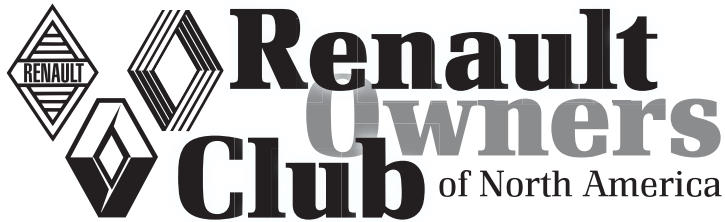


# Renault News 75



1st Quarter 2005

Feb - Mar



Photo from Renault Publicity

## Renault in Australia - page 6

New Members	03	Paris 2005 Photos	12
Events List	04	Making Sense	14
Another Great Year	04	Lane Museum Collection	15
Going Into Retirement	07	Central Florida Auto Show	16
Prince of Monaco Collection	08	Adieu Red R5	17
New Laguna	09	Michelin PAX Tires	18
What A Difference	10	Challenger Motors Renault?	21
Travel In Paris	11	50th Acapulco Rally	22

# Renault Owner's Club of North America

[www.renaultclub.us](http://www.renaultclub.us)

email: [info@renaultownersclub.org](mailto:info@renaultownersclub.org)

Established in May, 1991, La Jolla, California, USA

Founder Howard G. Singer

Vice President/Club Liaison	Jesse Patton
Membership Secretary	Jacques Lynn
New Member Secretary	Ray Dietz
Online Memberships	Marvin McFalls
Treasurer	Dene Barrett
Editor of Index	Kurt Triffet
Editor of Marketplace	Kurt Triffet
Editor of <i>Renault News</i>	Marvin McFalls
Co-Editor	Allan Meyer
Publishers	Bob & Carol Howard
Webmaster	Kurt Triffet
E-Mail List Editor	Giff Kushma
Librarian	Michael Muller

Alpine A310 Club rep.	Brad Stevens
ARROA Club Editor	Yves Boode
R5 Turbo Club rep.	Bill Dickinson

Technical Advisors	
R5 Performance-Competition	Bob Fogt
R8, Fuego, Medallion-	Don McLaughlin
R18-	Ray Dietz
4CV-Dauphine-R10-Caravelle	Jacques Lynn
R16	(vacant)
Alliance-Encore-GTA	Sam Stuckey
Premier (Eagle)	Chris Davidson

"Renault News" is the newsletter of the Renault Owner's Club of North America. This newsletter is published quarterly, along with the monthly "Marketplace" ads. We are a non-profit, all-volunteer club. Our purpose is to help one another keep our Renaults in shape and on the road. Club publications will closely parallel the collective input of members.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS **NOT** AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF RENAULT USA or Régie Nationale des Usines Renault. The opinions expressed here are those of the respective authors and not necessarily those of this club or Renault. Permission to reprint original material is granted to any non-profit membership publication on a single use basis if full credit is given to the author. Originally published items become property of the club.

**New Members:** Send dues of US\$15 for **online membership** worldwide or **postal membership** US\$ 20 for the USA; US\$ 26 for Canada/México; or US\$ 30 for all other countries; as well as details of cars to the New Member Secretary:

**Ray Dietz, (276) 638-8563;** 1250 Lanier Rd, Martinsville, VA 24112-5212

## Renewals-Registry Information & Address Changes:

Send dues (as above) to **Jacques Lynn, (619) 561-6687;** 13839 Old Highway 80, El Cajon, CA 92021.  
[membership@renaultownersclub.org](mailto:membership@renaultownersclub.org)

**Classified Advertisements:** Send to *Marketplace* Editor:  
**Kurt Triffet** – [webmaster@renaultownersclub.org](mailto:webmaster@renaultownersclub.org)

## Articles-Letters-Correspondence:

**Marvin McFalls, (865) 375-0995**  
4804 Ball Camp Pike, Knoxville, TN 37921  
[editor@renaultownersclub.org](mailto:editor@renaultownersclub.org)

## Newsletter Production- Graphic Artist

**Allan Meyer,**  
P.O. Box 6695, Woodland Hills,  
CA 91365-6695 [allan\\_g\\_y\\_meyer@yahoo.com](mailto:allan_g_y_meyer@yahoo.com)

## Publishers

**Bob & Carol Howard,**  
8537 Greenbriar Estates Rd, Edwardsville, IL 62025  
[publishers@renaultownersclub.org](mailto:publishers@renaultownersclub.org)

**Back Issue Requests:** Send US\$ 2.00 to

**Michael Muller,** 4907 Meridian Ave. North, Seattle, WA 98103 [m\\_muller22@hotmail.com](mailto:m_muller22@hotmail.com)

## Inter-Club Liaison- Club Correspondence:

**Jesse Patton (516) 669-2598;**  
52 Nicole Place, West Babylon, NY, 11704

## Technical Advisors:

**Ray Dietz (276) 638-8563;**  
1250 Lanier Rd, Martinsville, VA 24112-5212

## Bob Fogt,

1145 Orchard Place, Mendota Heights, MN, 55118-4119

## Jacques Lynn (619) 561-6687

13839 Old Highway 80, El Cajon, CA 92021

## Don McLaughlin, (717) 834-4449;

390 Linton Hill Road, Duncannon, PA 17020

## Sam Stuckey (865) 922-2236;

8544 Norris Lane, Knoxville, TN, 37938

## American Alpine A-310 Club representative:

### Brad Stevens (716) 394-3265

4652 Maiden Ln, Canandaigua, NY 14424

## Alpine Renault Registered Owner's Association Club,

Editor: **Yves Boode (815) 455-1944**

2816 Broadway, Rockford, IL, 61108

## R5 Turbo Club representative:

### Bill Dickinson (818) 981-6595;

14548 Dickens St, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

## December 2004 New Online Members

Beetham, Michael, 225 west 106 street #7F, New York, NY 10025, E-mail: [mikbeetham@yahoo.com](mailto:mikbeetham@yahoo.com)

Faloppa, Francois, 6353 Walker Drive, Troy, MI 48085, E-mail: [faloppaf@macomb.edu](mailto:faloppaf@macomb.edu)

Vantine, Nicholas, 344 Side Road, Moretown, VT 05660, E-mail: [nvantine@hotmail.com](mailto:nvantine@hotmail.com)

O'Shea, Kevin, 185 Fenner Avenue, Riverside, RI 02915, E-mail: [shkvn@yahoo.com](mailto:shkvn@yahoo.com) (Postal Membership \$20)

Cintron, Jorge, M16 Canada, Alt. del Remanso, San Juan, PR 00926, E-mail: [yoyocint@prtc.net](mailto:yoyocint@prtc.net)

Friedrich, Achilles, E-mail: [hacoavus@cs.com](mailto:hacoavus@cs.com)

### Renewals

Mark Desrosiers; Shoji Kanamori; Augustin Sandor; Louis Arata; Ted Thoroman; Robert Hand; Randall Brown; William Fleming

## January 2005 New Online Members

Burke, Dennis, 185 West Canton Street, APT. 2, Boston, MA 02116, E-mail: [dennisburke@hotmail.com](mailto:dennisburke@hotmail.com)

Nakadate, Yukio, 935-B Sunset Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, E-mail: [newportcars@earthlink.net](mailto:newportcars@earthlink.net)

Nelson, Ken, 26845 Martindale Road, South Lyon, MI 48178, E-mail: [kenneth.w.nelson@usa.dupont.com](mailto:kenneth.w.nelson@usa.dupont.com)

Nikstenas, Joseph, 503 Dark Star Drive, Harrison, OH 45030, E-mail: [joenic@nukeworker.com](mailto:joenic@nukeworker.com)

Gagnon, Otis, 14429 South Lake Street, Sterling, NY 13156, E-mail: [ogagnon@twcny.rr.com](mailto:ogagnon@twcny.rr.com)

Pauline, 907 Bernon Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895, E-mail: [Pauline@Dugal.org](mailto:Pauline@Dugal.org)

### Renewals

Byron Timmons; Richard Webb; Nicholas Dimopoulos; Keith Johnson; Steven Deness; Jorge Mendoza; Jeremy Bannister

## February 2005 New Online Members

Pounds, William, 1704 Morris Street, Mineral Ridge, OH 44440 E-mail: [billpounds587@zoominternet.net](mailto:billpounds587@zoominternet.net)

McEwen, Mark, E-mail: [mc2t@aol.com](mailto:mc2t@aol.com)

Weinroth, Joshua J. 17036 Enadia Way, Lake Balboa, CA 91406-3603, [shmoodog@aol.com](mailto:shmoodog@aol.com)

Carlson, Karen, 609 W. Stratford Pl. #6C, Chicago, IL 60657, E-mail: [tacentre@msn.com](mailto:tacentre@msn.com)

Thompson, Jeff, 266 La Camarilla Place, Nipomo, CA 93444, E-mail: [jthompson@scitor.com](mailto:jthompson@scitor.com)

Vogel, Paul, 548 Summit, Barrington, IL 60010, [Pk1@assuredstaffing.net](mailto:Pk1@assuredstaffing.net)

Neumann, Peter, 19 Glamis Gardens, SW, Calgary, Alberta T3E 6S4, Canada, [neumannp@telusplanet.net](mailto:neumannp@telusplanet.net)

### Renewals

Lardani, Anthony; Sears, Richard; Polson, Deborah; Johnson, Eric; Hite, Gerron; Sitz, Ben; Ferrall, Craig; Giboo, David; Gross, Thomas

## February 2005 New Members

J. T. Payton, 387 McQuady Ln, Horse Branch, KY 42349 (270) 274-8260

Brandes S. Elitch, PO Box 1048, Healdsburg, CA 95448-1048 (707) 526-0133 email: [belitch@summitstatebank.com](mailto:belitch@summitstatebank.com)

Orland D. McKee, 7801 Elm Ave, Raytown, MO 64138-1665 (816) 353-8667 email: [oorland@netzero.net](mailto:oorland@netzero.net)

Scott D. Snyder, 4073 Fetterhoff Chapel Road, Chambersburg, PA 17201; (717) 263-8746

Philip Sy, 2371 Rollingwood Dr, San Bruno, CA 94066 H (650) 813-6918, O (650) 757-7751 email: [philisy@sbcglobal.com](mailto:philisy@sbcglobal.com)

Carlos Tolsa, 840 East Grant Rd, Tucson, AZ 85719-2932 H (512) 622-6239, O (512) 620-6303 email: [tolsa@cox.net](mailto:tolsa@cox.net)

Maj. F. Dickson Prew, 100 NW 159 Dr, Miami, FL 33169

## March 2005 New Members

Bradley Friedle, 864 K Courtington Ln, Ft. Meyers, FL 33919 (239) 466-3673

Randy Frazer, 200 W. Grant, Moundridge, KS 67107 H (620) 345-2906 O (620) 345-8313 email: [modelaroadster@hotmail.com](mailto:modelaroadster@hotmail.com)

Bruce P. Taylor, 131 35th Ave NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33704-1431; (727) 824-6367 email: [bruceptaylor@prodigy.net](mailto:bruceptaylor@prodigy.net)

Todd Daniels, Rogue Works, 324 East Sixth St, Red Hill, PA 18076

## Renault Club Tentative Events and Race Schedule 2005

Date(s)	State	Location	Event Information
APR 28 - MAY 1	GA	Braselton	Road Atlanta (HSR)
MAY 15	CA	Los Altos	3rd Annual All French Car Show at the Friendship Day show, Cañada College in Redwood City. Going North or South on I-280, exit Farm Hill Boulevard, and drive East to campus entrance. Look for the French cars!
MAY 22 - 24	PA	Carlisle	Carlisle Import, Kit, Replicar Nationals
MAY 23 - 24	PA	Carlisle	Susquehanna Regional SCCA
MAY 27 - 29	OR	Portland Area	NWCOC May Meet all French Car show. Sauvie Island Grange Hall 840. Host hotel La Quinta Inn 4319 N.W. Yeon, Portland OR.
MAY 27	TN	Nashville	Lane Museum
MAY 28	TN	Franklin	Eurofest Nashville
MAY 29	TN	Nashville Superspeedway	TRSCCA Solo II
JUN 19	BC	Vancouver	Italian-French Car Show at Lonsdale Quay Market
JUN 19	TN	Oak Ridge	ETRSCCA Solo II
JUL 17	TN	Sevierville	ETRSCCA Solo II
JUL 22 - 24	TN	Knoxville	Master's Ultimate Auto Expo
AUG 14	TN	LMU Harrogate	ETRSCCA Solo II
SEP (TBA)	GA	Dalton	Borderline Road Rally (SCCA)
SEP 18	TN	Greenville	ETRSCCA Solo II
SEP 24 - 25	OH	Dayton	Orphan Car Show and Rally
OCT 16	TN	Sevierville	ETRSCCA Solo II
NOV 6	CA	Van Nuys	Best of France and Italy, at Woodley Park
NOV 6	TN	LMU Harrogate	ETRSCCA Solo II (if necessary)
NOV 25 - 28	DF	Mexico City	Acapulco Rally

\* ETRSCCA local championship consists of twelve events with top seven finishes counting towards the championship. Races take place on Sundays throughout East Tennessee in Harrogate, Oak Ridge, Sevierville, and Greenville.

## Another Great Year

By Marvin McFalls

2004 was a banner year for Renault. With a record nearly 2.5 million vehicles sold worldwide they increased sales by 4.2%. They are once again the number one automobile and light commercial vehicle seller in all of Europe with 10.8% of the market. They are the number one seller in France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and Luxembourg as well as second in the Netherlands and top three in the U.K. and Austria. However the biggest improvement has to be outside of Western Europe where sales were up more than sixteen percent. This was due to mainly to the introduction of the Logan but also economic recovery in places like Turkey where sales more than doubled.

Back in Europe, Mégane was once again the top-selling model, and its sister Scénic is also number one in the small MPV segment (mini van). While the new Modus had a

better than expected start with over eighty thousand orders since September, in only four months Modus has already cracked the top five in monthly sales in France. All told for the year Renault had four of the top ten selling cars in France with Mégane and Clio, first and third respectively. More than 28% of the small cars sold in France were from Renault, and next year they should approach a third of the market with a full year of Modus, the launch of the new Clio, along with the introduction of the Logan.

But it is just not the small and mid-size market where Renault is gaining ground. Espace is still number one in the large MPV market with more than twenty percent of the market. Meanwhile Laguna continues to make strides. As the first of the new generation of the Renault in 2000, it has more than ¾ of million models sold. For 2005 it will receive a restyling and some additional options so you can expect sales to continue to improve in 2005 and it may even crack the top five in its segment. Combined Vel Satis



Above: Samsung SM7, below SM3 and SM5. Right: Dacia Pickups and Logan. All photos from Renault Publicity.



and Espace totaled five percent of the luxury car market in Europe, while this isn't a large number it is better than many past years.

Once again Renault is number one in LCVs in Western Europe, which it increased its sales by 8.1% in 2004. Kangoo Express is the top selling small van, while Traffic sales were up more than sixteen percent, while the Master remains a steady seller with 6.1% of its segment. Between the Traffic and Master, Renault remained number three in medium-size van sales.

Outside of Western Europe the Renault Brand itself improved sales by 23.7%, and Dacia was up 38.6%. The one downside would have to be Samsung Motors, which again slipped with more than eighteen percent less sales over the previous year. However 2005 may be an improved year for Samsung with the introduction of the top of the range SM7 slated to join the SM3 and SM5.

2005 may go down as the year of the Logan, as production continues to increase in Romania and additional production will begin in Russia, Morocco, and Columbia by the end of the year. Also new markets will open all over Eastern Europe, the Middle East, as well as Western Europe. Growth also continues for the Renault Brand in Eastern Europe, Turkey, and Latin America.

With an enlarged and almost completely new line of vehicles Renault will look to maintain their ranking as the number one automaker in Europe, while improving profits. Meanwhile it plans to increase sales in the rest of its world markets and in new markets. If business can continue to improve for the next several years, Renault should be poised to look at the US market as this decade closes. Hopefully by then, the U.S. Dollar will be back on equal or better footing with the Euro making it possible to sell cars competitively. None the less the future is definitely bright for the French automaker, and its alliance partner Nissan.



# Renault in Australia

By Marvin McFalls

After a very successful off-season Renault arrived in Melbourne very optimistic about their chances. Not to let the cat out of the bag they didn't participate in the first practice session like some of the other top teams. New rules with only one engine for two race weekends, as well as only one set of tires per race will take some time to adjust to. For the third time in three years due to the new changes Renault has introduced a new engine. Unlike in previous years they feel they are finally on a competitive level with the other top teams. As far as the chassis, it has been argued they have had the best car the past two seasons and if only they had a motor.

So with no more excuses, Renault comes into the season expecting results. While a championship may not come, the team expects to win many races and have consistent podium finishes. As first round qualifying began on Saturday, a rainstorm had just covered the track, so it was a disadvantage to go out early. Michael Schumacher and his brother Ralf were two of the first drivers out, and they would have the slowest times of those who finished their laps. However shortly after the session began the sun came out and the track began to dry. This played right into the hands of Giancarlo Fisichella, who was competing for the Renault team for the first time since the 2001 season. As soon as Giancarlo finished his lap, it came another downpour, for all intensive purposes wiping out the rest of the session. Included in the drivers who had to go out in the slop were Fernando Alonso, Rubens Barrichello, Kimi Raikkonen, and Juan Pablo Montoya.

The new format also calls for a second qualifying session just prior to the race. With the times so widely spread because of the previous day's rain the cumulative scoring system didn't play much of a role. Fisichella easily secured the pole by almost three seconds. While Alonso and the other top pilots started in the second half of the field.

As the race was ready to begin, they had to call off the start because Kimi Raikkonen's Mercedes wouldn't go back into gear and he would have to be pushed off the grid. He was able to salvage the day and start from pit road. As the cars reformed and were given the signal to launch, Giancarlo easily moved his Renault into the lead, he was followed by former Renault pilot Jarno Trulli and David Coulthard who made an impressive start to get by Mark Webber in the Williams BMW. Meanwhile Barrichello made the best start of the top drivers in the rear moving up to eighth, while Fernando Alonso was stuck behind Jacques Villeneuve in tenth. After many laps following the Sauber he finally made it around the Canadian.

Once the first pit stop was completed. Trulli dropped back in his Toyota, and Alonso passed him coming out of the pits moving into sixth place. Barrichello also moved into fourth position in the number two Ferrari. While the seven-



time champion Michael Schumacher and Kimi Raikkonen were battling for a spot in the top ten. Up front Fisichella was cruising with a more than ten second lead over Coulthard in the Red Bull Cosworth (formerly Jaguar).

As the final pit stops approached, most had come to the conclusion that that race was now for second place. Unfortunately for David Coulthard, this meant he was the target. With blinding stops both Barrichello and Alonso were able to pass the Scot, but a fourth place finish in their first race would be a wonderful result for the Austrian energy drink, and to prove that it just wasn't a fluke his teammate Christian Klien was in seventh position. However the final stop would prove to be unproductive for Michael Schumacher, as he tried to hold off Nick Heidfeld in the Williams BMW. Both cars ended in the gravel trap, and were two of only three retirements on the afternoon.

While Alonso did his best to catch the Ferrari, it appeared that he had used up his tires reaching the front, so he would have to settle for third. As Fisichella approached the finish line the entire team awaited him atop the fence across from the flag stand. This was Renault's first win since Monaco last season, and the first dual podium result for the team since 1983. Other notable drivers to score points in the race included: Mark Webber in fourth, Juan Pablo Montoya in sixth and Kimi Raikkonen survived a horrible weekend to finish eighth scoring the last point of the event. Jarno Trulli had to be the most disappointed, after starting second he finished ninth just outside the points.

All and all the only way Renault could have scripted the event any better was if Alonso had passed Barrichello, as it stands however they scored twice as many points as their Italian rival. There is no doubt that Renault is on the right track and they are firmly atop the Driver's and Constructor's Championship standings. Time will tell how the team adapts, last season they started out quickly and faded as the season went along. If the team can continue to improve we could finally see the end of Ferrari's stranglehold on the sport.

## Going into Retirement

By Marvin McFalls

After more than forty years of continuous production and over 27 million produced France's version of the small block Chevy is officially retired. Yes who would have thought back in 1962 when Renault introduced its newest model the R8, which featured the revolutionary five main bearing engine known as the Sierra type, that it would remain in production for more than a generation.

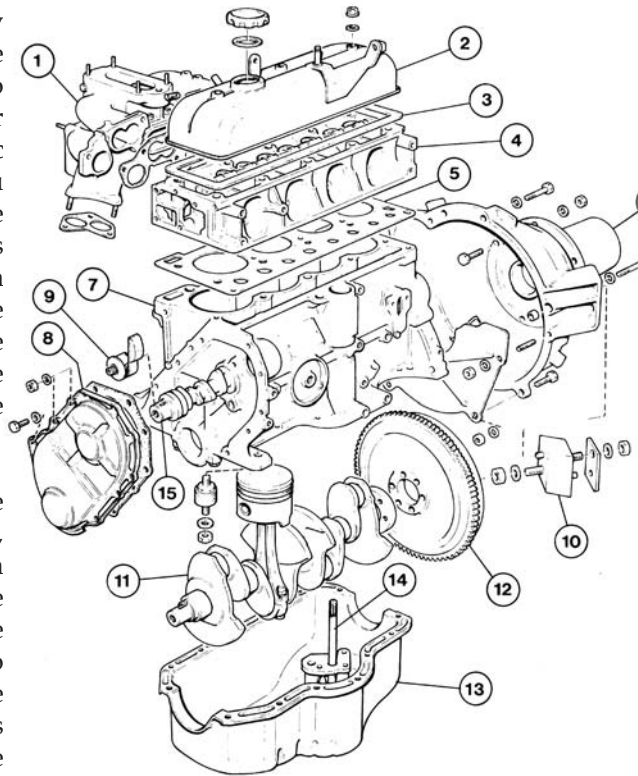
Over the years it went through several advancements. Starting out as an under 1000cc engine with 48 hp and reached it peak at about 1500cc and a reported nearly 700 hp in one of the Maxi R5 Turbo. However the majority of the engines were built in the standard 1100 and 1300cc versions, and most were built in the small French town of Cleon. Over the years the name of the town and factory became synonymous with the little engine. In France if you went into a garage and asked for a part for your 'Sierra engine' the mechanic would have looked at you like you were crazy. And in fact by the late eighties and early nineties cars were in fact identified as Cleon 5 or Cleon Clio if it featured the old push rod engine instead of the overhead cam version. Even some repair manuals refer to the engine as a Cleon instead of a Sierra.

Through the decades the engine became like a reliable, trusted friend. You knew when you turned the key the engine would come to life and take you to wherever you needed to go. It wasn't uncommon to see an engine reach 300,000 miles here in the US, and in that time possibly be fitted in two or three chassis. I have personally never seen one of these engines blown up, however if they had a weakness it would be the rod bearings. It wasn't uncommon once you motor reached 200,000 miles that you would have to have the crank turned. Unfortunately this would generally lead to another turning, as it seemed when the crank was turned so went the hardness in the metal.

The only other problem that the Cleon engine suffered from was overheating. Whether it was caused by mechanics whom weren't familiar with the closed cooling system on many models, or by a loss of water from a leak. It wasn't uncommon to have the head milled four or five times over the years. However after replacing you would actually enjoy a bit of rebirth of power. Generally speaking a Sierra engined vehicle would be retired because the body was rusting off of it, or it was involved in a collision. If by chance you took care of your chassis and were able to drive the engine much more than 300,000 miles, it would begin to show a loss of power to a point where you would scrap the car or get another engine with less miles.

In its final years the Cleon was built in Romania, and was used in the R12 derivatives the 1100, 1300, and Dacia Pick-up. Over the years it was used in many Renaults and many other applications. At this point I will try to name every vehicle it was used in but I am certain I will forget a few so please excuse me. R8(including Gordini), R10, R12, R4 and R6 (including rodéos), Estafette, Alpine 110, 310, (many of the LeMans prototypes and all of the licensed versions such as Dinalpin and FASA) Rene Bonnet and Matra dJet, R5(all versions including Alpine, Supercinq, Rodeo, and R5 Turbo), R15, R18, Fuego, R19, Twingo, and Clio. Other Applications include: Amphicar, DAF 55 and 66, Volvo 343 (B14), Mercruiser (marine application), Continental (farm applications). Beyond these I have seen some individual uses that even include a sawmill.

Needless to say it has been a very versatile engine, and I was made aware of the great respect the French people have for it when I saw a scale model on display at the Manoir de l'Automobile. So while there will be no new versions of the engine produced, this is by no means good-bye. I don't believe there will ever be a point in time when I don't own at least one vehicle with a Sierra engine. I am fairly certain that even one hundred years from now they will still be in existence, I wonder what history will have to say about them then.



Engine Diagram from Volvo

## Prince of Monaco's Antique Car Collection

Story and photos from Marvin McFalls

Better known in Monaco as: Collection De Voitures Anciennes De S.A.S. Le Prince De Monaco. You would think with a name like that everyone would know about the Museum, but surprisingly this is a little known destination. The really interesting thing is that it is located on the second level of one of the most popular shopping areas in the Principality, as well as it can be seen looking down from the grounds of the palace up above, yet it is one of the biggest secrets in all of Monaco. The day we were there maybe ten other people visited the exhibit. What the collection lacks in publicity it makes up for with quality of vehicles and uniqueness.

With more than 100 vehicles and a first class facility carved into the mountainside it is every bit what you would expect. Besides automobile the first thing you will see when you enter the hall is a selection of Royal Carriages. Also featured is a terrific collection of pre-1930s models including a 1903 De Dion Bouton, 1912 Renault 12cv Torpedo, 1913 Panhard Levassor, 1924 model T Ford, and a 1924 Peugeot Quadrilette , not to mention a 1925 5cv Citroën. I don't believe you will see a more diverse collection of limousines displayed anywhere. The collection includes: nearly a dozen Rolls Royce, several Mercedes and Citroëns, with at least one Hispano Suiza, Delahaye, Delage, Renault, Jaguar, Cadillac, Lincoln and Packard.

If the ancient or luxury vehicles aren't your taste there is also a nice small collection of sports cars and racers. Included in the museum are makes by Maserati, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Bugatti, and Facel Vega. With the French Influence it is probably the only museum in the world where you will find a Ferrari 250 GT Convertible displayed proudly next to a Alpine A110 1300. To me seeing the French Racing Blue next to the Italian Red was a real treat.

Also included was a nice collection of Military vehicles that were mainly of American origin including





## New Laguna

Story and photos by Marvin McFalls

Since our last visit to France several versions of the new Megane including the Coupe Cabriolet, as well as the Modus have hit the streets, but we arrived just in time to see the new and improved Laguna. On the ninth of February it debuted at the Amsterdam Motor Show. Since its launch in 2001 kicked off the new generation of Renault design, it seemed due for some upgrades.

However the improvements are not just cosmetic. Quality has been emphasized in the new design as well as using some new technologies to improve comfort. The new dashboard is much more user friendly. There is also a new GPS Navigation System available, Multimedia sound system as well as a hands-free telephone. Before now these features were only available on the top of the range models.

A new version is also being introduced. The Laguna GT features a 205hp 2.0 litre turbo engine that gives you the features of a luxury car with the handling of sport model. It sounds like the new Laguna Grand Touring will definitely take a bite out Mercedes, BMW, and Audi corner of the lower luxury market.

Just another piece of the Puzzle of the most complete line of vehicles on Earth. Unfortunately we weren't able to see the GT version, but we did see couple of breaks (station wagons). The first one we saw was on a truck on the way to dealership in Paris and the second was on the street when we visited Cannes. We also saw one of the new Initiale flagship sedans down the street from our hotel in Nice. While the changes are subtle, it is still an improvement to what was already a good product.

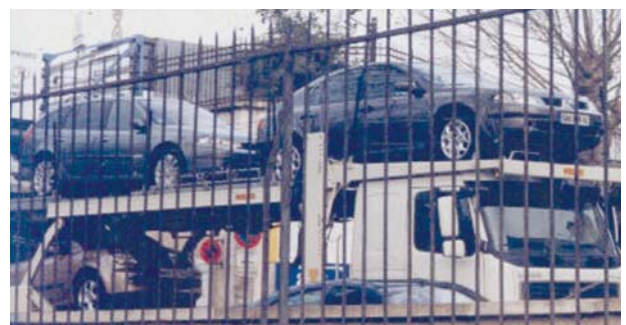


Jeep, Ford, Dodge, and GMC. Not to be outdone by the Americans, they proudly had one of the Citroën tracked vehicles from the Chinese expedition. Other unusual American cars included in the exhibit were a 1956 Chrysler Imperial and a 1966 Buick Skylark.

Probably my favorite part of the collection was the more common European cars. I enjoyed seeing the 2cv, 4cv, VW Beetle, Fiat 600, and some of the other basic forms of transportation. I guess the most basic had to be the [one] cylinder Russian Trabant. While I find it hard to believe a member of the royal family drove this car, it was a real treat to see a \$500 car in the same collection as million dollar ones.

I believe the crown of royal car enthusiast goes to Prince Charles III. It appears that most of the cars in the collection were obtained during his reign. However many of the royals had favorites that they brought into the collection over the years including: Prince Albert the 1<sup>st</sup> Ford Model A, and Prince Louis II Renault Floride. In discussing members of the royal family favorite cars, we would not want to leave out America's most beloved member. Princess Grace Kelly's contribution to the collection was a London Taxi.

So if you ever find yourself in Monaco, and if the incredible scenery or any of the other beautiful distractions don't keep you away, I highly recommend visiting the collection.



## What a Difference a Year Makes

Story and photos by Marvin McFalls

When last we traveled to Paris we stopped by Île Seguin to see the old factory where so many Renaults were born. This year we returned, but for another reason, to see what was left. Demolition has been going on since last summer and it's a slow go because of the location of the plant. Being on an Island in the middle of the Seine, it isn't possible to use the large cranes and wrecking balls, so they have to use hand driven equipment and bulldozers to knockdown and remove the rubble.

At this point almost all remnants of the factory are gone except for the bridge and front entrance. It appears that they will remain. Also the building's foundation for the most part appears to be intact. I am not certain but it looks like they will rebuild on top of the original foundation. It was announced late last year that part of the land on the island had been leased out for commercial development. At this point it looks like the South end of the Island is preparing for new construction.

For land that had originally been planned to be used as Louis Renault's, and a few other prominent families' retirement estate, then later as a park for workers to enjoy, ended up becoming the center of the largest industrial complex in France. Now it appears that its future will be that of a shopping mall. However Renault plans to keep a portion of the property probably for a showroom and maybe a small museum dedicated to the remembrance of the site and the company's long history in Boulogne - Billancourt

While the future of Renault is in the modern, state of the art Technocentre, for me Île Seguin is still what I think of when I think of Renault. I believe that I will always be drawn to the island on the Seine, and hope to visit each time I travel to France. Over the years I have collected hundreds of photos of the island and I even have a video from French Television filmed as the demolition began. One of these days I hope to put all of these images on a CD-ROM and I will make it available to members. If you are ever in Paris I recommend a visit.

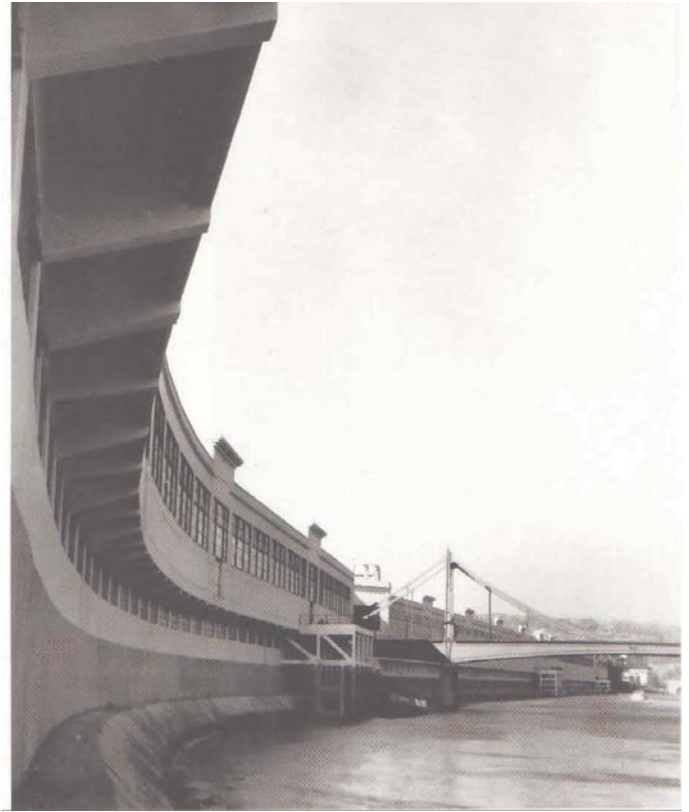


Photo above by Doisneau



## Traveling in Paris

Story by Marvin McFalls, photo from Campas

As for most people when you visit Paris most of the time you must use your feet. There is so much to see in close proximity. But should you need to travel a further distance the train is usually your best bet. However there is also the option of boat along the Seine. Unfortunately we didn't have a chance to do that on this trip so we gave our tickets to our travel companions Chris and Dan Barton. Now for the less attractive options; The most dangerous would have to be by bicycle, while the scariest but also the fastest would have to be by motorcycle or scooter, weaving in between cars and pedestrians alike. Probably the slowest would be by bus, all the diesel fumes aren't very attractive either. Your final option would be by car, either a taxi or if you are lucky enough to have a friend who owns a car.

While we definitely put some wear on the soles of our shoes and took a few taxi and train rides for most of our stay we were transported in the finest fashion, by Renault. As we arrived in Paris in the pre-dawn hours as we came off the plane there was a Renault Bus waiting to take us to the terminal. Our good friends Jean-Jacques came to the city in his Renault Avantime. So Brent and I took the train from the airport, south of Paris where we met up with

Jean-Jacques. The Avantime is a incredible car with almost every option imaginable. He showed us quite possibly his favorite feature the GPS Navigation, as we traveled from the train station to his mother's house. After meeting his Uncle Roland and having a shower and a nice breakfast, we traveled back to the city, while we were joined on this trip by Jean-Jacques' lovely wife as we made our way through the narrow streets to our hotel. After checking in to our hotel we were joined by the Barton's, and after a brief introduction we said good-bye to the Campas' for the evening. They went off to do some sightseeing of their own, as they were interested in some of the shops along the covered side streets. We spent the rest of day using our feet to see some of the Parisian sights.

The next morning two more Campas' and one more Renault joined us. Brothers, Claude and Marc joined their parents at the grandmothers the previous evening. This was the maiden voyage for Claude's 1.6 litre Clio to the city. He had the car nearly four years, and as it would turn out it would also be its final voyage. Claude had just purchased a Clio Renault Sport, and so when he returned home after the weekend he sold and delivered this Clio to a friend. Being that Brent and I had ridden in the Avantime the previous day, we gave Chris and Dan the opportunity to ride in luxury while we chose economy. That morning the weather forecast was calling for rain but we were surprised as we

started on our trip that skies were beginning to clear. By the time we reached our first stop at the original Renault factory in Bologne Billancourt, the sun began to peak through the clouds. As we arrived at Versailles the sun was shining making for a wonderful visit. However by the time we had stopped for lunch the clouds began to move in, and by the time we reached Flins we could tell that rain was imminent.

After our visit to the Renault Collection, the rain had indeed found us and we had three hours until our dinner reservations at l'Atelier Renault on the Champs Elysées. With it raining we couldn't do much sight seeing so Jean-Jacques proposed we do some sight seeing by car. Which in theory sounds like a lot of fun, it is in fact very stressful for the driver. At this point we found out why Claude had never driven his Clio to Paris before, While Jean-Jacques seemed to enjoy the challenge of navigating in heavy traffic.

We seemed to find our way into the heaviest traffic in city as we had to take Marc to the train station so he could get back home to his family. Once we left the train station, the traffic improved somewhat as we made our way to the Champs Elysées, however the weather did not as the rain continued.

We enjoyed the display and food at l'Atelier and even though it was still raining we decided to walk off

our meal and visit some of the other showrooms as well as the Arc de Triomphe. Here is a nice travel tip, when visiting the Arc, instead of getting yourself killed trying to cross eight lanes of traffic in the circle around the Arc, use the tunnel to safely access the monument. Also if you are traveling up the Champs Elysées you can also avoid the traffic circle as there is a tunnel for cars as well. After our enjoyable walk, we made our way back to the car, as it was nearly midnight, this is probably the best time to drive around Paris. We were moving rights along at a blistering pace (probably about 35 mph) and on the radio the Dixie Chicks were playing, it turned out they had become popular in France when they spoke out against the President last year. So as we passed the Louvre we just had to all sing out "Earl had to Die". It is definitely an experience I will never forget.

The next day we took taxis to and from Retromobile, and on Sunday we took a shuttle to the airport. Before we came home a few more laps on Renault airport buses were in order. I must admit my favorite mode of transportation in Paris is to walk. It is just so different from Tennessee, that it is a real treat to grab a map and just head out in particular direction with no destination in mind. I guess in a way it is similar to grabbing a map and compass and heading out in the Smoky Mountains, although the hills aren't as big and the paths are better marked. While travelling in Paris can definitely be a challenge it will always be memorable.



# Paris 2005 Photos

By Jean-Jacques Campas and Dan Barton

Here are several photos from Retromobile, the Renault collection and the atelier Renault. The theme of Retromobile 2005 was aerodynamic car designs. Among the featured classic streamliners was the Tatra 87, Mathis 333 three wheeler, Renault's prototype which looks like a large 4 CV, and cars from Wimille.



Above: from the Renault collection. Upper right, Bugatti Royale Esders Roadster, a re-creation started by the Schlumpf brothers at Mulhouse.



Below, the Reinastella show vehicle. Below left: early Alpine from the Renault collection.





Scenes from Retromobile and the Renault Collection. Below, R 16 design display from Retromobile. Lower right, early dash-shift R5 at the Atelier Renault. Top right, BMW Isetta, Mathis 333 streamliner.



Below: across from Île Seguin.



## Renault: Making Sense

Story by Chris Harris photos: Renault Publicity

If I owned a car business – had myself one of those swanky franchised forecourts – I'd like it to have a silver rhombus and a yellow badge saying Renault above the door. Why Renault? Because this week the Renault phenomenon hasn't so much sprung into focus but rather clocked me square on the jaw.

Every manufacturer whose brand image is somewhere south of Volvo, ie the mainstreamers, need to take a very long, hard look at what Renault's management has achieved and wonder how the hell they are going to compete. The way I see it, chances are they can't.

Here's why. Renault's range of cars is so complicated and extensive that it's quite difficult to know what's going on – at the last count it had 22 different models, and individually many of them are very good cars. But it is their collective effect, the message that this group of disparate (and sometimes weird) vehicles send out that matters. In a world obsessed with prestige, Renault has established itself as a sub-prestige brand and managed to make a virtue of the fact. No one else, apart from possibly Volvo, has done this.

As the allure of premium ensnared the Hello! Generation and its accompanying trappings, Renault didn't get hung on trying to cater for that market. It simply got on with developing excellent, affordable, and crucially, interesting cars. And now, I think that Renault-ness is a brand commodity that most other mainstreamers would pay billions for. Anyone can drive Renault because it says everything and nothing about them. Because of that a Renault purchase is granted unique status in the marketplace – somehow it sensible and interesting. A brand chameleon, Renault is capable of chic-ing up sassy superminis, playing the cosy safety card in the midfield and flogging giant MPVs.

Renault also has a unique sense of humor. The Avantime was never going to sell, but they built it for the bloody-minded Frenchness of the whole thing. The Clio



V6 is quite absurd. Both haven't sold well, but they both contribute greatly on a subliminal level, helping shuffle the company image away from the ordinary.

Then there's racing. At a time when Ford is again getting its underwear terminally knotted about motor sport expenditure, Renault calmly and quietly trucks along with a global programme that makes a mockery of Henry's fumbblings. It has made single-seater racing its own – look at how many current grand prix stars started in Formula Renault. It has also created the most wide spread stock car series with the Clio Cup. Again, the message underscoring all this pulls the perception of the company a little left of regular.

The only black mark is its current obsession with Euro NCAP results. No company has piggy-backed the European crash tests with more success or as little shame. It's only natural that crash worthiness should sell cars, but what started as a clever campaign is now bordering on disingenuous.

Either way, it all contributes to a wieldy company that has defined itself at a crucial junction in car history. It's difficult to see a future for anything overtly mainstream as society becomes more infatuated with notions of perceived superiority. I'd say that Renault has carefully redefined the accepted face of ordinary motoring. Now that it has done that, they can focus on making business more efficient as Ford, GM, VW, and Peugeot spend millions on 'positioning consultants' in an effort to work out what they have become and where they might be going.

I sat next to Patrick Blain, vice president of Renault Europe, during the Modus launch. There was never a more relaxed car company executive. His company is on a roll and he knows it.

Chris Harris writes for *Autocar* magazine in the UK. Special thanks to the Renault Owners Club of Great Britain for providing this story.



# The Renault Collection At Lane Motor Museum in Nashville

By Bethany Hopkins

Lane Motor Museum in Nashville, Tennessee harbors a gem of a collection of Renault automobiles. Three of the cars in the collection, displayed in a barrier free environment, belonged to Jeff Lane, a Renault Owners Club of North America member who lives in Nashville. He donated his private car collection to the museum which opened to the public on October 18, 2003. Lane Motor Museum is home to one of America's most remarkable car collections. The other Renaults were purchased by the museum.

The extensive Renault collection exhibited at Lane Motor Museum includes:

- 1960 4 CV
- 1959 Dauphine Henney (electric)
- 1960 Dauphine (electric)
- 1983 R5 Turbo2
- 1985 Alpine 310
- 1986 Alpine GT Turbo
- 1996 Renault Sport Spider

The 4CV came to the museum via Brill Byron White of California. It has been featured at DKW meets and micro car meets on the west coast. The 4CV was the first French car to top production of a million units. The Alpine 310 is also of special interest to Renault collectors. Jeff Lane was the second owner of the vehicle. The first owner purchased the vehicle new in Connecticut. It is displayed in extremely original condition with only 15,000 miles. It has a mid-engine, fiberglass, monocoque chassis and a V-6 engine. This car is extremely light at only 1800 pounds and is quite fast.

Lane Motor Museum is located in a well-known Nashville landmark, the former Sunbeam Bakery. Home to the bread company beginning in 1951, the 132,000 square-foot facility was the largest and most modern bakery in the area at the time of its opening. Production ceased in 1994, although distribution continued from the company's headquarters until the end of 2002 when Lane Motor Museum purchased the building. Today visitors can view a collection of over 100 cars and 10 motorcycles representing more than 50 different makes of vehicles originating in Asia, Europe, North and South America and ranging in age from 1924 to 2003 models.



# Central Florida International Auto Show

By Marvin McFalls

Every Year I try to get out of town after Thanksgiving. Not only are there some incredible travel bargains, but by that time it usually starting to get colder in Tennessee. So I try to go where it is warm, last year I tried to make it to Mexico but I couldn't find a good price on flight, so this year I settled for a trip to Central and South Florida. Little did I know three days after I booked this trip and excellent rate to Mexico City turned up, but as they say timing is everything and I have never had good timing. So after getting over the disappointment of missing another Acapulco Rally, I decided to make the best out of my Florida trip.

I arrived in Sunny Orlando about 5PM and picked up my rental car. This turned out to be a Ford Focus ZX4. I decided to go straight to the Auto Show as it closed at 10PM. As I arrived at the exhibition hall there were signs directing visitors up stairs, after walking down a long corridor they gave me the big tease. Through several large panes of glass you could see the entire exhibit floor. Now I headed back down stairs and into the exhibit hall. As I walked in the door I was surprised to see Alliance Partner Nissan was the first make featured. I was just like a kid at an amusement park, and I could figure out what I wanted to look at first.

I decided to work my way around the room and then I would choose which cars I wanted to see first. The first thing I noticed was that they had the fine Italian sports cars corralled. So there wasn't going to be any opportunity to sit behind the wheel of a Ferrari or Maserati. Nor would I have the opportunity to check out the Ford GT or several of the prototypes as they were on revolving displays behind ropes. However I had no problem sliding behind the wheel of the new 6 Series BMW Convertible or a Mercedes CLK 500. Also there were ample opportunities to check out a new Jag, or Hummer. While I was sitting the CLK I was amazed how little the interior and climatic controls had changed in the Mercedes over the past twenty years. Speaking of twenty year old features, many cars still have tape player which doesn't come as a complete surprise, but when I sat behind the wheel of the A4 Cabriolet I couldn't help but wonder are the car companies getting kick backs from car stereo manufactures?

At this point I decided to check out some of the latest and greatest cars. The all new Holden/ Pontiac GTO was pretty nice, but I preferred the display of classic GTOs that were in the back of exhibition hall. I checked out the first ever Pontiac G6 whatever that means, and I was very disappointed with gauges. They were plastic and they looked really cheap with a wind tunnel design. Next I checked out the Mazda 6, which also had unusual gauges, they were completely dark until you turned the switch on. I was much fonder of this model and thought the Sportwagon version was very practical. Another very expensive vehicle that had almost no gauges was the Chevy SSR Convertible Pickup. I have been behind the wheel of race cars that had

more gauges. For more \$40,000 you would think you could check your oil pressure. One last story about gauges, I was very impressed with the new Lexus IS 300. It had very nice chronograph dials like you would expect to see on a more expensive model. No wonder this car continues to dominate its class.

I next decided to look at some of the best deals. Probably the best car for your money right now is the much less popular Scion xA. With a price of around \$12,500 it is comparable in price to the base model Korean cars by the time you add all the options that aren't included in their \$9-10,000 list price. Next would come the Mazda 3 at \$14,000 it is much more car than the xA or xB and just as good as its much higher priced competition from the Focus, Corolla and Civic. The next best deal was the Hyundai Elantra. I especially liked the five door model they had on display. The last of bargains would have to be the Toyota Matrix, I was surprised just how much room there is inside. It is probably the car that is closest in size to the Renault Scenic sold in the U.S.

Now for the bad, one thing I hate is vehicle that are already very expensive, and they make them even more expensive by putting someone's name on them. Starting with the Eddie Bauer Explorer they have more and more of these each year. To me it seems silly to pay a couple thousand more dollars just for a different interior, wheels, and someone's name. Ford has done this again with the all new Harley Davidson F Series. Next is what is known as the 'special edition' which basically includes a special badge and few more options. When I bought my Jeep Cherokee a few years back they told me for \$1900 more I could have a 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary model. I passed back then, and I saw what had to be the worst special edition model ever at this show. Believe it or not they have a Mercury Grand Marquis limited edition. I understand that Florida is the number one market for these cars but it seems insane. I can just see Grandpa pulling up to the retirement community and sliding out of his new Mercury and telling all the other guys check it out guys it is a special model. Finally let me mention what seemed like the worst deal of them all. The BMW X3 which features a meager 2.5 litre engine and a starting price of more than \$31,000 seemed to be the least bang for the buck.

At this point I decided to check out some of the sportier models. The one car I wanted to get in seemed like it was always crowded was the Mazda RX8. I have been fond of this car ever since I test drove one more than a year ago, I figured with all the new models no one would be interested in it. Believe it or not there were two models on display and both of them had people waiting all night to slide in behind the wheel. I found it easier to check out the brand new Mustang than the RX8. I found a few other sporty models that caught my eye, including the Subaru WRX STi, but I must admit I was more impressed with the Mitsubishi Evolution MT. It was painted in a unique Gun Barrel Grey including the BBS wheels. Finally I will mention the very popular Civic SI. I found this little car nicely done



with a terrific exterior design and beautiful black interior, the one thing I couldn't take my hand off was the gearshift. It wasn't located in the floor like most cars, it was in the center of the dash right below the stereo. While I have seen many European cars with this design this is the first time I have seen it here in the U.S. I just couldn't keep from working my way up and down the gearbox. Even though it is in an unfamiliar location I had no trouble shifting gears and I look forward to driving one in the near future.

Next thing you know over the P.A. system, I hear the auto show will be closing in thirty minutes. I still haven't checked out the trucks and SUVs, so I hurry over to the Jeep display. I really like the integrated fog lights on the roof of the new Liberty. They also had a nice new retro prototype that also caught my eye. I also enjoyed the Nissan Titan display which included a bare chassis without the body, and I was really impressed with a unique feature on the tailgate. How many times have you unlatched a tailgate and it slip out of your hand only to crash down. The Titan tailgate will not do this, I didn't have time to figure out exactly how it worked but if you let the tail gate go it would fall a couple inches and then lower slowly until it was all the way down. As you can tell it doesn't take much to entertain me. Finally I want to mention probably the neatest concept on display. It is called the Honda SUT. It is by far the neatest of the SUV / Pickup combos I have ever seen. Honda claims that in the future their will be a production model I am very skeptical how much it will look like this prototype, and I would hate to ask how much it will cost.

Needless to say, I had more than four hours at the show and I probably could have used four more. Although I don't like seeing brand new cars with fingerprints all over them, there just isn't anywhere else you can check out so many brand new cars in one place, and the salesmen for the most part don't bother you unless you have a question. I highly recommend visiting a larger auto show anytime you have a chance.



Photo: Honda SUT show vehicle from Bibliopticus Alanskii

## Adieu 'WRENNO'

Story and photos by Terry Zabransky

We said goodbye to an old friend the other day, our 1982 Renault R5, license plate 'WRENNO'. I never thought one car could gain so much admiration over the years! We purchased the car in 1991 for \$600, it was a bargain of a lifetime. I calculated, over the past 14 years, we put about \$4000 worth of parts and upgrades into her to keep the car running in top notch form. Although she wasn't the greatest looking in terms of bodywork(I semi-restored and painted the car in 1999), it ran like a champ! That car started in all types of weather. I remember one cold Chicago morning about twenty below freezing without the windchill, after a few turns of the starter, she came right to life.

The car was used as a daily driver for getting to work and running all sorts of errands. It was perfectly equipped for this use and its small size made parking a breeze. The many years of Chicago winters and all the salt finally took a toll on the frame and undercarriage. Judy and I made the painful decision to send her to the 'crusher'. Over the past few weeks, I removed every part from her except for the engine and transmission, both had 185k miles and were original. I will be using these parts for our other two R5s. It is a shame that the LeCar acquired such a bad reputation here in the states, because they really were great cars if given a little attention.

So, it was with a tear in my eye, that I watched our little red Renault leave our driveway for the last time. It was hooked to the rear of a tow truck on its way to meet its maker. She will always have a place in our hearts and we will always remember the service she gladly gave us. In our minds it will always be our 'WRENNO' the little red R5. Goodbye old Friend!



# Michelin "PAX" Tires

From PCN 15

## RUN-FLAT TECHNOLOGY

*Run-flat* technology is one solution for the obvious safety problems and outright hassle that a flat tire represents. Michelin has developed a system that brings run-flat technology from the laboratory, test tracks, and expensive race cars to minivans and SUV's.

Michelin calls their new technology "PAX." We will explain the theory of the PAX system in a bit, but first a bit of history. Michelin has shown their "PAX" system on their website for several years now. This editor even managed to catch a glimpse of an early prototype version about 4 years ago at Michelin's facility in central France. But finally, in late 2004, Michelin's PAX became available for the first time on a mainstream, family vehicle in North America. It is standard equipment on the Honda Odyssey Touring Edition, the high-end version of their minivan. It is already available on several models in Europe, including some Audi and Renault.

"We believe the Michelin PAX system represents the most significant development in tire technology since the radial tire revolution itself," said Tom Chubb, vice president of marketing for Michelin's Automotive Division, noting that Michelin pioneered many significant technological breakthrough on tires over the last 100 years.

Michelin recently demonstrated their PAX run-flat technology for the media on the Honda Minivan and the Audi A8. After the tires' sidewalls were artificially blown out, the cars were able to travel an additional 100 miles on the "flat" tire. The handling was scarcely different with the flat tire.

## THE TRX LESSON

Other companies are betting on PAX technology also. Michelin has successfully licensed it to four of its competitors: Goodyear, Pirelli, Toyo and Sumitomo. It appears that this licensing arrangement is specifically aimed at avoiding a marketing failure such as that Michelin experienced with another technologically advanced wheel/tire system twenty-five years ago. Remember *TRX tires*? Citroën CX and BMW owners may be well familiar with the TRX system and the resulting marketing problems.

The "TR" from "TRX" means "Tension Repartie" (spread tension). Michelin's TRX design from 1975 used a shallower rim ledge that allowed freer movement of the tire sidewalls under compression (bumps) but provided high lateral stiffness during cornering.

The tire bead and the mating area on the TRX wheel "lock" together. Since the fit of the TRX tire onto the wheel is unique, Michelin had to develop a way to ensure that it was not possible to inadvertently install a normal tire on a TRX wheel, or the reverse. Their solution was to only make metric sizes, rare for automotive tires.

The TRX represented a new stage in the development of radial tires and its design reconciled two contradictory design requirements: greater **comfort** (previously only provided by tall, flexible sidewalls) and more **precise steering** (normally provided by low, rigid sidewalls). In essence Michelin developed a tire with the ride quality of a 70 or 80-series tire, but with the handling benefits of a 60-series profile. This was thought to be a boon for the high-end luxury-sport car market.

But, despite the successful technology, customers resented the single-source nature of the tires and wheels and the resulting cost thereof. To make matters worse, once the cars were 5 or 10 years old, availability of TRX tires and wheels were spotty, at best. Soon the TRX wheels and tires became nothing but a monumental pain in the ass for their owners. So, for all Michelin's effort, good intentions, and advanced technology, the TRX system failed in the market.

This time, Michelin is intent to not make the same mistake - hence the licensing agreements of the PAX technology to other tire companies. They want to *ensure* that customers will have choices in the marketplace so their new technology has a chance to succeed.

## PAX THEORY

All tires use air pressure to support the weight of the vehicle. Self-supporting tires - the most common type of run-flats - typically have reinforced sidewalls that hold up the vehicle even if a tire has zero air pressure.

But self-supporting tires have many technical drawbacks including ride comfort, and rolling resistance. For those and other reasons, run-flat tires have met with limited success in the market (e.g. Dodge Viper and Chevrolet Corvette).

Michelin hopes to change that with PAX, which doesn't rely on a stiffened sidewall to keep a vehicle rolling in the event of flat. Instead, the PAX system uses a combination of a modified wheel, a special technique for keeping the tire on the wheel, and a polyurethane support ring that sits inside the tire. The polyurethane support ring is strong enough to hold the vehicle weight, but is also slightly flexible, providing some degree of compliance on bumps.

The PAX system allows a driver to keep going for up to 125 miles at up to 55 m.p.h. with a completely deflated tire, often with little discernible difference in handling. It also eliminates the need for a spare, thereby saving precious weight and space. However, since a flat tire with the PAX system would be barely discernable to the driver, an on-board electronic Tire Pressure Indication System (TPIS) is needed in conjunction with PAX tires. Otherwise, the driver may inadvertently try to drive indefinitely on a "flat" tire.

Will the on-board TPIS drive the cost of PAX tires out of reach of most cars? Not necessarily. The US's

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is mandating that TPIS systems be incorporated in all cars and trucks, with a phased-in implementation, starting in 2005 and ending in 2007. This is a fallout of the Bridgestone/Firestone Wilderness AT fiasco on the Ford Explorer a few years ago (*by the way, thanks a lot, Ford and Firestone*). So in the USA anyway, perhaps the PAX system will be able to ride the coat tails of this upcoming requirement.

One key to PAX is an anchoring system that keeps the tire firmly attached to the wheel even as it loses air. An anchoring system is necessary since the flat tire would otherwise tend to migrate off the bead of the wheel during driving maneuvers. Michelin designed the PAX system to anchor the tire to the wheel in such a way that even under hard cornering, the tire stays connected and actually holds tighter with more vertical load. With the tire firmly in place, the vehicle rides on the polyurethane support ring inside the tire, but the rubber of the tire tread still interfaces with the pavement.

The load bearing element, the flexible polyurethane support ring, is mounted inside the tire on the rim. You can see the support in the following cut-away:



A curious design detail is that the inside and outside diameter of the wheel at the flange must be of different diameter to allow the polyurethane ring to be installed. This of course means that the PAX tire will have a definite "inside" and "outside."

A good video of the PAX in action can be seen at the following website (if you have high-speed internet):

<http://www.theautochannel.com/news/2004/10/14/252663.html>

### HURDLES

There are of course some major hurdles for Michelin and their licensees to overcome. The biggest is tire mounting/dismounting equipment. At the moment, Honda dealers in North America are not yet equipped to remove the tire from the wheel for repair. So the entire assembly (wheel, tire and support ring) will have to be swapped out as an assembly. It has been stated that Michelin will pay for this service, at least for the time being, to help the technology get started.

But Honda dealers are not the only ones caught short of special equipment - this also means that your local gas station will have no way to repair a PAX either. Kind of a problem on your family trip to Yellowstone. Michelin does have a toll-free number to help buyers locate a nearby dealer, and will arrange for a PAX assembly to be delivered within 12 hours if no dealer is nearby. Some Michelin dealers are also equipped to replace or repair a PAX tire. Maybe so, but this author would not venture out on a long trip without a PAX spare in the car.

Michelin, their licensees, several auto manufacturers, and market research companies are all unanimous in their opinions that run-flat technology is here to stay and will gain popularity very fast. It believed that one of the technologies (PAX or other) will become standard in about 5 years.

### MICHELIN PAX UPDATE

The product is a unique "run flat" tire, called the *PAX System*. To summarize the technology simply, the PAX has a stiff polyurethane ring mounted on the wheel, inside the tire, that will support the car if the tire goes flat. With PAX, Michelin claims that a car with a fully deflated tire can run for many miles at normal speeds, with little discernable difference to the driver. There is a lot more to this fairly complex technology, and we suggest going back and reading the last newsletter if you want details (or go to Michelin's website).

This author recently had an opportunity to test the PAX System at Michelin's famous proving grounds in Clermont-Ferrand, France. I can say is that the PAX System is quite amazing. Read on.

While on a recent business trip to Michelin's headquarters in France, a colleague and I were given a chance to tour their vast network of test tracks in the lovely Auvergne region of France. Those of you who went to ICCCR '95 will remember this vast proving ground well.

After a hair-raising tour of their numerous test tracks in a new BMW 330, we were escorted to a Renault Scénic minivan equipped with PAX wheels and tires that was



parked on the side of their Formula 1 test track. We watched as our tour guide fully deflated a rear tire by removing the valve core. At first, the car sank as the tire deflated (as one would expect), but as soon as the polyurethane support ring inside the tire contacted the ground, the car stopped sinking. This left the appearance of a slightly low tire, not a fully flat one.



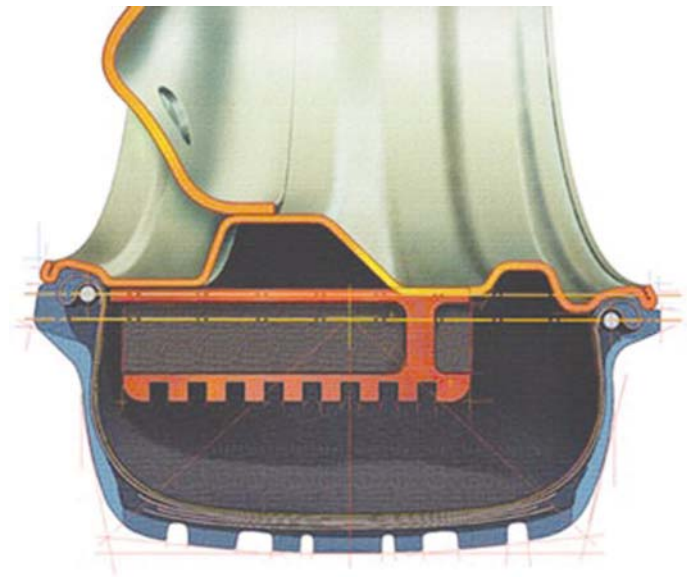
### Renault Scénic

From the driver's seat of the Renault, the first thing I noticed was a lighted display panel showing a car profile from above with representations of the four tires. One of the tire symbols was illuminated and blinking, indicating the flat tire on the left rear. As noted in the last article, PAX tires require an on-board tire pressure monitoring system since it may not be totally obvious to the driver that a PAX tire is underinflated (or completely flat).

The driving experience started out uneventful as I gingerly drove the car around the track. But despite media reports that a flat on a PAX was nearly unnoticeable, I immediately could feel that there was something "wrong" with the tire. First, vibration, road noise, and bumps from the pavement were more noticeable in that corner of the car since the car was riding on the stiff plastic ring instead of a pneumatic cushion. Also, the car seemed to wallow a bit when making turns in the direction that loaded the flat tire. Clearly noticeable, debunking several recent media reports that a flat PAX was unnoticeable to the driver.

As I gained confidence in the drivability of the car, I pushed the Renault harder and harder into turns on the windy Formula 1 track at higher and higher speeds. Corners that unloaded the flat tire were largely normal and you could scarcely tell that anything was wrong. But if you attempted a very hard corner in a direction that loaded the flat tire, a distinct noise emerged from the flat tire accompanied by a feeling that there was suddenly a large drag force from that corner of the car.

Incidentally, when I was attempting to drive at high speeds with the flat tire, a warning chime sounded and an illuminated alert displayed on the dash when passing through the 110 km/h (68 mph) mark, warning you that



you are driving too fast for the "flat" tire. Clearly, the PAX system must be integrated into the car's original design, as opposed to a retrofit.

After a lengthy and punishing test run, we stopped the little Renault to see what damage I had inflicted on the car or the tire. Much to my surprise, flat tire was totally undamaged although the surface of the flat tire was noticeably warmer to the touch than its normally-inflated mate on the other side. A Michelin employee simply re-installed the valve core, inflated the tire, and pressed the little Renault back into its normal routine.

At first I was a bit disappointed that driving on a flat PAX tire was so distinctly noticeable. Part of my disappointment undoubtedly stemmed from the (erroneous) media reports I had read indicating that you could not feel that the tire was flat. But despite the slight noise and vibration that the flat tire produced, the little Renault actually drove quite well. The car felt totally stable and safe. Braking, even hard braking, felt normal and I had a comfortable feeling that I could safely drive the car for many miles. Also, it is worth remembering that I was driving quite hard on a test track, much more severe than routine day-to-day driving.

So in the end, after thinking about it, I changed my mind and was thankful that the flat was noticeable to the driver and passengers, as it will clearly motivate one to get the PAX tire re-inflated or repaired. If a flat PAX was totally indistinguishable to the occupants, then drivers would perhaps ignore the blinking light on the dash and just keep driving indefinitely.

Driving the PAX on a test track was a unique experience and it made me appreciate how Michelin keeps pushing the envelope with new technologies. And what could be better than to follow up the test drive with a French meal and a bottle of red wine, both readily available in Michelin's corporate cafeteria!

## Challenger Motors Renault?

If anyone has more information concerning the subject of the following emails, please contact the club.

Lincoln Sarmanian wrote:  
Chuck [Forward] & Richard [Bonfond]:  
I went to the Portland Swap Meet today,  
and found an interesting badge. It is  
Diamond-shaped and says:

Challenger Renault  
Los Angeles Calif



Did Challenger sell Renaults? If so, what models and what years? Are there any photos or adverts? I have never heard of this and would like to know what is known about this. I want to write something up on it for the newsletters (Citroen and Renault).

Thanks! Lincoln

--- Yes they did as I was contacted in 2002 about a 2 door Citroen out in the desert. Being a 2 door in the description, I had them E-mail me a picture. It was a prewar Renault Juvaquatre. It had Challenger tags on the body and engine but with the "Citroen" legend which is why they initially contacted Pete [Smay]. I think Challenger was gearing up to sell Renaults but their shipment was sunk and then they sold out to Charlie [Dirscherl]. I'm surprised to find that they had tags made for selling Renaults but didn't tag this one unless it was the first. The owner is PAT MCMAHON.



I've been corresponding with Red Dellinger. He picked up the Citroen Diesel truck I saw at an estate sale in the early 80s. Challenger brought in one Diesel chassis and Charlie added the body and bed. During the war, Charlie put in German injectors in order to get it to run right. Richard, do you have any info on this truck for Red? I was going by the stories that Charlie told me after I asked him about it.

Since Challenger was bringing in Cits prewar, it would have been natural to include Renaults. They probably ordered the tags made but never had cars for them. Now if we can just find a Talbot-Lago or Delahaye with a Challenger Citroen tag and the owners don't know what it is.

--- Remember, Charlie was just servicing the cars prior to the war. Challenger was a partnership of two others that were importing the cars. Charlie bought them out in late 1940 after their last shipment was torpedoed by the Germans and they had no stock left. I think it was a shrewd move on his part as the Sweetzer (sp?) garage name would have attracted too much attention and too little work with the anti-German sentiment of the time.

I asked him on several occasions about the fabled V8 that was reported to be have been sent to Hollywood in 1934 but he never heard anything about it. Of the many visits to his shop, one car still intrigues me as I saw it parked on the side street up from the shop. It was a very well traveled (i.e. beat up) 15/6 with luggage rack on top and the spare on back. It looked like it was still in daily use from some third world country. What was different was the hood. Instead of the louvers, it had three of the prewar vent doors along the side of the hood, all proportioned correctly with the hood lines. Never seen the car again.

Chuck



Richard Bonfond wrote:

I've seen pictures of that truck before, not sure if I have it or not. Will have to look. Charlie never sold Renaults, but that doesn't mean he didn't consider or plan to. I know he had considered other makes such as VW well before they officially sold here. - Richard

## 50th Acapulco Rally, 26 Nov 2004

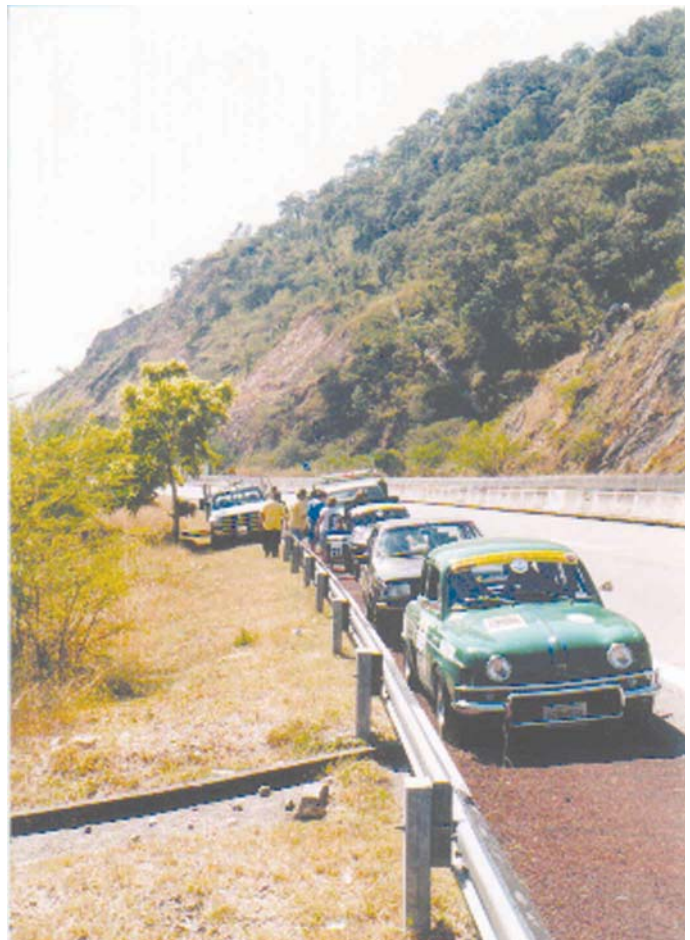
by Francisco Miranda

November is here and it is the time for the annual Acapulco Rally. For this year, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a new route was established, beginning with beautiful two lane small roads driving through forests, then through dryer grounds and finally to the tropical scenery as we moved closer to Acapulco. 10 hours of concentration, driving and above all, fun. This year the Alpine Club had three crews competing in the classic category, two novices and one expert. The Renault Owner's Club of North America, ROCNA, was also present in our cars. As in previous years, 73 crews joined in Metepec, Estado de México, to give way for the first car at 9:01 AM precisely.

Alpine, Dinalpin, Dodge, Mustang, VW Golf, Audi, Austin Mini Cooper, BMW, Camaro, Corvette, Malibu, Vectra, Shelby Cobra, Datsun, Mini Cooper S, Morgan, Nissan 300, Porsche, Renault Gordini, Renault 12TS, R8S, Clio, Scenic (!), Seat, Studebaker, Karmann Ghia, Jetta were the cars you could see in the roads, all trying to get 0 bad points on the competition. A lot of controls (about 30) were carefully taking time to each of the cars at several locations, making the rally very exciting and we have to be most careful not to run or lag at every moment in time. Every year gets more difficult the competition, as many cars are using terra-trip units or measuring equipment alike, so cars like ours who rely only on the speedometer or tachometers, are more difficult to control speed/ time differences.

Our friends Guillermo and Fuensanta Gleason were driving the blue Gordini, which unfortunately at about the middle of the road, had a broken exhaust valve, so the engine was very unstable. Firstly we did not know what the cause was, so we changed the coil, cleaned the distributor cap, etc. This car has the electronic ignition, so there were not many things to change. I guess as the engine cooled down, no coughing was present immediately, but after a few kilometers, the problem started again. Nevertheless, they managed to get in 8<sup>th</sup> place of the novice category. On the way back to Mexico, we had to change two spark plugs of that piston but we arrived home safely. After opening the head, the mechanic found out that a smaller valve was fitted and that caused the problem. A pity that this mistakes happens only because of non-competent mechanics. Luckily that detail did not stopped the good times from rolling.

On the other hand, the green Dauphine is really fast and stable. My wife and I enjoyed driving it a lot. Even at very low speeds, with the new gear, 5<sup>th</sup> of the R18 fitted instead of the 4<sup>th</sup> of the original R8 gearbox, made a huge difference. The engine does not run at high revs all of the time and it has so much power and torque that you do not miss the hole between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. At the very last stage of the rally, I was able to drive it at 6000+ rpm, which translates, to about 160 km/ hr (100 mph). Real cool! Speaking of "cool", the engine's temperature was "nailed" at 80° C even in the very hot Cañón del Zopilote (Buzzard's Canyon) that





had temperatures of about 40°C (104°F) or on the way to Metepec on Thursday night, with an outside temperature of 3°C (37°F). Again I have to thank Tomas Marin and Agustin Sordo of the Alpine Club, for the great job done putting together this car.

This year we did not had a good performance as we ended up in 7<sup>th</sup> place of the classic expert category, 37<sup>th</sup> overall.

As for the third crew of the Alpine Club, Miguel Ángel and Fernando Estrada, new members and their first appearance on the rally, and they got the third place on the novice category. Congratulations! Also, we saw another club member, Gaspar Arakelian, driving his red Alpine A110.

When we got to Acapulco, we were tired and thirsty, so we went to the Hard Rock Café, where Peugeot organized a cocktail for all of the competitors, where we enjoyed nice canapés cold beers and sodas. A friend of mine, Pieter Boer, was visiting from Holland, he joined another friend Fernando Roldán as his copilot. First, my friend Pieter is quite tall, so he did not fitted in the Berlinette A110, so Roldán took his race R8S fitted also with a 2-liter engine to the rally. Unfortunately, they had problems with the clutch adjustment, so he could not brake properly in the bumps on the road and he broke the water hoses running to the front of the car where the radiator is fitted. They had to abandon the rally at a very early stage. Unfortunately that happened, as they were doing a great job and easily could have won the rally. Next year perhaps. When they finally managed to fix the car, they went back to Mexico City; got Fernando's R18 and reached us at the Hard Rock Café.

Close to midnight we decided to call the day and we went to my friend's new house overlooking the bay, so it was mandatory to keep talking about the rally, the cars and the whole busy day. At about 3 AM we definitely went to bed.

Next morning we had to look on the blue Gordini's problem, so we went to the parts shop and bought spark plugs. I had a spare electronic device, so we changed it as well, just in case. It seemed then that everything was fixed, but as I said earlier, it was only a temporary cure.

We spent the day on the pool and sunbathing, only to move at lunchtime to eat seafood at a nearby restaurant. Back to the house and rest as long as possible.

Other friends went to the Prize Ceremony for the National Rally (the speed rally) where they were offered dinner. We decided to stay home doing nothing but talk and have fun.

On Sunday, we had a nice breakfast and started to get ready for the way back. We had to stop in Chilpancingo (about 200 km away from Acapulco) to change the spark plug again and from there all the way to the 4 Vientos Restaurant, where we enjoyed a nice lunch. We were averaging about 100 km/ hr so we reached Mexico City early at about 6 PM. By then the Gordini was behaving real bad, but we got home without having to tow it. The green Dauphine will need to go back to the garage as well, as the clutch has a rattling noise.

I most say that this year was a big difference in organization and I hope next year is as good or better than this one. Thanks to the organizers.

If you have any questions or comments please contact us at [DinalpinGT4@hotmail.com](mailto:DinalpinGT4@hotmail.com)

**LA NOUVELLE 4 CV "54"**

*Plus de place* *Plus de chaleur*

*Les 4 chevaux sont "confortables"*

**RENAULT**  
REGIE NATIONALE