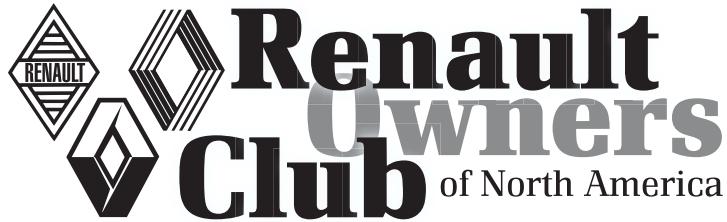


# Renault News 77



Autumn 2005



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# Renault Owner's Club of North America

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"Renault News" is the newsletter of the Renault Owner's Club of North America. This newsletter is published quarterly, along with the montly "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.

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## Editor's Notes

I appreciate everyone's patience as Allan and I have tried to get the newsletters back on schedule. Unfortunately I had to take on many additional duties at work this summer as well as all my other ventures took up to much of my free time, while Allan moved to Washington State and started a new job. We are both getting settled into our routines and finding more time to spend on the newsletter. We plan to be back on Schedule with our winter edition in your Mailbox before the end of 2005.

Speaking of your mailbox! After countless years of devotion to the Renault News Bob and Carol Howard have stepped down as publishers. We want to thank the Howards' for all their hard work, without them the club would have never made it out of Southern California. We have been lucky to have Ted Horn come on board in the past few months, as he has done the Marketplace in the transition. Starting with this issue he will also be printing the Newsletter. Welcome aboard Ted, it is nice to have you! If you need to contact Ted his e-mail is: [wonderlakeprinting@earthlink.net](mailto:wonderlakeprinting@earthlink.net) or you may write him at: N. 1133 Jonquill Terrace, Genoa City WI 53128, His Phone numbers are: 262-279-1248, or 815-385-4002

Finally, I want to let everyone know to check out the Renault Corporate Website. Back at the beginning of the summer I did an interview with a Reporter from France. He was interested in learning more about me and the club. If you want to check out the story point your browser to: [http://www.renault.com/gb/passion/mois\\_p10.htm](http://www.renault.com/gb/passion/mois_p10.htm) I told everyone about this interview many months ago but thought that Renault had decided not to publish it. Much to my surprise the other day Francisco wrote me to check it out. While the interview focuses on me and the Renault Farm, I hope that this will lead to more publicity for the club. I made sure that they included a picture of one of our events so the entire So. Cal. gang that attended last year's BOFI can see their picture on the site. However I must admit it's nice to see my name published on Renault's website.



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# Formula 1 Review

By Marvin McFalls

It is hard to believe but since my last report nine more races have been completed. The longest season in F1 history is churning towards the finish line, and what a season it has been. It started with Renault Dominating the first four Grand Prix and Ferrari and McLaren appearing like they weren't prepared. As the tour moved to Europe Kimi Raikkonen and McLaren showed while they came to table late, they were ready to compete. After winning on Fernando Alonso's home turf of Spain, Raikkonen backed up that victory with another in the most prestigious race on the circuit in Monaco. While the best Renault could muster was a disappointing fourth place finish from Alonso.

Going into the European Grand Prix it appeared McLaren was back on track and Renault was slipping. The entire race weekend the McLaren Mercedes was faster than the Renault and during the race Kimi built a huge lead on Alonso, but as the laps began to wane suddenly Alonso was much faster than his Finnish foe. With less than seven laps to go it became clear that Raikkonen had a tire that was coming apart. As each lap went by Alonso moved closer as we saw small strips of rubber fly off his right front tire. With a little more than one lap to go the entire front suspension gave way from the vibration. Kimi slid off the track and Fernando cruised to his fourth victory of the season. On a day that appeared that the best Renault would be able to muster would be a second place finish, they stood atop the podium and their top rival scored no points.

It was now time for the North American tour, which has been dominated by Ferrari for the last few seasons, and as if on cue the sleeping giant awoke. For the first time all season Michael Schumacher was strong in qualifying, and fast on race day. This would turn out to be the most disappointing day of the season for Renault. After Alonso had qualified in third position, he was able to move into the lead. Meanwhile teammate Giancarlo Fisichella had mechanical problems and had to retire. With Kimi Raikkonen qualifying 7<sup>th</sup> it appeared to be Alonso's day as he was out front and building a lead when he clipped the wall, and damaged his car beyond repair. It was small driver error but a costly one. Alonso's mistake was exactly the motivation Raikkonen needed. He charged to front and passed Schumacher for his third win of the season. The Advantage Alonso had gained in Europe was erased in Canada.

If Canada wasn't disappointing enough for Renault, Indianapolis was probably worse. During practice both Toyota's had tire failure that Michelin was unable to explain. As the race weekend continued it became clear the high speeds of the Brickyard wouldn't be safe with the tires Michelin had brought. The teams came up with a solution to add another chicane to the circuit which would slow the cars down and meet the safety requirements of both the drivers and the teams. However Ferrari was the only team opposed

to this plan, and F1 is by no means a democracy so if one team disagrees changes can't be made.

As race day came everyone wondered if some teams would race and others would not. In a show of solidarity all fourteen Michelin shod cars entered the pits at the end of the installation lap. With only six cars lining up for the start of the race it turned out to be an easy victory for Ferrari over lowly Jordan and Minardi, however hollow it may have been. With the disappointing season they have had it will most likely be their only victory. Following the race, Michelin stepped up and agreed to refund fans the cost of their tickets and even bought 25,000 tickets for next year's race which they will give to fans. Hopefully the sport will never see another day like this one.

With neither Renault nor McLaren scoring any points in the United States, the competition was resumed in France. On qualifying day Kimi Raikkonen nearly crashed. While he saved his car, his time was only thirteenth best. For Fernando Alonso it was a perfect day as his lap was great and he won the pole. On race day it was an easy drive for Alonso as he led Renault to their first victory in the home Grand Prix since returning to F1. As for Kimi, he made the best of a bad situation and overpowered the rest of the field for an impressive second place finish.

In the British Grand Prix qualifying was similar as Alonso was again first, and Raikkonen had to start further back in the grid because of an engine change. However for the first time all season McLaren second driver Juan Pablo Montoya showed the talent that had brought him to the team during the off-season. Montoya was the class of the field and Alonso was lucky to come home second holding off Raikkonen.

For the next race it was back to Germany, where Kimi Raikkonen once again sat on pole, but was not able to complete the race, once again Alonso pounced on the opportunity for his sixth victory of the season. At this point it had become clear that McLaren had the faster car and Renault had the more reliable racer.

In Hungary, for one reason or another the Renault was just not very competitive. To make an bad situation even worse Fernando Alonso was involved in a turn one incident and had to quickly head to the pits for a new front wing. This moved him to the back of the field where he would spend the rest of the day finishing a disappointing eleventh. Meanwhile, Giancarlo Fisichella had problems of his own with a car he could barely keep on the track coming home ninth. McLaren and Raikkonen took advantage of Renault misfortune and captured his fourth victory of the season. However his teammate Montoya wasn't as lucky he was forced to retire scoring no points.

The latest event and also the newest on the calendar was held in Turkey. With virtually no experience on the circuit it wasn't surprising to see McLaren and Renault

atop the leader board. For the first time all season the top two teams made up the top four positions in the standings, with Raikonen winning followed by Alonso, Montoya, and Fisichella.

With only five races left in the season, both championships are still in doubt and that is a pleasant change. Renault still leads the Constructor's championship by nine points over McLaren Mercedes. The way the season has gone I wouldn't be surprised to see this championship be decided in the season finally. As for the Driver's championship Fernando Alonso has a fairly large 24 point lead, but it isn't an insurmountable lead, while Renault plans to fight McLaren for the Constructor's title Alonso will not be able to take fewer risks and settle for just scoring points. Ultimately the points scored by the second drivers will probably decide the Constructor's championship. While both Fisichella and Montoya have had disappointing seasons, the next five races will be the most important of their careers. It should be an exciting conclusion to a thrilling season so stay tuned.

## **Formula One Champions, Finally!**

By Marvin McFalls

After nearly thirty years on and off in Formula one, Renault has finally reached the pinnacle of the racing world. In the final race of the season in Shanghai, China Fernando Alonso cruised to victory over his number one rival Kimi Raikkonen in the McLaren Mercedes to secure the title. In one of the closest Constructors Championships in years Renault beat McLaren 191 points to 182.

While the race itself wasn't that dramatic, the previous few races leading up to the finale had been very interesting. In Brazil it was a 1, 2 Finish for McLaren and for the first time all season Renault trailed in the championship standings. While in Japan, Kimi Raikkonen passed Giancarlo Fisichella on the last lap to secure his seventh victory of the season. While Renault lost the race they were actually the winner in the bigger picture as Fisichella and Alonso finished 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> while Juan Pablo Montoya, McLaren's second driver had an accident. Going to China Renault had regained the lead in the Constructors standings by a slim two points.

Renault pulled out all the stops for the race in China including bringing a brand new more powerful engine. It didn't take long to see that Renault meant business as they were atop the time charts in every practice session. In qualifying they kept up the pressure winning both spots on the front row of the grid. Meanwhile McLaren had to settle for third and fifth. Being out front it appeared that all Renault had to do was keep the Mercedes behind them. On lap 24 any chance McLaren had of taking home the championship was dashed when Juan Pablo Montoya ran over a piece of debris on the track. He stopped for a new tire, but once he left the pits it became clear that his car was damaged beyond repair and he had to retire.

At this point both Renaults were up front and all they had to do was finish the race and they would be champions. While Kimi Raikkonen made a good showing passing Fisichella for second, but it wouldn't be enough as Alonso came home for his seventh win of the season.

McLaren had to leave China wondering what might have been. It was clear that following Renault victories in the first four Grand Prix of the season, Mercedes began to flex their muscles and by mid season Renault was barely a close second to their German rivals. However for all the power the Mercedes engine had, it lacked the reliability of the Renault. Race after race McLaren would be leading the race and engine would expire or some other mechanical problems would take one of their cars out of the event, while Renault completed nearly every race with few mechanical problems.

Renault had a very similar season in 1983. They were by far the fastest car on the circuit, but they never had the reliability with their V6 Turbo engines. That year the Constructors Championship was decided by 10 points and Alain Prost lost the Drivers Championship by only 2 points. Renault was so frustrated they stopped competing as a factory based team and became an engine supplier until 2001.

Fernando Alonso finished every race except for two, and one of those was boycotted by all the Michelin teams due to safety issues. While Alonso and Raikkonen both won seven events, the Drivers Championship was all but over by mid season, and officially clinched in Brazil. The final standings had Fernando, 21 points ahead of Kimi, with 133 points to his 112. For the 24 year old Spaniard all his boyhood dreams came true becoming the youngest champion ever. His future certainly does look bright, lets hope he can bring home many more championships for Renault.

While Giancarlo Fisichella, only won one Grand Prix, he was able to score enough points to secure fifth place overall in the Drivers Standings. He has even been re-signed for next season. Hopefully he will have better luck than he had this season.

Some other milestones reached this season. Renault is the first mainstream automaker to win the Constructor's Champions with a completely in house team. Also Michelin, who has been with Renault since their very first Grand Prix it was their first ever double championship season being the official tire of the Drivers and Constructors Champions.

Congratulations Renault, don't let anyone tell you persistence doesn't pay. Renault is having another record breaking sales year, and their alliance with Nissan has made them millions if not billions at this point. Enjoy your time at the top of the automotive sporting world; we hope it will be long lived.

## News from México

By Francisco Miranda

Last Saturday I went to the Auto Frances breakfast meeting, and our friend Pablo Alcocer drove for the first time his R15 which he got out of the Katriina's Renault Message board somewhere in Washington State for free. He spent some money bringing it down to México and repairing the engine, brakes, etc. He let me drive it and it runs quite nice. A Renault will always be a Renault! It is very comfortable and has nice power under your foot. It is automatic so I did not expect a race car, but it has the same engine as the one the R12TS had fitted here in México and I can tell you those cars run quite fast! He still has a long way to go regarding the body paint (he's only polished it so far) and some minor body damage. He got rid of the rear bumper (US requirement) and left the European looks (at least in the rear). It could be one of the only, or at least one of the very few R15s in México, as this model never was sold here.

I also finally installed the emblems for the silver Dauphine. A friend of mine (from the Italian Club) found these emblems when he bought an Alfa Romeo and he thought of me and a year has passed since he first told me about the emblems until he handed them over to me. This happened at Huixquilucan. Now I will have to look for an instrument panel written in Italian and Marvin tells me there is a front grill emblem with the Dauphine Crown and instead of saying Renault it says Alfa Romeo. If anyone knows where I can get one of these please let me know. Then I will be all set with my Alfa Dauphine! It looks different and many people will start asking, because when Felipe gave them to me, even the Italian Car Club's President came running to ask me what was the story behind the car! He had never heard of that joint venture.

Club Member, Miguel Garza's 1093 has new upholstery. He found the exact fabric in France and Senor Cacheux replace it. It looks real nice. I have included many pictures as he did a fabulous job.

I have bad news to report on the date of the Acapulco Rally. As feared it has been changed from the day after your Thanksgiving to November 18<sup>th</sup>. The good news is the Alpine club meets this week and hopefully we will have some dates on other upcoming events. That is all the news for now from México.



## Huixquilucan 2005

By Francisco Miranda

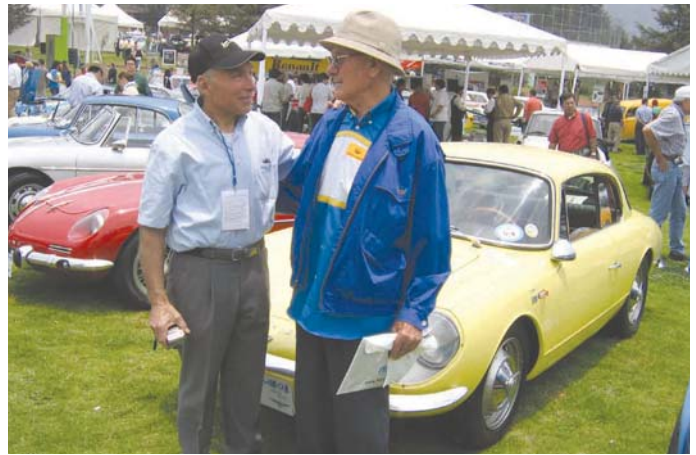
Huixquilucan "XIX Concurso de la Elegancia" was the backdrop for the 50/40th Anniversaries of Alpine and Dinalpin respectively. How exciting this year's event was! 20 vehicles were on display, showing the grace and force of these timeless cars. Street and racing versions of the three variations, Berlinette, GT4 and Cabriolet, in superbly restored state for the public to enjoy. Two unique Alpine Group IV, one 1600S from 1971 and an 1800 cc from 1972 with the original racing livery were overlooking their Mexican counterparts, and three R5 Turbos completed the scene.

The Alpine Club México invited Mr. Jean Pierre Limondin to come over to México from Dieppe, his homeland, and celebrate with us. Mr. Limondin was the person responsible to start operations of the Dinalpin plant, back in the early sixties. What a nice and dynamic person he is! A member of the Association des Anciens d'Alpine, and they were holding the Alpine anniversary celebrations the previous weekend of ours, so he was in such a hurry to prepare for his trip, arriving to México City on Friday 13<sup>th</sup>. Jet lag on top, he got to Huixquilucan (40 Km from México City) early on Saturday morning, only to start saluting "his kids", the Dinalpins, most of them already shinning bright ready to welcome him. We had the chance to show him our cars and he remembered every time an anecdote about the plant and the things they had to do to build the beautiful A110s in all of their variations.

We were also lucky Mr. Leonardo Marchetti accepted our invitation; He is a man that collaborated in those years with the factory as well. He lives in México City and was very happy to see his long time friend Jean Pierre. In the meantime we had to make sure that all of the technical support things were working in order. Our friends in Renault were very kind and provided us with a VHS player and a couple of flat video monitors, which were showing Alpine related material, like rallies or races. A small audio system (courtesy of Estudio 19) was also at hand for the formal presentations. Renault also provided a cocktail party for our guests on the two days of the festivities.

By about 1 PM, the place was getting really packed, so it was time to officially open the celebration. Alejandro Konstantonis, our club's secretary, was in charge of the presentations. Claude Berthelot (adj. CEO) and Alfonso Monreal (Communication) from Renault México were present, as well as many people related to the car world and the event's organization. Both Mr. Limondin and Marchetti gave their speeches and prepared the attendees of the presentation they were going to give at the main podium shortly thereafter. Juan Antonio Calvillo and Alberto Gironella, president and vice-president of the club, closed the speeches, welcoming our important guests like Héctor Calatayud, president of the National Federation of Automobiles and opened the cocktail party.

After drinking some wine, refreshments and eating some hors d'ouvres, some of us had to take the cars that were going to be presented at the podium. At 3 PM exactly, the speeches started again, this time for the general audience.

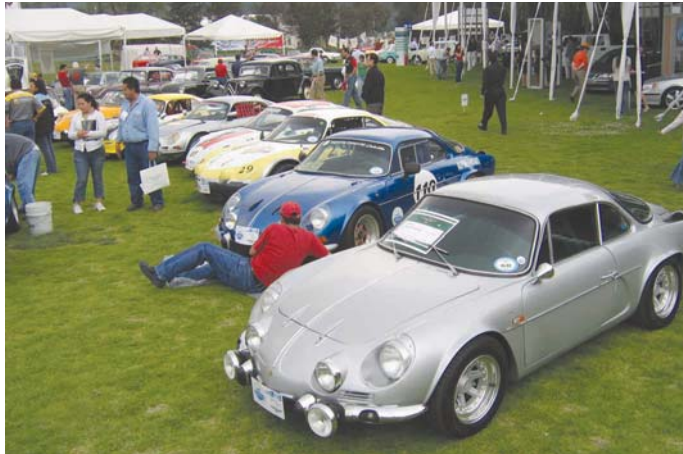


The place was only half full, but filled with Renault, Dinalpin and Alpine lovers. The cars were parked in a semicircle and it was a very nice display. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the R5 Turbo was also commemorated, taking advantage of the occasion.

Mr. Limondin told us the story of how Mr. Jean Rédélé commissioned him to come over to México and watched how things were being put together by Diesel Nacional (Dina) when he was only 23 years old (!) fresh out of the Engineering school. As no general plan or rules were available at Alpine, he put together a notebook full of technicalities, drawings, procedures, etc. of how A110's were being built at Dieppe. He came over with his "golden notes", applied them, and the cars started rolling out of the assembly line as planned. At those days, the Mexican government was very strict with import policies, and the rule was that cars had to be 60% minimum, built from Mexican parts. That was, in part, an advantage for Dinalpin, he told us, as their main direct competition (price wise) was the Ford Mustang (a lot of American parts). Most parts were being built by Renault, like the suspension, brakes, cooling systems, engine, and maybe only some small parts were imported. He also told us that it was an unfortunate matter they were never able to import the Gordini engine, for the reasons explained above. So he was very confident of his notes that were used a lot of the time. After some time living in México, he returned to France and left his notes for the guy staying here to cover his job. What a surprise for him it was, that after 40 years, that same notebook, believed to be in the city dump, was safely kept by Alberto Gironella! When the plant closed down operations, a friend of his handed over the notebook as a souvenir. Alberto gave it back to Jean Pierre and as you may guess how pleased he was.

Going back to the presentation, after explaining each of the models, and sharing with us several facts from his remarkable memory, some q&a was held. We were very happy for the successful presentation and we headed back to our area. Jorge Alduncin and his family already had reserved a table at the local restaurant, so I invited Claude to join us, so we had a little more time of Renault "inside" talks. Unfortunately Claude had to attend an invitation in Cuernavaca (about 150 Km from where we were) which forced him to stay a only a short time. After having a nice meal, we went back to the cars and talked with friends for a while. Before it got dark, we headed back to México City.





Sunday morning we arrived at about noon and it was very nice to see a lot of people watching our cars, asking questions etc. At about 1:30 we had our second cocktail party and this time presidents and friends from other clubs were invited. No speeches were held, only we had to find a break and speak with Mr. Limondin, who all of the time was eager to answer any questions or take pictures. He also took note of our cars serial and engine numbers for his personal register. About this, he will get in touch with our friend Alfredo Sevilla who has been compiling the "Dinalpin Register" for some years now.

This year the club members presented great and beautiful cars, as a brief example, Juan Antonio Calvillo's former red A110 with the 2 liters engine, now painted in blue "Alpine" He disassembled the car almost completely and put back together with inox screws and being a fanatic of cars, he cleaned every millimeter of it! A great job done. Jorge Alduncin finished his Berlinette, especially for the occasion, getting all of the emblems, baguettes, etc. precisely correct. Alberto Gironella finished an exact replica of his Alpine Group IV and Jaime Williams 1600S, using the same power plant, all the emblems and decals exactly as the Tour de Corse 1973 and Monte Carlo 1971 winners respectively. It is difficult to describe each of the cars, as this story would seem endless, so we will let you enjoy the pictures, hoping one of these days some of you may come to México and see them live.

The results for the Concours d'élégance this year are the following:

Dinalpin "street" category:

- Jorge Alduncin (silver, 4 headlamp Berlinette)
- Adrián Duarte (silver, two headlamp Berlinette)
- Carlos Cadena (red Berlinette)

Dinalpin "race" category:

- Juan Antonio Calvillo (blue Berlinette)
- Olivier Lombard (black & yellow Berlinette)
- Jimena Domenzain (white with flowers Berlinette)

R5 Turbo category:

- Lorenzo Zambrano (white Turbo II)
- José Miguel Díaz Goñi (black Turbo II)
- Alberto Gironella (white Turbo Rally Group IV)

We are grateful to Renault México, the Jaguar Club and Promoclave for the support given to us to make this event possible. If you have any questions or comments, please write us to [DinalpinGT4@hotmail.com](mailto:DinalpinGT4@hotmail.com)

## The Incredible Collection Continued!

By Marvin McFalls

When I left you last time Christian Maillot had opened the doors to the remainder of the Renault Collection. Once again we wanted to run in every direction. However we were able to keep our composure and the first car to catch my eye reminded me of my childhood. Back when I was a kid I collected diecasts, what do I mean back when I was a kid? I still collect toys! Anyway one of my favorites was the small cars with a boat or camper hooked behind them. While in the real world this isn't a very good idea, in the diecast world towing capacity doesn't apply. Someone at Renault is also a fan of this concept as they had a R4 with a boat attached to it. However it wasn't just any boat but a Renault powered boat similar to the one owned by our good friend Sam Stuckey.

With this little teaser behind Mr. Maillot explained that the cars were placed in order from the oldest to newest so we started with the 19<sup>th</sup> century models and worked our way up. As the tour went along I asked many questions, and Mr. Maillot would quiz me on different models to see if I knew my Renault history. I believe I passed the test, as the tour continued we teamed up to explain many of the features of the different models. Our hosts were very gracious pulling back the plastic on many occasions for photo opportunities.

More than 100 of the cars in the collection were race cars. I guess the only place I have seen more Formula One racers would have to be at the track. However the rally division was not to be out done as they must have had close to a Dozen R5 Turbos and many of the other unique racers from throughout Renault's history.

If racers aren't your taste, how about prototypes and concept cars? There were dozens of one of kind cars. We saw the companion car to the Renault 900 that was displayed at Retromobile. We also had the opportunity to see the R8 Chop Top and we heard the story behind the car. It turns out Renault wanted to build a sporty version of the R8 and one of the company designers came up with the idea of lowering the roof line. It turns out Renault decided to produce the R8S, but the Chop Top wasn't a bad idea. If this wasn't interesting enough how about a Fregate Convertible? Or probably my personal favorite the all-wheel drive Alpine Prototype. This was very interesting as they used one of US Model Alpine chassis that were never brought to America due to Renault selling AMC to Chrysler. While I wasn't able to find out what kind of drivetrain, I assume it was similar to the R21 Turbo in reverse but I wonder if it is a four cylinder or six. I would definitely like to take a closer look at this car one day.

Even my friend Jean-Jacques found a prototype that interested him. As part of the collection they had not one but two Avantimes. One was even painted the same color as his and only had two or three small differences from the production model.

Some of the more interesting cars on display included the AMC collection, including Alliance, Encore, Alliance Convertible, GTA, Medallion as well as the Jeep Cherokee. Many other Renaults from around the world

were also displayed including a Japanese Hino Taxi based on the 4cv. Not to be outdone Argentina provided one of their Fuegos.

To say the least there was something for everyone on display as I even saw our female companions Genevieve and Chris take a second look at more than one car. Following the tour our hosts presented all of us with gifts and I presented them several copies of the club newsletter. We thanked Christian and his staff, and we suggested that maybe we could come back for another visit some day; He said they would be glad to have us.

As we were driving back to Paris, Marc asked us if we could pick a favorite car from the collection. Being that I had been drawn to a R1093 Dauphine, I chose it, but I said that I enjoyed them all. Then I asked Marc which was his favorite? He told me that he couldn't pick just one; I told him I could understand. If you ever have the opportunity to visit the Renault Collection I challenge you to try to pick a favorite, it isn't easy.

## Dinalpins in France

By Francisco Miranda

After reading the story about the Renault collection I thought I would let the members know how the the Dinalpin Cabriolet came to be in Flins. That car was brought to light by Memo Acosta and after putting it back to work, he then sold it to Alejandro Rubio (both from the Club Gordini Sport). Alejandro took the car to Miguel Cacheux for a fresh paint job and repaired the usual small things. About a year and a half ago, he put it up for sale and Jose Luis Gutierrez (former mechanic, now working for Renault Sport) mentioned it to Christian Schamltz and closed the deal for a reasonable amount (so I'm told).

While I am speaking of Dinalpins in France, recently I was visited by an internet Dinalpin friend, Jean-Marc Merger, came to visit us from France. He came with his wife and two daughters (about same age as my daughters) and off we went to Tepoztlán, a nice town close to the city, so since I had just filled the tanks of the GT4 and the blue Gordini so we took them. I called Miguel Garza, who was also on visit with his two sons, so we all met in Tepoztlán. We were ready to spend a day enjoying what was a great sunny, but not too hot, day.

We had a little tour of the town, but the kids (and I) were hungry, so we found a nice restaurant of traditional food. After a long talk we had another walk through town and got to the cars to find a spot for a picture and then headed back to the city. We made it home about 6 PM and we had a long talk until midnight (and since we were not driving, we had some beers as well). On Sunday we went to the old car parts flea market that organizes every two months, then we had lunch. Then we said good-bye as they were off to the airport for the flight back to France and a TGV ride to LeMans where they live.

It is very nice to share a nice day with someone who shares your hobbies or work from the other side of the Atlantic. Technology can also help sometimes!

*Editor's Note: From Renault and Christian Schmaltz point of view the price was very reasonable, at least that is what he told me last winter when I saw him at Retromobile.*

## Carlisle 2005

By Marvin McFalls

Carlisle continues to be our best attended event. As usual we met at the Middlesex Diner for Breakfast. We had a smaller than usual turnout but we had a good meal and were able to meet some new friends. While we didn't meet our goal of 25 Renaults, we did have a total of 17 on the grounds during the weekend. While as usual it was mainly AMC era models, this year we had a good selection of models including LeCar, Alliance, Fuego, 18i, Medallion, and GTA.

We also had nice mix of exotics including, a R5 Turbo owned by Brian Duca. It turns out that Brian bought his first Renault from our very own Don McLaughlin back in 1977 or 78, he couldn't remember which year. However, Don remembered selling him the car and even his name after nearly thirty years. Probably the biggest treat from me was the R4 brought by our good friend Les Woods. Finally we had a couple of rear-engined models with Don McLaughlin bringing his R8 racer and Tony Lardani driving down in his Dauphine.

We saw many of the regulars including Clayton Hoover and his new bride in their Show Winning LeCar. We also had some newcomers. Lee Weaver brought all three of his Renaults during the weekend, of which two won awards on Saturday. Besides showing off all his Renaults he became the newest member our club. We also met members Tom Gross and Angela Feltis who didn't bring their Renaults this year but we hope we will see them at another show in the future. Angela and her boyfriend drove all the way from Wisconsin to attend the show.

The balloting for the car show include the aforementioned winner Clayton Hoover in his beautiful Red LeCar sport, followed by Les Woods and Lee Weaver in his GTA Convertible. In fourth place was our beloved host, John Vogler, and his multi year award winning Silver GTA. Honorable Mentions were awarded to Ray Dietz in his 18i wagon, and Lee Weaver for his Red GTA coupe. Our own Sam Stuckey won the award for furthest distance traveled in his Black GTA Convertible, despite a few leaks in his top that were tested by a Spring monsoon that followed him most of the way from Tennessee.

Following the car show we had our annual swapmeet under the canopy Sam and I provided. Much to my surprise it was well attended and I sold more parts and other Renault memorabilia than I ever had before at this show. I look forward to doing this again next year. Hopefully I will be able to spend less time at the booth than I did this year, though.

On Saturday evening, my good friend Marty Mckee and his nephew Aaron drove up from Tennessee in Marty's Super Charged Fiero. We all decided to head back to the Middlesex Diner for Dinner. This time we did have quite a turnout, and another fine meal and Renault fellowship.

Following a good night's rest it was back to the fairgrounds for Sunday. Lee Weaver brought his third Renault, an Alliance Convertible, as well as his wife. We were also joined by Don McLaughlin and John Vogler. The day passed by quickly and before we knew it, 3PM had come. They gave away a VW Ghia but none of us were the lucky winner. So we loaded up and headed back to Tennessee. Some time in the wee hours of Monday morning I arrived home.

It was another great year at Carlisle, hope to see you there next year.



## The Marquis and the Rogue

By Marvin McFalls

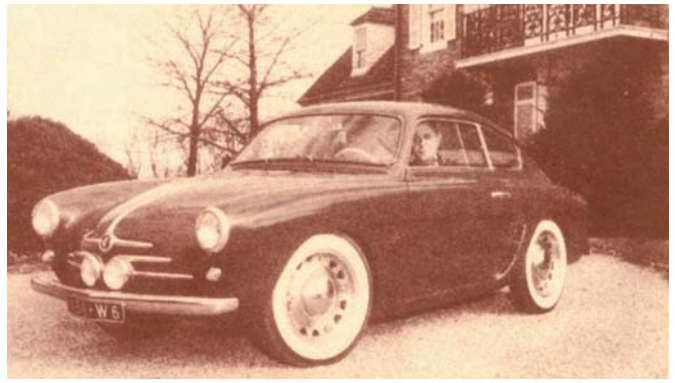
On the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, 1953 the first Corvette rolled off the assembly line in Flint, Michigan. The concept of an all fiberglass production sports car had just become a reality. The previous year Renault had begun providing 4CV chassis without a body to be used to build race cars. Jean Rédélé, Louis Rosier, Vernet-Pairard, and others bought these chassis known as a "4CV punt" from Renault's racing department, then modified them and placed aerodynamic bodies on them and took them racing.

Louis Rosier owned a Renault dealership in Clermont-Ferrand and was a well known racer of 4 CVs. In 1952 he commissioned Motto of Turin to construct a two-seater aluminum racer to be placed on a 4CV chassis. At the 1952 LeMans race Rosier finished first in the 750cc class in his coupe. To take advantage of his racing success Rosier hoped to build a production version of his LeMans winner, but he determined it would be too costly, so in 1953 the Rosier 4CV Barquette was constructed and ran at Le Mans. It finished third in its class and twenty third overall. A street version of this car was built, it was different from the race version in that it didn't have a front grille and it was fitted with Borrani wire wheels.

In 1950 Jean Rédélé began racing his 4CV in local events. Over the next three years he had incredible success with his little Renault winning the Monte Carlo Rally and Tour De France and placing third in class at the 24 hours of LeMans. Like Rosier, Rédélé also dreamed of building a French production sports car that would use standard spare parts from the 4CV. Rédélé hired an Italian named Michelotti to design his first prototype. This car was the start of the Alpine legend, it was followed by a second prototype that Rédélé raced and won the Dieppe Rally and the 1000-mile race in 1954. The Third prototype 4CV based coupe constructed by Allemano was built that same year and it was named the Marquis.

By 1954 both Rédélé and Rosier had made a name for themselves and their Renault dealerships. However neither had the capitol to make their dreams of a production sports car a reality. As if on cue enter Zark Reed, an American Businessman. Reed sold the two on the concept of The World's First Rear Engine Fiberglass Sports Car. It was decided that Rosier's 4CV Barquette would be produced in fiberglass in association with Plasticar Inc. of Doylestown, Pennsylvania USA. While Rédélé exchanged the licensing rights for the Marquis in the US for matrix fiberglass molds so he could produce his prototype in France.

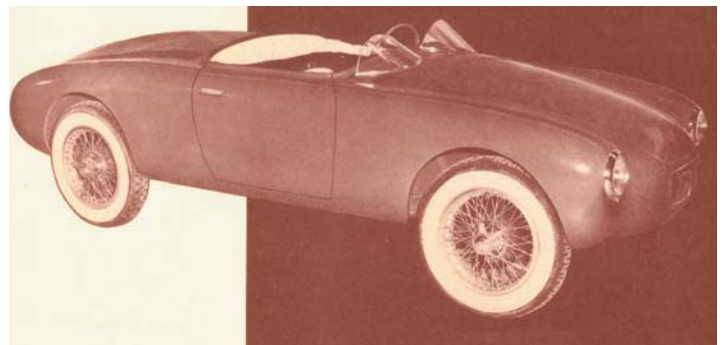
In March of 1954 the newly constructed Rosier/ Plasticar prototype along with the Marquis and a standard 4CV were shown at the New York International Motor Sports Show. Introduced as the "Rogue", its notable features were that it was produced in fiberglass, the high tech material of the age, it has no doors, a reinforcing ridge around the cockpit, Borrani wire wheels and the distinctive front grill. The color of the car, a specially developed brilliant red, was permanently incorporated in the polyester resins.

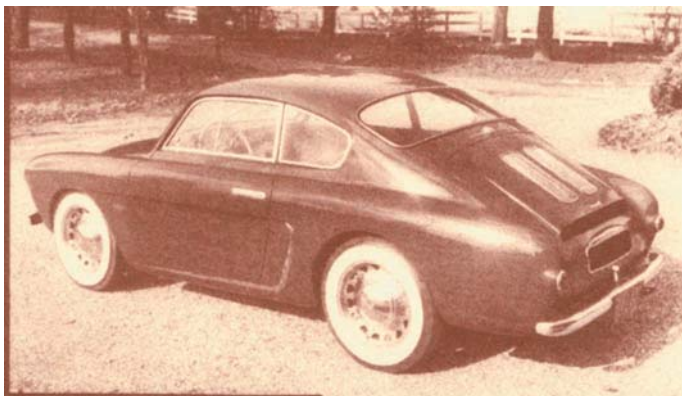


Following the successful introduction of the Marquis and Rogue, Arrangements were made for Plasticar Inc. to purchase 150 chassis punt sets from Renault of France. At the same time franchises were sold and a brochure produced. The Marquis was equipped with a 4CV / Rédélé 750cc-racing engine, which had a top speed of almost 100mph. The car came standard with a standard 4CV three-speed gearbox, but an optional five-speed transmission was also available. The car also featured a four-shock rear suspension that later became famous in the Alpines and then the R8 Gordini. PlastiCar Inc. versions of the Marquis would be produced in an all fiberglass version. The Rogue featured a standard 4CV drive train, with the 24hp engine and a three-speed gearbox with a top speed of 60mph. However the racing engine offered with the Marquis was optional. Wire wheels were also an option with the Barquette.

On paper this new French/American venture looked great. After several weeks with no word from Plasticar, Rédélé decided to travel to the United States and check on the progress for himself. He arrives at Plasticar facility, to find that his car the Marquis has yet to have matrix molds made, and it has been parted out and the drive train installed in the Rogue. At this point the deal falls apart, Jean Rédélé ends up purchasing the 150 chassis from Renault, has Chappe and Gosselin produce fiberglass molds from his latest prototype and the A106 and Alpine brand was born.

When Plasticar lost the deal with Renault, the project and the company were finished. However the story of the Marquis and Rogue continued. The Marquis was placed on a used car lot in Doylestown, PA. The car was purchased by local racer named Bob Holbert. Holbert placed a new engine in the chassis, but unfortunately he found the car just wasn't very competitive. So he eventually sold the car to another racer. The next sighting of the Marquis was in 1956. During an event at the Cumberland Maryland Airport, William Harding took these photos of the car. Bill doesn't remember





seeing the car race that weekend but it was in full racing trim. The letters "HM" on the car represent that it was in the 750cc Displacement-Modified class. This was the last reported sighting of the Marquis.

The Rogue now equipped with the motor, five speed transaxle, and rear four shock absorber suspension from Marquis, became a road racing special. Unfortunately the weight of the overly thick fiberglass body made the car uncompetitive against the top cars in the Northeastern United States. In 1959 Ronald Fitzgerald and Larry Yoder, two young racers purchase the Rogue from an elderly gentlemen, possibly Zark Reed of Plasticar. They continued to hill climb the car with mixed success. The car was then sold several years later to another racer. In the early 1970's, the car had been disassembled and was to be destroyed. Fortunately the tow truck driver, Dave Damiani, a long time Renault owner and fan, recognizes the car from his youth as he knew Yoder and Fitzgerald and had driven the car. He saves it from destruction and stored it in his barn.



In 1997 Todd Daniel purchased the car, and began the restoration. Over the next five years he pieced it back together and in 2002 the restoration was completed. Todd's restoration was first-rate and it is registered for use on the street. Last year he competed with the Rouge in the Vintage Sports Car Club of America. Most notably it qualified quite well at the Pittsburg Vintage Grand Prix. It was timed between a 1951 Crosley LeMans car and an Abarth double bubble coupe on the grid. This year the car will compete in Vintage events in Camden, New Jersey and again in Pittsburgh.



While the Marquis has most likely been destroyed as it hasn't been seen in almost fifty years, it has been forever linked with the Rogue since Plasticar installed its drive train in the barquette. While I am not certain if Plasticar Inc. claim of the "First Rear Engine Fiberglass Sports Car" is accurate, as they only produced the one prototype. However, it makes you think what would have happened if the cars had been produced. Looking back I believe it was a blessing in disguise that the deal fell apart. The Michelotti roadster was a much better prototype, and the A106 would have probably never been born if the Marquis had been produced. Who knows if the Alpine brand would have followed the same path with the Marquis as their first production car. On the other hand, Louis Rosier might be more than a footnote in the French sports car industry.



Todd Daniel has preserved a piece of both French and American car history. It is great that he continues to use the car as it was originally intended as a racer. However the car races in virtual anonymity, as there aren't many people in the United States who are familiar with 1950's French racers. Hopefully the Rogue will be invited to participate in future events in Europe where more people will be able to appreciate it.

Special thanks to Todd Daniel, Allan Meyer, and William Harding who have all provided information and the wonderful photographs and the original brochure used to create this article.

## Renault Dauphine Makes a Splash

By Marvin McFalls

A few months back Francisco Miranda wrote me an e-mail. He had just received an advance copy of Collectible Automobile. In the August 2005 they were featuring an in depth article that cover all the models from 1956-68. Francisco informed me that our good friend Miguel Garza and his 1093 Dauphine were also featured. Little did I know until the magazine was made available to the general public a few weeks later that Club Members, Larry Claypool and Milt Simon's Dauphines were also proudly displayed. If that wasn't enough publicity for the club, they even included our address, phone number, and website. My hat is off to Graham Robson, the author of this condensed history of the Dauphine. The work is of such good quality I scanned the entire article so all the members can enjoy it.

After I finished reading the article I wrote Francisco back congratulating him on the great honor of having his car in major publication. I told him I am still humble from having my Fuego in

Autoweek several years ago. He replied that he wasn't aware that my car had been in a major publication. So while I was scanning the article on the Dauphine I pulled out my advanced copy of Autoweek and scanned it as well. While I know I don't need to pat myself on the back, Francisco reminded me that not all the members had seen the article. So enjoy our fifteen minutes of fame.

# 1956-68 Renault Dauphine: Once Upon a Time There Was a Princess

by Graham Robson



**Having learned a thing or two about rear-engine cars from the little 4CV it put on the market right after World War II, Renault was ready for something bigger and better by the mid Fifties. The Dauphine certainly was bigger and—arguably—better enough to make it a success.**

**D**r. Ferdinand Porsche has a lot to answer for. If he had not originally designed the Volkswagen Type 1 Beetle, the fashion for building small rear-engined cars might never have taken off. Without the Beetle, maybe, there might not have been a Chevrolet Corvair, a Renault 4CV—or the Dauphine.

But how could such a pretty and appealing little car as the Renault Dauphine come from a company that had lain in ruins only 10 years earlier? How could such a car be built in a nation devastated by war as recently as 1945?

When American troops from General G. O. Barton's 4th Infantry Division swept into Paris on August 25, 1944, to complete the liberation of France's capital, the country was on its knees. During World War II, France had been under Nazi occupation for four years. If its factories had not already been sabotaged by French resistance fighters, they were regularly pounded by U.S. Army Air Forces and British Royal Air Force bomber sorties.

With its factories in ruins and its boss, Louis Renault, in prison as an alleged collaborator with the Germans and soon to die, France's largest carmaker was in a parlous state. Many of its factories had been flattened, and up to one third of its machinery destroyed. Somehow, though, the state nationalized it, rescued it, and chief executive Pierre Lefauchaux got things up and running. A brand new Renault, the 760cc 4CV, went on sale in 1947.

Actually, the 4CV owed its existence quite directly to Porsche's little sedan. Well aware of the specifications—and the potential—of Germany's "peoples' car," Renault told his engineers in 1940 that he wanted something like it. Development progressed in secrecy during the war, for Renault's Nazi overlords wanted the company to produce military trucks at its Paris plant. Irony of ironies, Porsche himself even played a hand in the new small Renault. While in French custody in 1946, the authorities sent him to look over the

drawings of the impending 4CV model. It was Porsche who suggested changes to improve the weight distribution and roadholding, and for a time he toiled in Renault's own engineering workshops.

Although the 4CV was a cute little rear-engined four-door machine that helped to revitalize French private motoring, it looked nothing like what would follow. Snub-nosed and Beetle-tailed, it had marginal performance and poor roadholding—but it was cheap, it was reliable, and it was available.

2

1. Developed in the early Fifties and tested extensively in harsh conditions around the world, the Dauphine, Renault's "crown princess," was ready for production by late 1955. (Owner: Miguel Garza Hoth) One of its destinations was the United States, where sales of small European cars were growing. 2. U.S. advertising stressed driving fun.

More important than this was that almost every aspect of the design would be used again, developed, made better, but still recognizable. In 1951, Régie Nationale des Usines Renault—as the government-backed company was now known—decided that it was time to try again.

It took a long time to get the new R1090 project car ready for sale. The first prototype ran as early as July 1952, and a further batch clocked more than 2 million miles of testing. Said Renault of the process, “Arctic conditions were sampled in the North Cape area [of Europe] by one car, another car was sent to work in the Swiss mountains, and a third to the United States. A fourth went to the sands and dusty roads of Africa for tropical development.” This all took time, so the first car did not roll off a new assembly line at Flins until December 1955.

Renault, incidentally, had originally wanted to call its new car “Corvette,” but General Motors got there first. Instead, the company got in touch with its feminine side. Although France was a republic, it still enjoyed its royal connections. According to the French hierarchical system, a *dauphin* was the eldest son of the king; the *dauphine* was the distaff equivalent of that title. Renault’s “princess” made her public debut in March 1956, and the French were enthralled.

Renault kept its conventional “Venoux” ohc inline four-cylinder water-cooled engine with removable cylinder sleeves in the tail, and swathed it all in pretty and curvaceous bodywork. At 89 inches, its wheelbase was 6.3 inches longer than that of the 4CV. The Dauphine was a full foot longer end to end, and it was wider and slightly lower than its predecessor (which hung around until 1961). The result was a peoples’ car that looked much classier than it was, could wallow an impressive payload of people and luggage, and would swish along France’s tree-lined *Routes Nationales* at more than 60 mph.

Unhappily for Renault, at that stage, it knew no more than Dr. Porsche did about controlling tail-heavy swing-axle handling characteristics. If the heavy engine and gearbox were mounted in the tail, and most of the front sheetmetal surrounded nothing but fresh air for carrying luggage, the resulting weight distribution was bound to be scary. Nearly 62 percent of the Dauphine’s weight was carried by the rear wheels, and since the rear suspension was by simple high-

pivot swing axles, those wheels always had a hard time. Everything you have heard about Dauphine handling—the nervous way in which it might pass a semi on the Interstate, and the skittish way it crossed high exposed bridges—was true. Not even a weird combination

of recommended tire pressures—15 psi at the front and 23 psi at the rear—could completely tame that problem. (Early road tests in U.S. publications were quite content with the Dauphine’s handling, but by 1960, *Motor Trend* had this to say: “There is nothing in the handling at nor-



### 1956 Renault Dauphine: Selected Specifications

<b>General</b>		<b>Drivetrain</b>	
Wheelbase (in.)	89	Transmission type	3-speed manual, synchromesh, floor-mounted shifter
Overall length (in.)	155	Gear ratios	1st—3.70:1; 2nd—1.81:1; 3rd—1.07:1; reverse—3.70:1
Overall width (in.)	60	Axle ratio	4.37:1
Overall height (in.)	57	<b>Suspension</b>	
Tread, front/rear (in.)	49/48	Front	independent coil-spring-and-wishbone with antiroll bar and tubular shock absorbers
Curb weight (lbs)	1324	Rear	independent swing axle with coil springs and tubular shock absorbers
Weight distribution, front/rear (%)	39/61	<b>Steering</b>	
Cargo space (cu ft)	7	Type	rack and pinion
<b>Construction</b>		Turns, lock to lock	4
Layout	rear-engine, rear-wheel drive	Turning diameter (ft)	29
Type	unitized	<b>Brakes and Tires</b>	
Body material	steel	Brake type	4-wheel hydraulic drum
<b>Engine</b>		Brake diameter, front/rear (in.)	8.9/8.9
Type	inline ohv 4-cylinder	Brake swept area (sq in.)	133
Material	cast-iron block, aluminum head	Tire size	5.00×15
Bore×stroke (mm/in.)	58/2.2880/3.15	*U.S.-specification cars; 26 others.	
Displacement (cc/cid)	845/51.5		
Horsepower @ rpm	30* @ 4250		
Torque (lb-ft) @ rpm	48.5 @ 2000		
Compression ratio	7.25:1		
Main bearings	3		
Valve lifters	mechanical		
Carburetor	1-bbl Solex downdraft		
Electrical system	6-volt		



mal speeds to indicate that the engine is stowed in the rear but push up to some high-speed cornering and the rear end becomes quite skittish, requiring skilled control of an oversteer condition that presents itself.”)

The unit-construction bodyshell was

really that of a conventional body under which a pair of perimeter-shaped longitudinal box sections, with substantial cross-bracing, had been welded. The four-cylinder 845cc engine, essentially the 4CV powerplant with larger cylinder bores, lived in the extreme tail with cool-

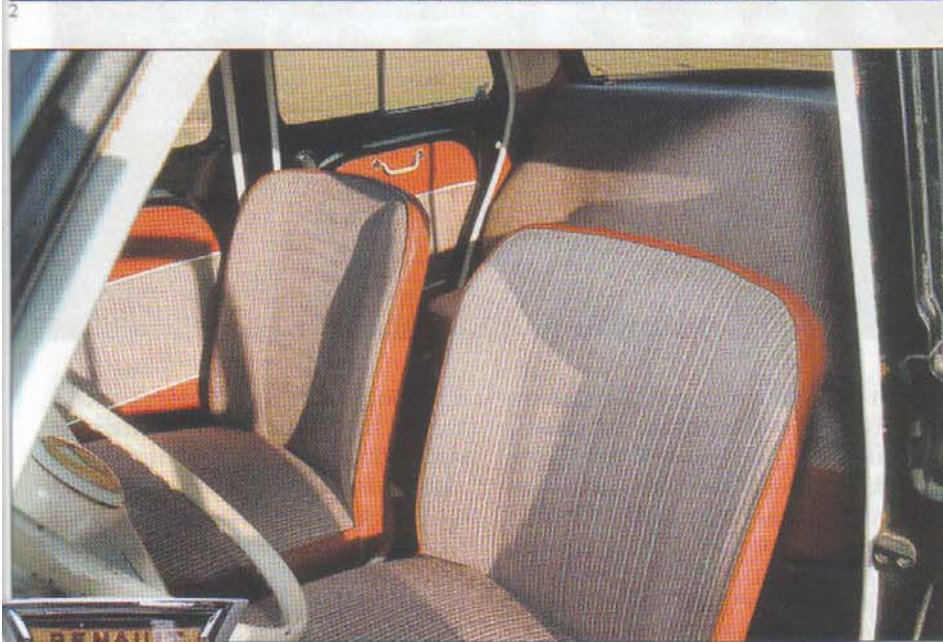
ing outlet vents in the engine lid—I nearly called it a “trunklid,” though that was at the front—and neat air intakes in each rear passenger door to give away the game. The rear wheels were driven through a three-speed transaxle mounted ahead of it. (Even in 1956 *Road & Track* and *Motor Trend* longed for a fourth gear.) One technical oddity was the option of the Ferlec clutch, which had automatic electromagnetic operation, and no separate clutch pedal. The front-hinged trunklid, in which the headlights were mounted, flipped up to reveal a seven-cubic-foot cargo hold. The spare tire was carried on its side under the front of the car, hidden behind a pivoting panel below the center section of the bumper.

The suspension, let’s now be honest about this, was a mixture of the sensible and the bizarre. Up front, there was a conventional coil-spring/wishbone layout, with an antiroll bar, all neatly packaged with rack-and-pinion steering, on a detachable front cross member. Then, at the rear, there was a high-pivot swing axle of the simplest nature, with concentric coil-spring/telescopic dampers sitting atop the swing tubes (Renault called them “trumpet casings”) themselves. Fore-and-aft location? Except for the trunnion arms in the transaxle housing itself, there was none at all. The whole of the pressed engine/transaxle/suspension mounting member was detachable from the main body structure.

One oddity, which was carried over from the 4CV, was that the axle hubs at front and rear were quite large, with five very widely spaced bolt locations for the road wheels. The wheels themselves were really no more than sturdy rims with five mounting lugs to match up with the hubs, the space in the middle being pure fresh air!

Maybe it all looked technically elegant, and maybe the Dauphine was very cheap to build, but this certainly wasn’t the sort of car likely to last for decades. At the front end, it looked positively flimsy (in any sort of head-on crash, that fairly hollow nose would fold up to the windshield in no time at all), and it wasn’t long before customers discovered the alarming tendency for body panels to rust away.

Commercially, none of this seemed to matter very much. New at the right time, when France’s economy was picking up well, and when the world was still looking for really modern-looking cars, the Dauphine was soon a fashionable



1. Despite being a preproduction version from 1955, this Dauphine displays all the characteristic design features of the series, including unitized body construction, hood-mounted headlights, and rear-door air intakes for the engine at the rear of the car. 2. 3. Inside was a simple dash with storage bins at either end, a floor shift for the three-speed gearbox, and seating for four. 4. The hood badge referred to Renault’s status as a state-owned enterprise. (Owner: Miguel Garza Hoth)



1

1, 2. To help foster the Dauphine's spread through markets around the world, Renault set up assembly operations in various countries. This 1960 model (with nonstandard wire wheels) was made in Mexico. Some export markets, the USA among them, required additional bumper protection, which was addressed through the full-width overriders seen here. The Dauphine rode a tidy 89-inch wheelbase and was just 155 inches long from nose to tail. 3-5. From the start, the Dauphine was considered for rallying and other types of motor-sports. Renault eventually hired race-car builder Amédée Gordini to concoct a sports model, which became known as the Dauphine-Gordini. Its 27-percent boost in horsepower was enhanced by the addition of a four-speed transmission. By 1960, when this one was made, output was up to 40 bhp. (Owner, both cars: Francisco Miranda Kirchner)



2

machine. It wasn't long before Paris and other French cities were teeming with these little four-seaters. Before long, 700 Dauphines were being built every day, the 100,000th car being produced in March 1957.

Renault, never likely to miss too many publicity tricks, made sure that film stars like Brigitte Bardot were photographed in a Dauphine. A works team of five cars with tweaked engines and five-speed gearboxes swept the first four places in class at the '56 *Mille Miglia*, the smashed-up fourth-place car having survived a tumble into a ravine along the way. Kit assembly began in several countries (including England and Italy), and

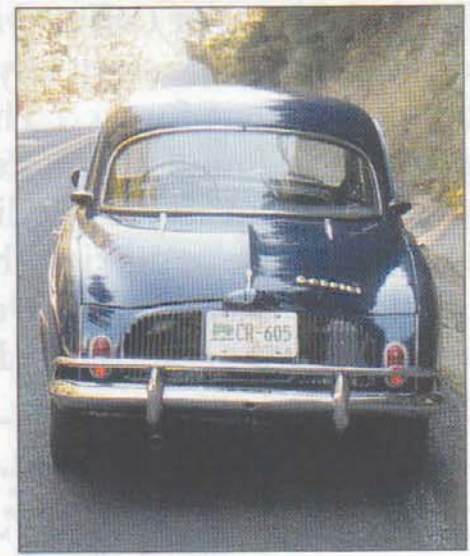
Renault even hoped to sell big numbers in the USA, where the car first appeared in April 1956 at the New York Auto Show.

Could they have been serious? Could they really have expected a 30-bhp machine that took an age to drag itself away from traffic lights (0-60 mph in about 31 seconds), one that couldn't afford to dispute the same piece of road as a Checker cab, to take over on Main Street, USA? They could—and they were swiftly proved wrong. Customers soon found that they could not really beat 45 mph in second gear, and somehow, too, they felt vulnerable. At least the Dauphine had frugality going for it. In addition to its affordable starting price

(\$1645 at its U.S. introduction, or \$150 more than a base VW Beetle), the Dauphine averaged as much as 39.1 mixed-use mpg in magazine tests.

The glamorous side, though, was soon enhanced with brighter, faster, and more sporting models. Luckily for Renault, when the Dauphine was being launched, the impecunious French race-car builder, Amédée Gordini, had abandoned Grand Prix racing, and was looking for work. Renault speedily hired him, and set him to improve the Dauphine's performance.

In September 1957, the result was the Dauphine-Gordini, which not only had a different cylinder head and a 38-bhp engine, but a four-speed gearbox, too.



The extra peak power doesn't sound like much, but it was, after all, a 27 percent improvement on the standard car—enough to provide a top speed of 74 mph, much more suitable for keeping up with larger-engined cars, particularly in the U.S. (The Dauphine further proved its performance mettle by winning the punishing 1958 Monte Carlo Rally.)

Little more than a year later, Renault then added the very fashionable Floride models—called Caravelles in the USA (CA, October 1994)—with styling by Frua, and bodyshell manufacture by specialist coachbuilders Brissonneau et Lotz. Though available in extremely smart 2+2 coupe or two-seat convertible forms,

these cars were both based on the Dauphine platform, albeit with a more powerful engine. For a time, a Floride was the car in which to be seen in Paris, or in French seaside resorts.

For the 1960 model year, Renault astonished everyone by introducing a new Dauphine suspension system, called Aerostable. Don't get too excited, though; this was not a replacement for the agricultural swing-axle rear end, but the addition of extra rubber springs up front, and auxiliary air spring units (mounted inboard of the conventional coils) at the rear. Although this setup gave a softer ride in most conditions, it firmed up rapidly as the payload increased. For the

sporty driver, the main advantage was that when only two people were being carried, the rear wheels now had a small degree of negative camber and more grip when cornering.

By that time, Renault had pushed up 845cc engine power to 32 bhp in the standard Dauphine and 40 bhp in the Gordini (the latter now picking up the Caravelle's engine rather than its own special castings). As such, the Gordini was good for 0-60 times of around 20 seconds and a top speed of about 80 mph.

With more than 200,000 Dauphines being built every year, and the 1 millionth car being produced in 1960, a bit of



1-5. The Dauphine line expanded in the early Sixties to include better-equipped luxury models and, in 1962, the limited-edition rally-bred R1093 model. The "Ventoux" inline four in the R1093 generated a hefty—by Dauphine standards—55 horsepower. Regardless of model, Dauphines could carry seven cubic feet of luggage beneath the front-hinged lid of their cargo bay. This well-lighted R1093 was originally sold in Sweden and made its way to Mexico in 1999. 6, 7. The '62 base-model Dauphine was improved through the adoption of a fully synchronized three-speed transmission. As always, the rear half of the back-door windows slid forward for ventilation. (Owner, both cars: Miguel Garza Hoth)





6

pension systems that first appeared in mid 1962—it picked up the R8's four-wheel disc brakes for 1964. New options for the year included air conditioning and a three-speed automatic transmission with pushbutton controls mounted on the dash. Here, at last, was a well-matured little car that looked good, was brisk enough, and stopped very well indeed. If only Renault had ever taken heed of criticism over the handling problems—if Porsche could find ways of dealing with it in its sports cars, why not Renault?—the package might have been even more appealing.

By the mid Sixties, however, time was running out for the Dauphine. It had been running for nearly 10 years with no style changes, and, in basic form, with very little improvement in performance. Serious body-corrosion problems that came on with age were now well known, and the light (some said fragile) construction was sometimes criticized. Appealing or not, the car was also under attack from within Renault itself: from below by the new front-wheel-drive R4, and from above by the more spacious, more capable, R8.

In America specifically, some other factors were at work cooling demand for the Dauphine. Renault's U.S. sales, which had been in the mere hundreds per year in the early Fifties, shot up in the decade's latter years, a time when more and more Americans were turning to small, economical European cars. Led by the Dauphine, Renault sold 91,073 cars in the States in 1959. But from that high point, the total slipped precipitously to just 12,106 for 1966. When new domestic compacts from Ford, Chrysler, and Chevrolet joined existing small cars from Rambler and Studebaker on the market for 1960 (CA, December 1997), all the imports—even Volkswagen—suffered to some degree. Even a price cut instituted for 1961 couldn't help the Dauphine.

Renault faced more than a sudden spate of Yank competitors, however. There was also growing disenchantment with its service support in the U.S. You needn't take our word on it; Renault freely admitted as much in its magazine advertising when it introduced the R8's successor, the 10, for 1967. "Our [earlier] cars were not fully prepared to meet the demands of America. . . . More than a fair share of things went wrong with our cars. Less than a fair share of our dealers were equipped to deal with what went wrong," the company confessed as it



7

midterm complacency might be expected, but there was none of that at the Régie. For 1961, the Ondine Dauphine appeared, this being a standard model equipped with the four-speed gearbox of the Gordini, then from mid 1961 came the DeLuxe models, in which the backrests of the front seats could be reclined, the luggage container was lined, the trim was enhanced, and whitewall tires were standard.

There was more to come. For 1962,

Renault gave the basic Dauphine an all-synchromesh three-speed gearbox. At the same time the fierce limited-edition Dauphine R1093 (R for "Rally") made its appearance. Because almost all of those cars stayed at home, export enthusiasts missed out on a car with no less than 55 bhp that could beat 90 mph.

Although the Dauphine was soon outshone by the new rear-engine R8 sedan—a square-rigged, larger-engined car with updated versions of the Dauphine's sus-



begged erstwhile customers to consider "The Renault for people who swore they would never buy another one." Renaults would briefly sell in great numbers in the USA again, but not until the early Eighties, when they were being manufactured in American Motors Corporation plants and sold by AMC dealers.

The last of the base-model Dauphines

was produced in December 1966, though the higher-powered Gordini types carried on until 1968. In the end, about 2 million of the little sedans were built, which made this a commercial success by any standards. And no matter how hard Renault tried in the next few years, it never again produced anything that looked quite as cute. CA

**Club for  
1956-68 Renault Dauphine  
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3



4



5

Riding on the back of the Dauphine, Renault's U.S. sales rose dramatically by the end of the Fifties, but then dropped sharply by 1964, when the cars on these pages were made. 1-5. Even as American demand for the Dauphine waned, the spunkier Gordini was still available. It had a 40-bhp engine and four-wheel disc brakes, a feature that was extended to all Dauphines in '64. (Owner: Milton Simon) 6, 7. Dauphine Ondines came with the Gordini's four-speed gearbox as standard equipment. An automatic transmission and air conditioning were newly optional. (Owner: Larry Claypool)



6



7



**A BIGGER FAMILY—The Renault family of outstanding automobiles has grown! The new Renault 16 Sedan-Wagon (left) joins the famous Renault 10 on dealers' showroom floors all around the country this month. For a look and test drive . . .**

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