as close to original state back to life after being in the family fifty-one years.

Specifications: Rear mounted 850 cc, OHV inline 4-cylinder engine, single carburetor, 36 HP at 4,000 rpm, 3 speed manual gearbox, independent coil spring front suspension, independent swing axle suspension with coil springs, 4-wheel hydraulic drum brakes, wheel base is 82.5."

Although my Father, who passed away in 1998, and my brother Mike in 2000, never got to see the Jolly finished, I know they look down from heaven and are very proud the way it turned out, I think about them every time I start the Jolly up and drive it down the road knowing that they are with me and enjoying the wind as we drive along. 💎



The Little Renault at Pebble Beach

by Marvin McFalls

The Seventieth installment of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance was held Sunday, August 18th, and featured 209 cars from 17 countries and 31 states along the 18th fairway of Pebble Beach Golf Links. Bentley, in celebration of the marque's 100th anniversary had the largest contingent. Additional marques and models featured at this year's event included Bugatti Type 59 Grand Prix and Touring, French Ballot Indianapolis racers, early Thomas models including the NY-Paris winning Flyer, and the definitive works of Zagato.

As always the excitement kicked off at dawn, when the command to fire up is given and the majority of the entrants make their way from the polo field to the green. This year in among the mass of machinery was an unusual Transformable Landauet built in 1907 by a well-established French coach builder named Labourdette, atop a Renault Type XB chassis, featuring a 14/20 HP engine. With the chassis number: 9304, motor number: 2064, and the carriage is identified as number: 1323 produced by Laubourdette.

While the coachwork was of the highest quality, appearing to be trimmed in mahogany, with the interior made of the finest fabrics, and upholstered with a high grade of leather and topped off with a door monogrammed with the original owner's initials. The Renault XB chassis chosen was not typical for this type of presentation. Renault in 1907 also offered the larger, Type V 20/30HP and the Type AI 35/45HP which would have been more typical selection for a car of this ilk. However for the original owner, Monsieur Santa Maria, the Type XB was all he required.

Typically a Transformable Landauet will carry four passengers in the rear, and the Chauffeur's bench would usually be covered. However in the cast of this fine motor car, it only has seating for two in the rear and the driver was completely exposed to the elements. However, what really made this car stand out was its overall condition. It does not appear that the soft top of the Landauet has ever been opened, and even the spark plug wires are original to the car. For an automobile that was constructed one hundred twelve years ago, it appears more likely to be less than a decade, than over a century old.

The reason for the Renaults incredible condition has to be credited to the car second owner, an un-



known Swiss collector who took possession of it in 1919. From the time of its purchase it was not seen in public again until 1948, when it took part in a Fiftieth Anniversary celebration of a Swiss automobile club and was featured in the magazine *La Revue Automobile*. Its next public appearance would not come until the new millennium, when it was part of the Louis Vuitton Bagatelle Concours d'Elegance. Finally in February, 2018, it was on display at Retromobile, where it first caught the attention of its future owners.

Steve & Marilee Hamilton, of Washoe Valley, Nevada would become the new owners, and they astutely entered their new car in the Prewar Preservation Class. It had competed and won a similar class back in 2000 at the Louis Vuitton Concours. As the car pulled onto the lawn at Peb-



ble, it looked like it was in the right place, as it easily stood out against the typical competition of 75-100 year old cars which were significantly showing their age in one way or another, or worse yet with telltale signs of older restorations attempting to be passed off as original.

While the Renault was clearly the top of the class, despite it not being a traditional Landauet. It would be up to the Judges to determine if this incredible time capsule would go home with any hardware, or would be snubbed for not being a Concours caliber vehicle. As it turned out, one of the judges was in fact also an owner of a 1907 Renault, Doctor Fred Simeone, who owns one of the Vanderbilt Renault racers featured at Pebble in 2017. Once the judging was complete, it was time to wait and see if the little limo, made a big enough impression.

As the awards ceremony began it did not take long for the Renault's number to be called, as it was awarded the FIVA award. Which is for best preserved and regularly driven automobiles, there were two awards one for a pre-war and the second for a post-war example. While the preserved part of the award clearly fit in this case, as far as regularly driven may have been a quite a stretch. However with one award already in the carriage, only time would tell if a class victory might be possible. As the time finally arrived for the Preservation class winners, sure enough, the Renault made its way back up the ramp to also claim the Preservation Best of Class Award.

The Renault's owners, Steve & Marilee Hamilton, were very proud as their car was displayed with all the other class winners just below the ramp. The 1907 Renault Type XB joined a very exclusive class of Pebble Beach Winners that also included the 1926 Renault Type MC of George Wingard from 2015, and the Vanderbilt Renault Type AI of Robert Kauffmann which won in 2017. In the show's long history, these are the only three Renaults to win at Pebble Beach. Hopefully this recent trend of success, will lead to more Renaults driving onto the ramp in the future.

As the remaining class awards were handed out, it was now time to see who would be Best of Show at this year's Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. After much hype, it was awarded to the 1931 Bentley Eight Litre Gurney Nutting Sports Tourer owned by Michael Kadoorie of Hong Kong. Others in the running for Best of Show included: the 1938 Talbot-Lago T150C-SS Fioni and Falaschi Teardrop Cabriolet, a 1936 Mercedes-Benz 540K Erdmann and Rossi Special, and the 1962 Aston Martin DB4GT Zagato Coupe. 🏆

4CV Muster in Australia, Easter 2019

by John Waterhouse

The Renault 4CV Register of Australia had its biennial Muster in Inverell, in north-eastern New South Wales over Easter, 2019. Readers will have seen the lovely “drone” photograph organised for the event.

We love our Musters, which give us 2-yearly opportunities to meet and talk, renew friendships and to welcome new members. Our Register has about 120 members, scattered across Australia from Perth, in the south west of Western Australia, to near Cairns, in the tropical north of Queensland. Not surprisingly, we do well to get half of this group to attend: this year we had 110 people at our main dinner, including several family groups. Counting infants, we had one family into its fourth generation and more than one with two and three generations at the Muster.

Some years ago, our Register agreed to accommodate all the rear-engined cars, meaning everything from the R1060 cars of 1947-1950 (we have a few in Australia) up to the last of the R10s, sold here up to 1970. Being casual about these matters, we’ve readily accepted a few R4s, which were sold here for a few years in the early 1960s (all three-speed models, apart from private imports). After all, they have the 4CV transaxle system, more or less. Socially, other members come in other Renaults, this year including a 16TS, a 20TS, a GT5 Turbo and one new Alpine A110.

This year we had 23 4CVs supplemented by 3 Dauphines, 4 Florides, 3 Caravelles, 2 R8s and no fewer than 6 R10s. It is interesting to see R10s beginning to come out of sheds, some in perfect condition body-wise. Similarly, there is still a steady flow of 4CVs for sale, some greatly modified in past years and being sold by the next generation when the garage is cleared out. Other cars are surprisingly original. This year’s surprises included a very original 1959 Thriftmaster, driven bravely and successfully from Melbourne and back (2,000 km plus about 500 at the event). A new, young member, came with his family in a superbly restored car complete with baby capsule (for the baby), also from near Melbourne.

We are encouraging the new owner of the Thriftmaster not to molest it but to buy another car if he wants a fun of a different kind! There are few original cars left and this one is good, even in its paintwork.

Musters are great times for detailed discussions, as



The Muster group in a very dry paddock – this area had a serious drought (and still has)



Newly restored car (note baby capsule in left rear)



Newly “mobilised” Thriftmaster in very good company



"Where is that fuel leak???"



we rarely are all in the same place to chat about our cars, modified or original.

Some more photos illustrate the range of Renaults that came along. The rare "round-eye" R10 and the new Alpine were an unexpected pair. In this photo the eagle-eyed can also find a Megane, a brand-new Koleos, an R16TS and a Peugeot 404!



Engine bay of slightly uprated Caravelle

We had various drives out from Inverell to points of interest in the district, notable being a moving visit to Myall Creek, the site of one of Australia's 19th century Aboriginal massacres. A local indigenous man took us through the site, now on the Australian National Heritage List. This was the first case where the white perpetrators of such a massacre were arrested, tried, found guilty and hanged.



Round-eye R10 and new Alpine A110

All too soon we were heading home, in so many different directions. Musters seem to end almost before they begin and it is a poignant thought that most of us won't meet for another two years. 📍



Two lovely Caravelles



Retromobile 2019

by Francisco Miranda

Last November 30th we were invited to the year's end cocktail party that the "Federación Mexicana del Automovil Antiguo" organizes in behalf of their affiliated clubs. Spanish "tapas" or hors d'oeuvres were served accompanied by very good Spanish wines and refreshments that went well into the last hours of the day, a good occasion to meet with friends from his wonderful old car's world.

The magnificent frame was the yearly Retromobile Mexico, held as in previous occasions at the "Salón de Exhibiciones y Conferencias de la UNAM" at the university' grounds. This was the 5th edition and luckily the attendance was very good, as it is growing every year, with a total of 6000 visitors during the two-day event.

The theme chosen was "Sport Two Seaters: Race and Convertibles" and they managed to gather around 70 vehicles and as they are strict with the quality of the cars displayed, almost all looked very well maintained or restored. Cars were displayed in a look alike course of the Hermanos Rodriguez racetrack, so while you walked around, you were doing the straight, hairpin, the corners, etc.

Worth mentioning was the participation of the Alpine and Gordini clubs, that presented these beautiful red (1969), white (1972) and blue (1969) Dinalpins A110 Berlinette, reminiscence of the French flag. Another nice Dinalpin, was the recently restored 1966 green Berlinette from the Mexico club.

As it's been said in previous years about this event, many of these cars are usually kept in their respective collections and not shown in other events, so it is a great opportunity to enjoy watching these beauties.

Some of these special appearances (in no particular order) were the Ford GT40, Ferrari 330P4, Jaguar types E and D, Austin Healey 3000, Mercedes SL300 Gullwing, Ferrari Dino 246 GTS, Mustang Shelby GT500 KR, Jaguar XK120, etc.

The Federation well deserves a round of applause with this score. Well done!

I'd like to thank Jaime Hernández whose knowledge of cars was invaluable enjoying this event and for his input herein and to Alejandro Cortés for the hard work he puts into these events and on top of it all, to make us feel at home with his kindness and attentions. 🍷





MARCA	AÑO	MODELO
ALFA ROMEO	1960	TOURING SPYDER 2000
ASA	1967	1000 GT
AUSTIN HEALEY	1967	3000 BJ8 MKIII
AUSTIN HEALEY	1962	3000 MKII
AUSTIN HEALEY	1960	SPRITE
AUTO UNIÓN	1959	1000 SP
CHEVROLET	1960	CORVETTE
CHEVROLET	1967	CORVETTE STINGRAY
FERRARI	1959	250 GT
FERRARI	1979	308 GTS
FERRARI	1967	330 P4
FERRARI	1967	DAYTONA SPIDER
FERRARI	1972	DINO 246 GT
FERRARI	1973	DINO 246 GT
FERRARI	1988	TESTAROSSA
FIAT	1962	1200 SPYDER
FIAT	1957	TURISMO VELOCE, TRANSFORMABILE
FORD	1903	A

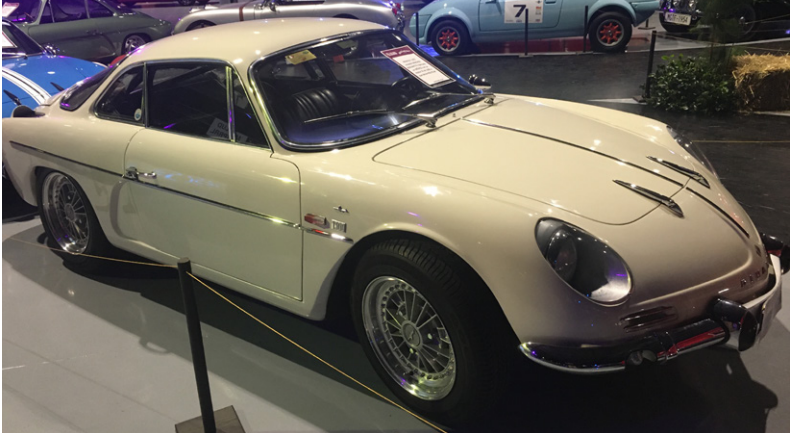
FORD	1965	DAYTONA COBRA
FORD	1965	GT 40
FORD	1965	MUSTANG
FORD	1968	MUSTANG 350 GT
FORD	1967	SHELBY COBRA DAYTONA
FORD	1927	T
FORD	1912	T SPEEDSTER
FORD	1955	THUNDERBIRD

MARCA	AÑO	MODELO
FORD	1956	THUNDERBIRD
FORD	1962	THUNDERBIRD
JAGUAR	1957	D
JAGUAR	1985	XJ6
JAGUAR	1954	XK 120
JAGUAR	1965	XKE CABRIOLET
JAGUAR	1968	XKE CABRIOLET
MASERATI	1987	BITURBO SPYDER
MERCEDES BENZ	1960	190 SL
MERCEDES BENZ	1967	230 SL
MERCEDES BENZ	1954	300 SL GULLWING
MERCEDES BENZ	1989	560 SL
MG	1959	A
MG	1956	A
MG	1960	A COUPE
MG	1976	B
MG	1969	C
MG	1972	MIDGET
MG	1935	PA

MARCA	AÑO	MODELO
PORSCHE	1973	911
PORSCHE	1975	911
PORSCHE	1978	911
PORSCHE	1966	912
PORSCHE	1974	911 TARGA
RAMBLER	1982	RALLY AMX
RENAULT	1966	DINALPIN

MG	1953	TD
MG	1954	TF
MINI	1970	MIDAS
MORGAN	1968	4/4
PLYMOUTH	1932	PB
PLYMOUTH	1997	PROWLER
PORSCHE	1956	356

RENAULT	1972	DINALPIN BERLINETTE
RENAULT	1971	DINALPIN BERLINETTE
RENAULT	1971	DINALPIN BERLINETTE
RENAULT	1967	DINALPIN CONVERTIBLE
RENAULT	1962	FLORIDE S
TRIUMPH	1973	SPITFIRE MK IV
TRIUMPH	1973	TR6
TRIUMPH	1975	TR6
VOLVO	1963	P 1800
VOLVO	1969	P 1800
VOLVO	1965	P 1800S
VW	1960	KARMANN GHIA
VW	1958	KARMANN GHIA





Renault in World War One

by Marvin McFalls

By the outbreak of the First World War, Renault was the largest manufacturer of Automobiles in France. However they quickly converted their factories to build trucks, aircraft engines, artillery and armaments. The Germans hoped for a quick and decisive victory, and mounted an all-out charge. In the early battles of the war, the Germans were able win a number of decisive victories and moved through Belgium into France, eventually making their way within thirty miles of the capital. Many feared that if Paris fell, the war would be all but over.

To stop the offensive, the French called for reinforcements and while the majority were transported by truck and train, many Parisian taxis were also enlisted to transport troops to the battlefield. On the night of September 6, the first group of taxis assembled on the Place des Invalides. The Parisian taxis of 1914 were Renault Type AG Landaulets. They could seat five men per vehicle, and run between 20-25 mph fully loaded. The cabs travelled in a single-file line, making their way to the front. Although estimates vary on the final count, by the next morning, the Renault taxis had transported about 5,000 men, an insignificant percentage in a battle involving more than a million participants. Many of the troops carried by taxis were actually reserves and did not even take part in the battle.

The battle had begun when German general, Alexander von Kluck, had decided to chase after the retreating French armies. While not under orders to do so, he had inadvertently exposed the German flank. The French commander-in-chief General Joseph Joffre, decided that an all-out attack might stop the German offensive. While they had succeeded in breaking the German line, the French commander still needed help. When the British Expeditionary Force joined the counter-offensive, Joseph Gallieni, Commander of the Parisian troops protecting the city, decided to also join in. The German high command had been taken by surprise, and their progress had finally been halted. Both sides then dug in, and the war entered a new phase.

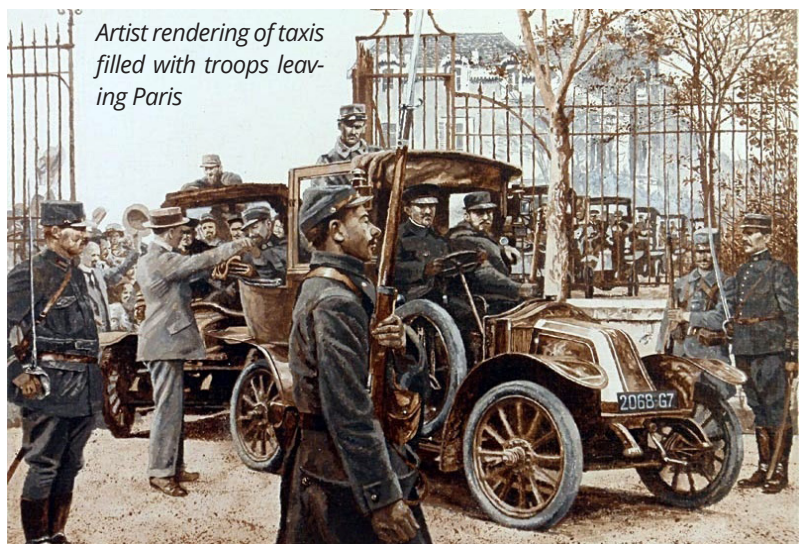
Following the landmark victory, the story of the insignificant fleet of taxis carrying reserves to the fight, was transformed into the heroes of the Battle of the Marne. The Renault taxis and their drivers were celebrated as having saved the city and uniting the



Mid-century sighting of a Marne Taxi with driver in period French army uniform



Marne Taxis preparing to carry troops to the front



Artist rendering of taxis filled with troops leaving Paris

American Doughboys with their FT tanks at the Battle of Soissons



One of the early FT trainers, with a machine gun mounted on the turret



FT-17 on parade celebrating victory



3D rendering of a FT-17

French people. While untrue, the legend of the Taxis of the Marne endures.

The Miracle of the Marne had marked the end of German hopes of a quick victory in 1914, however the second battle there in 1918 would lead to their eventual defeat. Unlike in the first battle, Renault vehicles would actually play a significant role. This latest contribution from Renault in the war effort was called the Char Mitrailleur Renault FT-17. The new tank was both small and light by the standards of the period. It weighed only six and a half tons. It was also the first operational tank to mount its main weapon on a turret that could be rotated 360 degrees. The FT-17 was first equipped with a machine gun, but many were armed instead with a small artillery. Indeed, the most common armament was a 37mm Hotchkiss cannon, while a few carried a short-barreled 75mm gun.

Other features of the FT-17 included heavy tracks and simplified construction. The front wheel was substantially larger than the rear wheel, giving the front end a larger section of track to assist in climbing over obstructions; this was crucial because the relatively small tracks of the heavier allied tanks made them poor climbers, and so many of the larger tanks were lost in battle when they failed to make a summit. As for the FT-17's construction, the tank had no separate chassis. Everything, including the wheels, were mounted directly to the exterior of the tank. This left no unarmored weak points. Finally, the engine was in the rear, making it relatively safe from enemy fire. The FT-17's biggest disadvantage was its top speed. However with speeds just under 5 mph, it was fast enough to keep pace with the infantry, making it excellent cover for advances.

Starting in the spring of 1918, the Germans were again advancing. By mid-July they had mounted an attack on the southern banks of the Marne. At this point, Marshal Foch, the new Allied Supreme Commander, launched a massive counter-offensive, comprising of 22 French and 10 American divisions, as well as a sizeable contingents of British, Italian and other Allied troops. Both French and American forces were supported by as many as 478 Renault FT-17 tanks, the attack began on July 18th and by 27th of July the Germans had been forced to retreat from the Battle of Soissons. The Allies had suffered 107,000 casualties, 95,000 French and 12,000 American, while the Germans suffered 168,000 casualties.

After the victory, Allied armies continued to push back the Germans. By early August, virtually all the territory gained by the German army in its spring of

fensive had been recaptured. By the end of the summer, the German army was all but defeated and by fall, Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated and fled the country. On November 11th an Armistice was signed, ending the war.

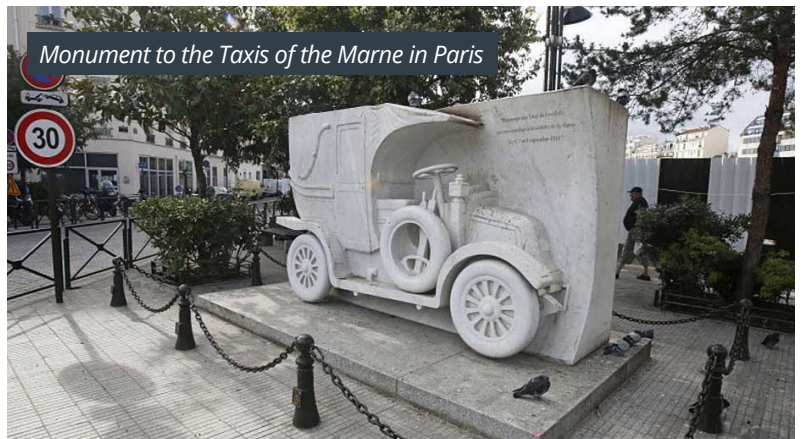
Renault had been significant in supporting the French and their allies, in gaining victory over the German invaders. Even without the exaggerating of the importance of the Renault Taxis in the Battle of the Marne, they were present and did play a role in stopping the advance. While the Renault FT-17 Tank, was crucial in ending the final German offensive, and supported the Allied forces ultimate victory. Louis Renault, was awarded with the Grand Cross of the Légion d'honneur after the war for the major contribution made by his factories for the war effort. 💡

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Renault Type AG1 Paris Taxi in service



Monument to the Taxis of the Marne in Paris



Another survivor in period correct trim



One of the remaining Taxis of the Marne



Recent parade featuring a Marne Taxi



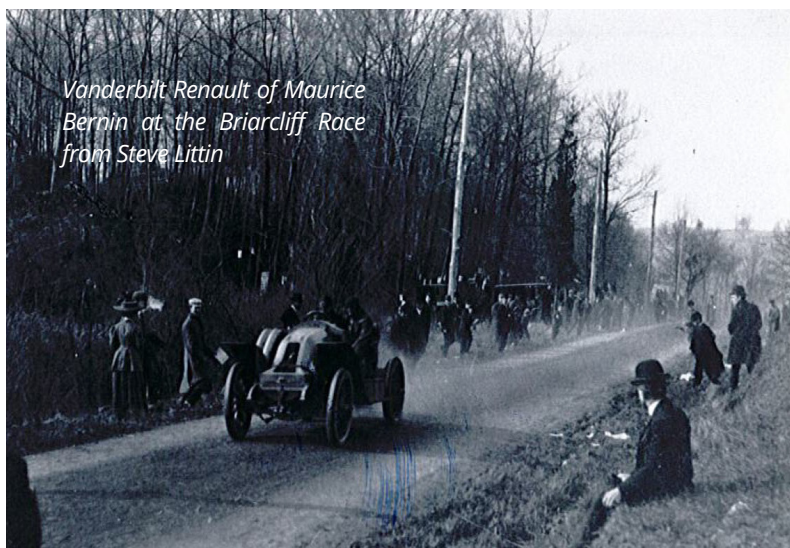
a group of FTs on the move

Vanderbilt Renault Racing History - Part II

by Marvin McFalls



Mr. & Mrs. Kirk Gibson Sr.



Vanderbilt Renault of Maurice Bernin at the Briarcliff Race from Steve Littin



Possibly Willie K.

The Vanderbilt Renaults were delivered to Willie K and his friends in the summer of 1907. It appears that possibly a twelfth car was also delivered to the Renault Freres Selling Branch in New York. Where the Vice-President and General Manager Paul LaCroix, along with his newest employee, Maurice G. Bernin, boarded a train bound for Chicago with the Vanderbilt Renault on board. The duo planned to drive the Vanderbilt Renault the 1240 miles from Chicago back home to New York, at a new record pace. The record was held by a 28 hp Franklin, which had made the journey in just under forty hours.

LaCroix and Bernin left Chicago at 3:00 AM on Saturday August 24. The pair made it to Toledo, Ohio by 1:00 PM, but had to stop to remount their gasoline tank. Before the troubles in Toledo, they were three hours ahead of the Franklin's record pace. After a quick repair they were back on the road, and made it to Cleveland before the tank mount failed again. At that point they were also having an issue with their engine oiler, so they decided to abandoned the attempt, and return to Chicago at a slower pace. It was reported that a second attempt was scheduled for the following week, but no documentation has been found collaborating it.

Already entered in Morris Park 24 hour race on September 6 - 7, the Vanderbilt Renault was back in New York in time for that event. In the race, driver Maurice G. Bernin, along with co-driver Paul LaCroix, went on to victory. Completing an impressive 1,079 miles at an average speed of 45 mph for 24-hours, setting the American Circuit Track record. The Vanderbilt Renault was now not just a rich man's toy, it was also an endurance racing champion.

Following the 24 hour victory, another documented attempt of the Chicago-New York record was attempted by Bernin. However it was reported that the attempt was unsuccessful, due to Bernin being injured when he was struck by a non-skid tread which had broken away from one of his tires. The injury must have been fairly serious because it also forced Bernin to miss the October 3rd 24 hour race, again at Morris Park. The failed record attempt turned out to be the final appearance of the Vanderbilt Renault for 1907.

As the Vanderbilt Renault prepared for their first stock car races in the 1908 season, unfortunately at the time there was a significant debate going on in the

racing community about the stock car status of cars like the Vanderbilt Renault. The key issue of the day were truly stock versus the limited production purpose-built race cars. The latter group were often referred to as freak cars, due to the fact that contributed little to demonstrating the value of a given manufacturer's product. So thanks to the Morris Park 24-hour victory, after defeating a field of larger more powerful stock cars and other purpose built racers, the Vanderbilt Renault was atop the list of freaks.

The first appearance that season of a Vanderbilt Renault was in the hands of an amateur. It was at the Ft. George Hill Hillclimb in Manhattan on April 9th. Robert Guggenheim, a 23 year old millionaire playboy and racing enthusiast competed in his own Vanderbilt Renault and finished tenth with a time of 47 seconds. This is the only known instance of one of the original owners competing in a race in their Vanderbilt Renaults.

The next event on the schedule, and one of the primary reasons for the construction of the Vanderbilt Renaults and other freaks of the day was the inaugural Briarcliff Trophy race. Billed as the stock car equivalent of the Vanderbilt Cup, the race was held in Westchester County, just outside of New York on April 27th. Just like the Vanderbilt Cup the winner would receive a silver cup made by Tiffany and Company, however that is where the similarities ended. The roads were not the same quality as those on Long Island, and the race course was not well controlled. Also due to limited train service attendance was considerably less.

The race itself was highly competitive with twenty-two entrants from more than a dozen European and American manufacturers, as well as drivers from England, France, Italy, and the United States. The 240 mile race was led from start to finish by American, Lewis Strang, who was driving the Italian built Isotta-Fraschini. Strange's Isotta was the most powerful car in the race, and he had also powered it to victory in the previous month's Savannah Challenge Trophy stock car race. As for the two Renaults entered Julian Bloch, the Director of French Manufacturer Motobloc agency in New York finished thirteenth, While Maurice Bernin had to settle for a fifteenth place finish. Both cars lost time due to minor mechanical issues and flat tires. Bernin had lost 12 minutes early on due to a problem with his magneto, knocking him out of contention.

Following the Briarcliff defeat, Paul LaCroix met with race winner Lewis Strang, to enquire about his services for racing the Vanderbilt Renault later in the fall at the Parkway Sweepstakes races as well as racing a Grand Prix Renault in the Vanderbilt Cup and American Grand Prize races.

While on the Fourth of July Robert Guggenheim again competed his Vanderbilt Renault at Monmouth Park in a fifty mile race for professionals. Guggenheim enlisted George Magee who raced under the name Al Bellows to pilot his Renault in the race. Al Bellows reportedly had twice driven in the Gordon Bennett Cup race, but there is no record. Early on Bellows was in contention battling with a Lozier for third place. However, Bellows run came to an end when he lost a tire, drove through a fence and flipped Guggenheim's Renault upside down. This was the last record of Al Bellows racing and it is not known what became of Guggenheim's Renault. The following year he campaigned an Italia and sponsored the New York to Seattle race. After that he seemed to have lost interest in auto racing.

The next appearance for the Vanderbilt Renault was on September 17th at the Brighton Beach 24-hour race. In this race driving for the New York Renault Selling Branch was Paul Sartori. Sartori was the long time chauffeur of Alfred G. Vanderbilt and had previous race experience driving for his employer. The race started well for Sartori as after the first hour he was in third place. However after only 64 miles Sartori's race ended when he was involved in an accident with another competitor, causing him to drive through a fence. Following the race Paul LaCroix offered a challenge to any competitor willing to wager \$1000 against his car, Charles Singer owner of the fifth place Simplex accepted the challenge.

It was only two weeks until the next 24-hour race at Brighton Beach, and for this event LaCroix entered two Vanderbilt Renaults. The first driven by America's top stock car driver Lewis Strang, who after winning the September 7th stock car race in Lowell, Massachusetts, had left the Isotta team and joined LaCroix and the Renault Team. The second car was again driven by Frenchman, Julian Bloch. As expected their top challenger in the race would come from the Simplex of Charles Singer driven by George Robertson. For the first two hours Robertson led Strang, then in the third hour to two traded positions.

In the fifth hour Julian Bloch's race was ended when he had a blowout and crashed into a fence. Bloch survived the crash, but his car caught on fire. In an attempt to extinguish the flames Bloch received significant burns on his hands and face. By the time the fire was put out the racer was completely destroyed.

Meanwhile Strang continued to hold the lead past the midway point, where he set the record for furthest distance travelled in twelve hours. Unfortunately this would be the highlight of the day for the Renault team,

as Strang was repassed by Robertson in the Simplex in the thirteenth hour. By hour seventeen the simplex had a five mile lead over the Renault. After completing 888 miles Strang also had to drop out of the race when he had a connecting rod failure. Following the race, LaCroix blamed the failure on a broken oil line. George Robertson went on to win the race, and Charles Singer collected on LaCroix's \$1000 challenge

On October 10th, just a week after losing one racer in a fire, and having an engine failure in another, the Motor Parkway Sweepstakes race for stock cars was held in conjunction with the Vanderbilt Cup. The ten lap, 235 mile race would be a test run for the upcoming Vanderbilt Cup race which would take place two weeks later. This race pitted drivers Herb Lytle and Lewis Strang. Strang had dominated every major stock car race in 1908, winning at Savannah, Briarcliff, and Lowell. He won all these races driving an Isotta, but had recently switched to Paul LaCroix' white and gray Vanderbilt Renault. His bright red Isotta was now in the hands of veteran racer, Herb Lytle.

After one lap Lytle and Strang had identical times followed by Charles Basle's Knox half a minute behind in third place. By lap three Lytle's faster, and more powerful Isotta had opened up more than a three minute lead over the Renault. By lap seven after Lytle made his only pit stop his lead was more than six minutes. Lytle finished eleven minutes ahead of second place finisher Strang, with an impressive average speed of 64 mph. It was clear that while Strang was a great driver, the Isotta was clearly superior to the Vanderbilt Renault in a road race.

Following the Vanderbilt Cup race in early November 1908, Paul LaCroix boarded a ship for France. He planned to have a meeting with his boss, Louis Renault. Among the number of things he planned to discuss, his highest priority was securing new racers for the 1909 Season. While the Vanderbilt Renault's had performed well, he hoped for a new, more powerful stock car model to compete with Isotta and other top manufacturers, as well as new version of the Grand Prix car.

Following his brother, Marcel's death in the 1903 Paris to Madrid race, Louis had changed his opinion on racing. While his company's initial success was completely based on racing results. Louis now claimed that racing added nothing to the improvement of the automobile. Furthermore, he declared that the financial and other costs of racing far exceeded revenues from whatever sales resulted from the success. Since his brother's death he had built only the one racer for W. Gould Brokaw in 1904, then three nearly identical

cars for the 1905 Gordon Bennett Cup Trial, and when the Initial French Grand Prix was announced for 1906 he built three new cars with new body work made by stamping specialist Arban. Following the Grand Prix Victory, Renault would not compete with a factory effort again until 1924.

Since his Grand Prix victory Louis had banned his French employees from racing with the exception of Ferenc Sziş who services he had been included in the sale of the Grand Prix winning racer. Until now his brother Fernand Renault had been in charge of the New York Branch, but that was no longer the case as Louis had recently acquired his ailing brother's interest in their company.

With the rules for the 1909 season in hand, LaCroix was proposing a run of at least 25 new racers, with a price tag that would have approached \$10,000 each this would have meant a substantial profit for both Renault and LaCroix. Normally, Renault would have accepted this deal, as he was a profiteer. However, he was determined to get his company out of the racing business. There would be no new racers for LaCroix, as he quickly left Paris, and it appears the racing ban was extended to include employees in America from this point forward.

As LaCroix was returning to America with the bad news, tragedy struck in Birmingham, Alabama on November 17th. Lewis Strang, along with friend and racing mentor, Emile Stricker were both competing in Vanderbilt Renaults, attempting to regain the American 24-hour distance record. It was first reported that Stricker was killed when he crashed on the poorly lit track. However according to Strange, Stricker had lost control of his car and had spun out in the middle of the track. While the car had not been seriously damaged in the spin Stricker's driving coat became entangled in the rear wheel pulling him from the car and causing his fatal injuries.

Following Sticker's death Strang and Sziş both competed in the American Grand Prize on November 26th. Strang finished sixth while Sziş had mechanical problems and was classified seventeenth. This was the last appearance by the Renault Grand Prix racers, and much like the Gordon Bennett cars, and Brokaw's car they have all never been seen again.

For the 1909 season, with the rule changes for entry into many of the top stock car races requiring at least 25 examples to compete, there were not as many opportunities for the Vanderbilt Renaults to race. However on June 7th, they were invited to race in Boston at the new Readville racetrack. Frenchman, Charles

Basle, now raced the Vanderbilt Renault. He had co-driven the Brighton Beach race with Lewis Strang the previous season and was familiar with the car. At Readville Basle competed against Ralph DePalma in a 25 mile match race. While the victory went to DePalma and his Fiat, Basle made a good showing and he prepared for the rest of the season.

On a letter dated August 14, 1909, Paul LaCroix wrote Willie K. Vanderbilt Jr. that he had received a letter from the Manufacturers Contest Association of the Vanderbilt Cup. For 1909 the Vanderbilt Cup race had been changed from an international race to a stock car event. In the letter, LaCroix states that while Renault is not able to compete here or abroad, he would arrange for his driver, Charles Basle to personally enter the 35-45 hp Renault in that year's Vanderbilt Cup.

Charles Basle next teamed up with Louis Rafflovitch, for the 24 hour race at Brighton Beach on August 27th. Rafflovitch was of Russian descent, but he grew up in Paris. He had gone to school with Louis Renault in France, and he had been his ride along mechanic early in Renault's career. While the nearly three year old Renault didn't have the top speed of many of the other competitors, it was still very reliable and consistently turned respectable laps.

The race started out well, after the first hour the Renault was in second place behind an Acme. However in the second hour there were two crashes first the Allen-Kingston lost a tire and was struck by a Fiat causing the A-K to burst into flames. Both Driver and mechanic jumped off the car and rolled around in the grass, while they had significant injuries, they were able to walk away. Sadly that would not be the case a few minutes later when a Sterns collided with an Acme. The crew of the Sterns, Laurent Grosso and Leonard Cole did not survive their injuries.

After an hour and a half delay the race was restarted. At the end of two hours the Rainier led and the Renault was in third. By the end of hour number three, the Renault moved back into second where it remained until the eighth hour when it finally took the lead from the Rainier. With all the early crashes, and a few more DNFs along the way, by the mid-point of the race only six cars remained in contention. The second half of the race the Renault continued to expand its lead, by the twentieth hour their lead was a hundred miles over the second place Rainier. As they crossed the line for the 1050th time the race came to an end. While they were 112 miles ahead of their closest competitor, they were still 127 miles short of the record set in the previous year's race.

Following Basle and Rafflovitch's win of the 1909 Brighton Beach New York 24-hour race, Rafflovitch sent word to his childhood friend Louis Renault about their victory, only to get the reply "We are not amused" from Renault. While their cars constructor was not happy, for Basle and Rafflovitch it was the major high-point of both of their racing careers.

However for Charles Basle, he had to cut the celebration short as he was entered in the Lowell Trophy race on September 8th. Unlike the twenty-four hour mile circuit track race he had just won, this race consisted of thirty laps of a 10.6 mile closed course totaling 318 miles. In the race of top American and European stock cars, victory went to George Robertson in the Simplex. While Basle came home fifth his car had been in contention the whole race, and he finished ahead of Ralph DePalma who had beat him earlier in the season.

On October 23, Basle along with two Vanderbilt Renaults were reported at a demonstration event held for the motoring press in Atlanta Georgia. It appears that Basle had some issue with his Vanderbilt Renault that day, and finished third in a three car exhibition race. Also competing that day was stock Renault driven by one of the track's investors named Ed Durant. All the cars that competed that day were photographed to publicize the upcoming meet.

The Vanderbilt Cup race was then staged on October 30th, but even though LaCroix had pledged to have Charles Basle enter the Vanderbilt Renault in the race, it did not compete. It was not even mentioned in the official list of entrants. Being that Basle was in Atlanta the week before the New York race and competed ten days later again in Atlanta, LaCroix and Basle's Vanderbilt Cup plans did not come to fruition.

Basle and the Vanderbilt Renault were back in Atlanta on their newly constructed two mile speedway from November 9th thru the 13th. The event was co-sponsored by the New York Herald as well as the Atlanta Journal, so top drivers from both the North and the South took part. During the four days of racing Basle competed in a number of events. On the opening day of the event Basle raced in the 200 miler against a field of large displacement American cars. The victory went to Louis Chevrolet in a Buick, while Basle finished a respectable fourth in the field of nine competitors.

The most interesting fact was that a second Vanderbilt Renault competed with Cliquot as the driver of record. Outside this event he had only previously raced in the exhibition race held the previous. Unfortunately, Cliquot was most likely not the driver of the second Renault. Earlier that day he had broken his arm in three

places attempting to start the Pope-Toledo known as the Merry Widow. So whomever was driving the second Renault is a mystery.

On the third day of the meet Basle raced again. This time against top drivers Louis Chevrolet and Ray Harroun. In the race, Chevrolet got out to an early lead, but had trouble with an engine fire. In the end Harroun was the winner with Basle finishing third and Chevrolet brought home his injured Buick in Fourth.

On the Final day of the meet, another 200 miler was the main event. Again there were two Renaults entered in the race. Driven by Charles Basle along with L. Basle. Charles did have a brother who raced, but his name was Maurice. Eleven cars started the feature with George Robertson dominating the race until the 162nd mile when his drive chain broke. By the time he repaired his Simplex he was in third place and was four laps down to Louis Disbrow. Charles Basle in the Renault had taken second place. Robertson sped back into the race and was soon able to repass Charles Basle. Even though he was half a minute a lap faster than Disbrow, he ran out time and the Victory went to Disbrow. Meanwhile, fourth place went to the mystery Renault driven by L. Basle

Looking back, prior to the event an unknown driver name Bahr had entered the second Vanderbilt Renault in the Atlanta races, and the official drivers of record were Cliqout aka Florence Michael and L Basle. While it had been a common practice for gentlemen to race under an alias in the early days of racing. However, what had also become fashionable in this period was Renault employees racing under aliases.

Since 1904, a number of French employees of Renault had raced under assumed names. It could be that either Paul LaCroix or Maurice Bernin was the driver of the second Renault. LaCroix, was still in charge of the New York Selling Branch, and he had taken part in a tour from New York to Boston earlier that summer. There was a similar tour associated with the race in Atlanta, sponsored by papers from both cities. As for Bernin, since his victory in the Morris Park 24-hour race he had been put in charge of the New Orleans Selling Branch, so it would have also be feasible for him to travel to Atlanta for the meet. Whoever was the actual driver of the second Vanderbilt Renault on the final day of meet has been lost to history.

Following the Atlanta meet, Charles Basle had one final event for his Vanderbilt Renault. He remained in the South, travelling to New Orleans for two days of road races. He would face many of the same competitors that he had faced in Atlanta. On the first day of

the meet he raced in three stock car races and one free for all; finishing third in the five mile, winning the ten mile ahead of Harroun in the Marmon and Aitken in the National, and again coming in third in the twenty miler. For the main event, competitors from two different displacement classes raced. At the end Harroun out ran Basle to win the large displacement class.

On the second day, a number of top racers arrived including Barney Oldfield, who quickly set a new track record in the mile. Basle again captured the ten mile free for all race victory, this time defeating Kirscher in a Darracq, and Harroun's Marmon. While in the final event of the meet, the hundred miler, Harroun outlasted Basle again. With two second place finishes in the feature races, it had been a good final meet for Basle and the Vanderbilt Renault.

"The Little Renault" as Willie K called his car had proven to be the giant beater that Vanderbilt had hoped it would be when he had it commissioned by Renault. With such a pedigree you would think these vehicles would have been coveted and found their way into museums and private collections. At this time in the very brief history of the automobile, the best one could hope was once a racer was no long competitive, it would end up in a barn or would be repurposed for some commercial application. But the majority of earlier racers were just scrapped. That five, or as much as nearly half, of the Vanderbilt Renaults still remain is highly unusual for cars of this era. 🏆

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- The Horseless Age: The Automobile Trade Magazine, Volume 24 – Page 635

The Back Page - Sun Ring



Recently we had a car/friends breakfast and this amazing phenomena took place at about noon in Mexico City. It lasted about an hour (not sure) but it's always nice to enjoy nature's displays, isn't it?

Hope you like the pictures and in case you are interested here's a link to Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halo_\(optical_phenomenon\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halo_(optical_phenomenon))

—from Francisco Miranda



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