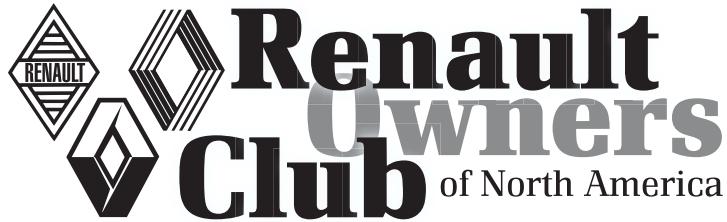


Renault News 78



Winter 2005-6



Photo from Francisco Miranda

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Renault Owner's Club of North America

www.renaultclub.us

email: 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	Sharon Desplaines
Editor of Index	Kurt Triffet
Editor of Marketplace	Kurt Triffet
Editor of <i>Renault News</i>	Marvin McFalls
Co-Editor	Allan Meyer
Publisher	Ted Horn
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.

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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

Classified Advertisements: Send to *Marketplace* Editor:
Kurt Triffet – webmaster@renaultownersclub.org

Articles-Letters-Correspondence:

Marvin McFalls, (865) 357-0995
4804 Ball Camp Pike, Knoxville, TN 37921
editor@renaultownersclub.org

Newsletter Production- Graphic Artist

Allan Meyer,
P.O. Box 1948, Vashon, WA 98070-1948
allan_g_y_meyer@yahoo.com

Publisher

Ted Horn, 262-279-1248, or 815-385-4002
N. 1133 Jonquill Terrace, Genoa City WI 53128,
wonderlakeprinting@earthlink.net

Back Issue Requests: Send US\$ 2.00 to
Michael Muller, 4907 Meridian Ave. North, Seattle, WA 98103; 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

October 2005 New Online Members List

Ross, Philip, 1808 Windsor Place, Findlay, OH 45840
E-mail: rossviii@aol.com

Knepp, Steven, R.D. #2 Box 601, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
E-mail: augacre@localnet.com

Lewis, Wade, 110 Juniper Circle, Savannah, GA 31419
E-mail: lew4778@yahoo.com

Einhouse, James, 179 Cedar Lane, Carlisle, PA 17013
E-mail: jimeinhouse@comcast.net

Griffin, Jeffrey, 5811 Foxcrest Drive, Charlotte, NC 28227
E-mail: jgriff007@yahoo.com

Kaufman, Peter, 465 Spring Creek, Derby, KS 67037
E-mail: pkaufman@cox.net

DeVore, Cynthia, 1714 Underwood Road, Oakland, MD 21550
E-mail: psycadelicladybug@yahoo.com

Mooney, Herb, 166 Martel Cir, Dillsburg, PA 17019 (Postal Member) E-mail: hmooney@restoreandmore.com

Robinson, Floyd
E-mail: flip@iupui.edu

Steirer, Gregory, 3174 Red Bird Road, Apopka, FL 32712
E-mail: gsteirer@aol.com

Bowker, Darren, 12 Wilton Drive, Hollins Bury, Lancashire BL9 8BG, UK E-mail mr30tx@yahoo.co.uk

Renewals

Dominic Russell; Mark Ashcroft (Postal); Patrick Herron; Yvonne Best

November 2005 New Online Members List

Erne, Robbert, 49411 Central Park East, Shelby Township, MI 48317
E-mail: robberterne@earthlink.net (Postal Membership)

Stockdale, Shirley, 200 Colonial Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370
E-mail: nphuffman@aol.com

Streett, Ferebe, 4622 Keswick Road, Baltimore, MD 21210
E-mail: ferebe@qis.net

Perryman, Richard, 247 Woodside Drive, Washington, PA 15301
E-mail: deltap100@adelphia.com (Postal Membership \$20)

TIM Resourcing, 28 Hillside Road, Ingersoll, Ontario N5C 4B6 E-mail: rickster@sympatico.ca

Ray, Jay, 16500 Sanborn Road, Saratoga, CA 95070
E-mail: cyprscon@aol.com

Price, Nick, Greenesfield Business Centre, Gateshead, Tyne

and Wear NE8 1PQ, UK E-mail: nick1price@hotmail.com

Munt, Sarah, 133 Roding Road, London, London E5 0DR, UK
E-mail: sarah.munt@tesco.net

Hensley, Don, 1208 E. Broadway #10, Needles, CA 92363
E-mail: main@ucsp.com

Bailey, Jim, 116 Sage Lane, Morenci, AZ 85540
E-mail: baileys2@vtc.net

Robinson, George, 1405 W 3RD, SEDALIA, MO 65301
E-mail: gmichealr@charter.net

Renewals

Scherf, Frank; Malette, Mike; Purcell, Raymond; Agulian, Manuel; Larson, Dan; Christensen, Mark; Cardaciotto, Nick; Miedbrodt, Marcow (Postal Membership)

December 2005 New Online Members List

White, John
E-mail: mikerenault@cox.net

Cordier, Christophe, 2667 7TH Ave North, Sartell, MN 56377
E-mail: ccordier53@hotmail.com

Boyson, William, PO Box 390387, Anza, CA 92539-0387
E-mail: woodyone@earthlink.net

Garland, Don, 10506 Mayten Road, Montague, CA 96064-9679
E-mail: Melinda@lavacrawlers.com

Medeck, Tim, 9175 NE River Road, Rice, MN 56367
E-mail: medeck1@msn.com

Barron, Theresa, 2119-42nd Avenue SW, Seattle WA 98116
E-mail: bigsound2001@aol.com

Yaptinchay, Herberto
E-mail: gohoop1@yahoo.com

Liddell, Gary, 336 Glebeholme Blvd, Toronto, Ontario M4C 1V1, Canada
E-mail: g.liddell@sympatico.ca

Flynn, Tim, 2358 Brunswick Court, Burlington, ON L7P 4P1, Canada
E-mail: flynnstephens@sympatico.ca

Barnett, Jim, 1 Wasser Bridge Road, Greenville, PA 16125
E-mail: jimbarn@infonline.net

Renewals

Ted Thoroman; Robert Hand; Nicholas Vantine; Ken Gladyszewski (Postal Membership); Louis Arata Augustin Sandor

New Additions

By Terry Zabransky and Judy Napoleon

I have been looking for an exceptionally clean R-5 for about two years and finally my persistence paid off! I found a gorgeous 1982 four-door in California. I really lucked out on this one, because it is a true "Garage Queen".

It has 48,000 original miles, brand new paint, a new exhaust system and the interior was reupholstered with NOS factory material. This car is so clean the inspection stickers are still on the frame. There is no sign of rust anywhere on the frame or body. The price was a little high (\$4,000), but it was worth it, because it is a like new car. It cost me \$800 to have it shipped to Chicago and I put about \$1000 into upgrades and replacement parts (shocks, rebuilt the front end, Euro headlights, Gotti rims). I have all the parts from the red R5 I sent to the crusher, plus the white R5 is in storage in my mother's garage. So, with two parts cars, I have enough parts to keep the black R5 and the new Blue four-door (his name is Henri by the way) running for a long, long time.

We just love our Alpines and R5 Turbo, but the R5s are our daily drivers and they just get the job done every day and they are so much fun to drive. It is a shame they acquired somewhat of a bad reputation in the states, because with a little TLC they are very reliable. I sent the red 5 to the crusher with 190,000 miles and the engine and transmission had never been rebuilt.

We also inherited my mother's 1999 Oldsmobile Cutlass (another garage queen with only 17,000 miles), because she could not renew her license due to poor eyesight; she is now 90 years old. So I thought I would have a little fun and "convert" it to a Renault. I pulled all the Olds badges off the car and put a Euro plate on the front. Then I had some vinyl appliques made and put an Alpine 'A' on the front nose and a "Renault F1" emblem on the rear deck and the two rear windows.

Judy thinks I have lost a few screws, which I have, but it just great to see people trying to figure out if it is a Renault or not. It gets more attention than I thought it would. We have nicknamed it the "Oldspine". So as off now the tally is, A-110, A-310, R5 Turbo 2, R17 Gordini, the two R5s and the Oldspine. We hope you have as much fun with your Renaults and Alpines as we do. Remember, when you are going anywhere, the "drive" is the best part.

Enjoy the drive!



Letters

From Francisco Miranda

I hope you are fine. We are very happy now that Renault is WORLD CHAMPION! and Fernando Alonso is the Pilot Champion.

Our friend of Renault invited to the new restaurant Terrasse Renault to see the race (at 1:00 AM started and we finished at about 3:30 AM) so Alberto Gironella thought we should arrive earlier and invited us for dinner to my wife and myself, along with Claude Berthelot, Jorge Alduncin and his wife, Alberto by himself (his wife was ill) and a couple friends of Alberto. The place as you can imagine was packed full, so it was very cheerful. We had a great time.

Have a good day,

Francisco



The little girl is Anaele Campas, Jean Jacques and Claude's granddaughter and niece.

"La Nena"

By Marvin McFalls

I recently received an e-mail from my good friend Francisco Miranda. He let me know that our good friend Miguel Garza recently purchased a gem of a Dauphine Ondine. It is a 1090A model. Francisco and Miguel nicknamed the car "la nena", as many of you may know that "la nina" mean the girl in Spanish. What I didn't know was that "la nena" is slang for a really preety girl. Well let me tell you after seeing the wonderful photos Miguel took there is no doubt they named this car correctly.

Miguel is currently living in Germany. He recently took the car which is in pristine, unrestored condition with 30,000 original miles. As you can see from many of the landmarks, Miguel and his family paid a visit to Paris and Ile Seguin in nearby Boulogne Billancourt. After seeing many of the sights in the city of lights it was back to Germany. It looks like they had wonderful trip.



Visiting the Motor City

By Marvin McFalls

Last winter, I made contact with Dan Doyle from the Metro Detroit Convention and Visitors Bureau. Obviously he was promoting Detroit and trying to get our club to hold a national meet there. We discussed many topics over the next several months and out of the blue he invited me to come up for the Woodward Dream Cruise. For those of you who aren't familiar it is the largest car show in America with 40,000 cars and more than a million spectators. It takes place along Woodward Avenue from the town of Ferndale in the south to Pontiac in the north. Just mile after mile of classic cars, street rods, and America Muscle, with a tad bit of foreign intrigue from time to time.

Since they invited us up for the whole weekend, the put together a entire weekend of events so they could show us everything Detroit had to offer. As a reward for joining the club after years of poking and proding, as well as the fact it was his birthday I invited Marty Mckee to join me on trip. We left Knoxville Friday morning and arrived in Detroit shortly after Noon. Dan and another man dressed in a black suit met us. The other man turned out to be our driver, as we had a stretch Lincoln Town Car to take us to our hotel. We were taken to the Hilton in Troy, Michigan and Dan invited us for a quick lunch at one of the hotel's restaurants. We spent the rest of the afternoon relaxing as the other groups continued to arrive.

That evening we met the other clubs that would be participating with us throughout the weekend. We were joined by members of the Mercury Club, Police Car Owners Association and the BMW Club. We were also joined by Carrie Braxton who works with Dan at Visitors Bureau. After a nice dinner we went to Kart 2 Kart an indoor go cart track where we had a little excitement. Marty, and Glenn, as well as myself had lapped the entire field in the first race, so we decided to have a rematch. Glenn successfully defeated us in the rematch as my car in the second race was just not very competitive. I am not sure what Marty's excuse was. With everyone a bit tired from the trip we headed back to the hotel and prepared for a busy day to come.

On Friday morning I awoke early so I had plenty of time to read the paper before leaving for Breakfast at the Hyatt. They had a wonderful buffet and then they showed us several of the rooms just in case we wanted to come back for a stay. Following our tour it was off to the Henry Ford. The Henry Ford is a complex in Dearborn, that includes a museum, Greenfield Village, an IMAX Theatre and a research center. It is also the starting point for the Ford Rouge Factory Tour. We took a bus and were transported through the factory and dropped off for a tour. After a short movie to introduce us to the history of the facility and then a interactive experience showing how the new F150 were built, we went upstairs to the observation deck. Now it was time to see the factory. Unfortunately, this was a bit disappointing as we were only allowed to see final assembly, instead of

something interesting like stamping, We then returned to the Henry Ford where we had lunch and then a brief tour of part of the museum.

The night before we had been introduced to Bill Chapin, if the name sounds familiar it should. Bill's Grandfather was the founder of Hudson and his dad served as president of AMC. Bill is with the Motor Cities National Heritage Area, which coordinates with all the automotive attractions in the Detroit area. His area of expertise is marketing and he assists many museums and car collections to better promote themselves. Since Bill also worked with AMC before it was sold to Chrysler he had experience with Renault. He actually lived in Paris for a few years working on marketing for Renault in the United States. So I tried to spend as much time as I could pumping him for information.

After running thru the Henry Ford Museum we heading over to the Automotive Hall of Fame. Where Bill gave us background on the Hall as he is a member of the board. Somewhat surprisingly the Hall's list of Inductees is not limited to just Automobile pioneers like Chrysler, Ford, Chevrolet, Benz, Duesenberg, Daimler, and the Dodge Brothers. It is also includes many inventors including Edison, Diesel, Firestone, Bosch, Zeppelin and others, as well as many designers like Harley Earl, Battista Pininfarina, Giorgetto Giugiaro, Virgil Exner, and many more. Also included are racing legends Carroll Shelby, Bill France Sr, Don Garlits and Mario Andretti. In more recent years, the Hall has begin to include more European Automotive pioneers including Bugatti, Ferrari, and five members of the Opel family. Unlike most discussion of automotive pioneers the Hall also includes the great French contributors including; Citroën, Peugeot, Renault, and Michelin. They even had very nice displays of Citroën and Peugeot. While Renault only had a plaque on the wall it was still nice to see Louis recognized. It was a very enjoyable exhibit and I recommend it.

Following a quick trip back to the hotel to freshen up we were off to Birmingham for a nice dinner and a birds eye view of the cruise. While most of group went over to Ford's official display, I had enough of Ford for one day, so Marty and I met up with the representatives from the Police Car Owners Association and headed for Woodward Avenue. After checking out the cars going by for an hour or so we headed back towards the restaurant where we met up with Brenda and Glenn from the BMW Club and Carrie from the Visitor's Bureau. Instead of heading back to the hotel we decided to check out some of the Suburban Nightlife. We ended up in the town of Royal Oak at a club called the Memphis Smoke. It was a blues club with another bar up on the roof. So we decided to check it out. After a few drinks and few stories it was nearly Midnight and we probably figured that Carrie needed to get home to her family before she was in too much trouble.

We awoke Saturday morning and the weather appeared to be taking a turn for the worse. As we left



the hotel for the Walter P. Chrysler Museum it began to rain. After having a wonderful catered breakfast we were able to check out some of the wonderful cars they had on display. Included in the collection were several Hudson, Rambler, and even a AMX, that had been restored at the factory during the 1980s and had gone down the assembly line with the Renault Alliances where it was repainted. They had several interesting interactive displays as well as a very knowledgeable staff. While it was a much more modern facility than the Henry Ford the collection of cars was very diverse. I believe all the clubs were in agreement that we enjoyed the Chrysler Museum over the Ford.



By the time we left the Museum it was steadily raining as we drove over to our next destination Meadow Brook Hall. Meadow Brook Farm was the suburban home of John Dodge and his wife. In 1920 both Dodge Brothers died and Matilda became quite possibly the wealthiest woman in America. A few years later she remarried a lumber baron named Wilson, and they set out on two-year honeymoon in Europe where they found inspiration for the new home they would build. Needless to say having much more money than sense and the need to display their wealth, they set about building an American castle with 190 rooms. It is the fourth largest house in America and one weekend out of the year it is the back drop for the Meadow Brook Concours which takes place on the golf course behind the house.



As we were leaving the Hall the rain began to lighten up and then stopped by the time we arrived at Woodward Avenue the sun was actually peaking out of the clouds. Following a quick lunch provided by Eaton Automotive, Marty and I decided we would see as much of the cruise as possible in the few hours we had before we had to leave. Directly across the street was the Chrysler exhibit so we had to check it out. After seeing a great collection of muscle cars and the latest and greatest they had to offer we headed south. We were able to cover more than two miles of Woodward Avenue before we crossed the street and headed back towards our rendezvous with the other members of our group. Of course there were far to many interesting cars to check out and as usual we were running late. Everyone else was already in the bus and Dan and Bill were making one more pass before they had planned to leave us. Luckily Bill saw us and we were back on the bus an on our way.



After cleaning up we were off to Edsel Ford's house. While his house was only about 100 rooms, it featured many rooms purchased from castles and estates in Europe during the Depression. There were countless works of art worth untold millions, and a million-dollar Tiffany lamp that was in storage because it didn't meet Mrs. Ford's liking. Speaking of Lamps they had one made out of a once priceless Ming vase.

European Car of the Year

Clio III has been voted Car of the Year 2006. This is the sixth time Renault has won this prestigious and much-coveted award. Clio III has been voted Car of the Year 2006 by a jury of 58 motoring journalists from 22 European countries. Clio scored 256 points just edging out the Volkswagen Passat which received 251 point and the Alfa Romeo 159 which tallied 212 points. A total of 28 new models cars were in the running for the award.

Boasting an expressive design, Clio III has redefined the standards of the small car segment with record cabin space, top road handling qualities and remarkable fit and finish. Clio won five stars in the Euro NCAP crash tests, underling Renault's lead in safety.

The latest generation of Clio went on sale in mid-October. The car has enjoyed an enthusiastic reception and initial sales are very encouraging.

This is the sixth time Renault has won the prestigious European Car of the year award. Starting with the remarkable R16 in 1965, followed by the versatile R9 (Alliance) in 1982. Next came the original Clio in 1991, followed by the Scénic in 1997 and the Mégane II in 2003.

The award will boost the new Clio line as a whole. With new trim packages, as well as addition engines, transmissions, and the new Clio Renault Sport still to come. 2006 will be the year of the Clio and another banner year for Renault.



New Clio at At elier Renault

Text and photos from A. Meyer

On a trip to France in October, 2005 we had the chance to revisit Renault's boutique on the Champs-Ellys es. The subject of the exhibit was the newly introduced Clio III. The theme of the show included well known cities throughout the globe, including Rio de Janeiro, Barcelona, Shanghai, Paris, and oddly enough, New York. Yet as far as we know, Renault has no plans to import vehicles under the Renault name.

The new Clio is a handsome vehicle, with an interesting shape, but not the extreme appearance of the M egane series.

The cars were spread out in the downstairs display area, surrounded by murals of each of the featured cities. Large plastic globes were filled with memorabilia from the city in question. New York featured scale model Yellow Cabs, Chock-Full-O'Nuts coffee, an I   New York ball cap, Batman and Hulk comics, a Bloomingdale's bag and other items.

In another area, there was a green screen provided which created a video background for people to see themselves superimposed in the skyline of various cities, sort of a live-action "Wish You Were Here" postcard. The restaurant was just as busy and expensive as ever, and it was still surprising to see a waiter with a tray full of food striding through an auto showroom. As always, a rewarding experience.



Tripping around California

By Marvin McFalls

After missing last year's Best of France and Italy, I was determined to make it to this year. Last time we went, my friend Brent Bartley had such a good time, he decided to join me again. Brent was also accompanied by his Joel who was turning eighteen, and he had never been to California so what an opportunity. The three of us met up at the gate for our flight to San Diego in Cincinnati. Believe it or not our flight took off on time and arrived early. We claimed our bags and went out to the curb, it wasn't more than a minute and our Club Secretary Jacques Lynn and our Treasurer Sharon Desplaines pulled up.

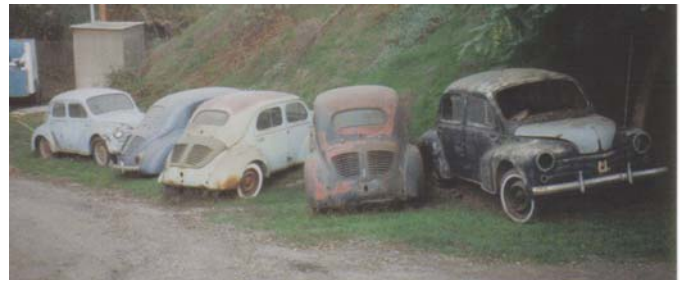
Since it was after 6PM, and they don't serve meals on the plane anymore we decided to go out for some dinner, Jacques recommended his favorite Chinese restaurant. After a nice meal we went back to Sharon's for some wine and Jacques told us the story about hitch hiking thru Central America back in the sixties. It was a very entertaining story and he actually wrote a book about the trip, hopefully one day he will get it published. Next thing you know it was nearly midnight, so we decided to call it a night.

The next morning, Brent, Joel and I rented a car and headed for Orange County. I had a surprise lined up for the guys. Being that it was a car weekend, I scheduled a visit to the Marconi Automotive Museum. For those who haven't visited the Marconi is located in Tustin, CA, which is about ten miles inland from Newport Beach. The museum features the incredible personal collection of Dick Marconi. Mr. Marconi is a racing enthusiast and he has invested millions from his successful vitamin business to assemble one of the nicest collection of sports cars in California.

The collections features; dozens of Ferraris as well as Lamborghinis, Maseratis, Mercedes, BMW, and even one Renault. This is what first brought the Museum to my attention. They have a 1995 Williams Renault that was driven by Damon Hill. To my knowledge it is the only modern day Renault F1 car in the United States. The car is on loan from Sir Frank Williams' personal collection. After drooling all over these incredible cars, we must have worked up an appetite. So we decided to head down to Newport and have some lunch after checking out the beach. As there weren't many pretty girls on the beach we decided to check out the pier and then we jumped on PCH and started working our way back to south. Following a stop in Laguna Hills we made our way back to the 5 and headed for Jacques' place in El Cajon. We made good time and arrived at Jacques' just before dark. After a quick tour of the operation, we went down the street for diner. Following diner, we went back to Jacques' and retired early as we had a big trip planned for the next day.

The next morning we awoke early and helped Jacques clean-up 'Butter Pat' and we took her over to Sharon's. On the way the little 4CV, decided to spit out some of its coolant. Jacques had recently replaced the head, and I figured he had an air pocket in the system. We replaced the coolant and drove on





without incident. After dropping off the car with Sharon to do the finishing touches to get Butter really gleaming, we headed for Tijuana.



On the way, we stopped by Clancy Menzel's to check out his two show winning 4CVs. Needless to say I am surprised Clancy can get his 4CVs to his house and he lives on the top of a very San Francisco like hill. After Brent picked up a few tips for his 4CV project, we loaded back up and headed for the border. We crossed the border in the industrial part of town and Jacques took us to a roach coach for some fish tacos. While I must admit neither Joel or I were hungry enough, to eat tacos out of the back of a truck, Brent and Jacques enjoyed them. Jacques then took us shopping and we stopped by the shop where Jacques gets his cars painted. Next, Jacques recommend we check out one of the neighborhoods he frequently visited, but Joel and I were still hungry so we stopped by a Vegetarian restaurant for some lunch, then we headed down town. For some reason we were about the only gringos around so outside of every shop they had callers trying to get us to come in. Needless to say whatever you want, most likely you can find there.



As it was getting late in the day, we decided to head back to the U.S. Being that we needed to be back by 5PM we decided to cross at the same place we entered. This turned out to be a big mistake, as we chose the wrong lane and it took us almost two hours to cross the border. Once we finally crossed the border we called Sharon and let her know we were on our way. Sharon had put together a nice dinner and after stuffing ourselves we retired early as we had to get up early to make the drive to L.A. We left the house about 5AM and made decent time and arrived at Jerry's Famous Deli just before 8AM. Being that we were the only ones there we figured everyone had forgot about breakfast, so we sat down and started to look at



Continued Page 14



Best of France and Italy

Photos from Lincoln Sarmanian and Jason of Los Angeles

The Best of France and Italy show at Woodley Park in Van Nuys, CA never disappoints. French marques included Citroën, Renault, Matra-Simca, Facel-Vega, Bugatti real and fake, Delahaye, Peugeot.

Generally, held the first Sunday of November, this year the show occurred on the first Saturday, an unwelcome change which we hope will not be repeated.







Matra D'jet at Lexington Concours

By Bethany Hawkins

A rare 1965 Matra D'jet was shown at the Lexington Concours d'elegance. Lane Motor Museum showed its 1965 Matra D'jet 5 at the 2nd Annual Lexington Concours d'elegance on August 27th 2005. Lane Motor Museum restoration specialist Greg Coston recently completed the restoration on this fine example of the world's first mid-engine production car. The Lexington Concours marked the first public appearance of the Matra since its restoration.

"We were pleased to showcase this beautiful car and restoration job at this prestigious national show," said Lane Motor Museum President, Jeff Lane. "It was great to see the public's reaction to a great road and race car."

The Matra D'jet owes its existence to René Bonnet who designed this wonderful car and used an 1108cc Renault engine mounted just ahead of the rear wheels. The design of the car made it light and very aerodynamic allowing it to reach a top speed of over 100mph. Bonnet eventually lost his business and Matra took over the company. Only about 1500 of the Matra D'jet were produced from 1963 to 1967.

Lane Motor Museum's Matra competed in the "Post War Foreign 1946-1975" class that included a Lamborghini Espada, Mercedes Benz SEB, Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, Maserati Khamsin, HRG 1500, and a Sunbeam Talbot Alpine Roadster. The 2005 Lexington Concours d'elegance benefited the Kentucky Children's Hospital and WUKY.

The 1965 Matra D'jet is now on display at the Lane Motor Museum in Nashville, Tennessee. The Museum's current collection showcases over 125 cars and 20 motorcycles from more than 50 different marques of vehicles from Asia, Europe, North and South America and dating from 1922 to 2003. In addition to a substantial micro car collection and several prototypes, visitors of the museum the largest Tatra collection outside of Europe, amphibious vehicles, alternative fuel vehicles, competition cars, and much more.



the menu when we were joined by two more members, both driving Caravelles. First came Joe Hernandez and a couple minutes later, webmaster Kurt Trifett came in. Now that we had the makings of a group we decided to order breakfast and we were soon joined by Jim Miller and several of his friends. Jim drove his Red R10. About the time we finished eating, Dene and Pat Barrett arrived so we ended up with a good turnout. We took a group photo and then headed for Woodley Park.

Besides the cars at breakfast we also had another 4CV and a like new Medallion as well as an A310 and Nine R5 Turbos in the show field. Also on display were a couple of other unique French cars. The same person that owned the A310 also owned a smart car. While this isn't the first smart I have seen in the US, I did however see my first Peugeot 206 GTI. It was a 2003 model that was bought and licensed in Baja, México. I spoke to the owner and he said he and friend had both bought one. He had hoped to get the car registered in California, but if he had to he could continue to register it in México. While I was talking to him a representative from Hemmings came over to ask him about doing a story. The same guy spoke to Kurt and he is also going to do a story about his Caravelle. I will keep you posted.



Renault Meeting

By Francisco Miranda

Last Sunday Pablo Alcocer, the Gordini Club's new President invited, myself and several other members of the Alpine club to a Renault meet. Since a reorganization of their club has taken place, with many new and fresh ideas, as well as a new board of directors, but most importantly getting rid of old problems and mismanagement, we were glad to join and support them with our cars.

Juan Antonio Calvillo, the Alpine Club president, drove his blue Dinalpin Berlinette. Carlos Calvillo arrived in his beautiful silver Floride. Tomas Marin proudly displayed his red R8S, while Angel Espinosa brought his silver Fuego. Myself, I opted to drive my trusty R4L. Our good friend Lorenzo Sendra, president of the French Group, was also present supporting the event with his white Berlinette. It



was a nice moment to photograph the three presidents together (Lorenzo, Pablo, Juan, and Tomas).

Inside the Automobile Museum we could see a nice red Dauphine and a blue R8S for sale. Outside, on the bazaar, the usual Renault bits and pieces and some toys as well, like this nice Floride (pedal car) and the remote controlled Berlinette. I decided to buy a tin Berlinette that even has some sound device inside. It needs some cleaning but I am sure it will look very nice in my small collection, after Miguel Cacheux finishes his restoration.

We were very happy to see old friends again with their very nice Renaults and spend a day with car talks. We wish the Gordini Club success and continued growth.





Restoring a Caravelle:

The consummation of a 40 year love affair
H. DeWayne Ashmead, PhD

In 1963, at the age of 19, I left home and relocated in France. I remained there for the next 2 ½ years. During that period I was introduced to all things French, including Renault automobiles.

When I first saw the Renault Caravelle I thought it was one of the most beautiful cars I had ever seen. I spent many hours at the Renault dealership on the Champs-Élysées in Paris admiring the car. At the time I didn't know it was a coach built automobile or that it had been designed by Ghia in Italy. All I knew was that I liked it. It had style that contemporary competitors lacked.

During my time in France I wasn't able to purchase a Caravelle or any other car regardless of cost. Further, I had no French friends who owned Caravelles. Consequently my only knowledge of the Caravelle came from observing it on the streets and from drooling over it in the French automotive dealerships, not from actually driving it.

Upon returning to the United States, with my father's biased encouragement, I purchased a new Pontiac GTO. In spite of having a lot of fun with the Pontiac, I still reflected on the Caravelle. About 1967, I decided to buy a Caravelle. I went to the local Renault dealer in Salt Lake City. The salesman who worked with me extolled all the benefits of the Caravelle with enthusiasm. His sales pitch got me quite excited. The Renault brochure, which I still have, claimed the Caravelle was a "spirited sports car." Then I drove the car for the first time. Compared to the performance of my GTO, the Caravelle was a gutless wonder. It was still as beautiful as ever but I didn't think it could pull a knife out of melted butter. I walked away disappointed with the car.

Today, as I reflect on that experience, I am reminded of an article on the Caravelle which appeared in the July 1962 issue of Sports Car Graphic. Bernard Cahier, who had raced Dauphines, reported that the Caravelle's suspension and subsequent handling was far superior to his race prepared Dauphines and felt it was an outstanding sports car. His only lament was its lack of power which he believed would have been helped by the larger engine which was being installed in the Alpine A110. The Caravelle needed more power.



Fast forward to the present era. In the early 1990's, as my children started leaving home, I began collecting and restoring cars that I had coveted all of my adult life. I returned to the Caravelle. In spite of my earlier disappointment with its performance in that test drive almost 40 years earlier, I still loved the design of the Caravelle. By then, my automobile collection contained many performance cars, but it also included several docile examples, such as a 1949 MG-TC, a 1965 Volvo P1800S and the like. I decided a Caravelle would be right at home in this eclectic collection.

I began to search for the right car. I wanted either a 1966 or 1967 model for several reasons. First the unibody construction was reinforced in the door area and didn't fold in the middle when the doors were open like earlier iterations. Second, it had more instrumentation including a 6000 RPM tachometer, which the earlier cars did not have. It also had more supportive bucket seats. Fourth, it had an improved swing axle suspension with reinforced longitudinal radius rods, which, along with more precise steering improved handling over the earlier cars. And finally the later cars had bigger engines which in theory meant better performance.

Most Caravelles that I looked at were quite rusty and in poor condition. When they were eliminated from my search and when I would only consider 1966 or 1967 models, it limited my selection. It took over a year to find the right car. The Caravelle that I finally settled on was manufactured in April of 1967 and had only traveled 26,000 miles from new.



It was still not perfect. It had rust in the passenger compartment floor as well as the trunk floor. This meant I would have to cut the rusted areas out and build new floor and trunk pans with the correct ribs, etc. (I don't believe in filling rust holes with fiberglass or bondo.) All of the under carriage pans were missing which is a common problem. Servicing requires removal of the pans and frequent servicing is much easier when the pans are left off. Over the years these removed pans tend to get lost and don't transfer with the car when it is sold to a new owner. A previous owner had also removed the side chrome strips and filled in the attaching holes with bondo for a custom look. I would have to find these chrome strips, redrill the



holes and reattach the chrome strips to the car. Many of the mechanicals, such as brakes, steering, etc. had deteriorated due to long term improper storage and would need to be replaced. In spite of these obvious problems and several that wouldn't become obvious until I restored the Caravelle, I decided to purchase the car. It was still better than most of the cars I had examined.

Once the Caravelle was delivered to my shop I spent several months studying it and getting to know the car before disassembling it for restoration. I believe that in order to restore a car correctly, it requires a significant amount of research on that car long before the first nut is loosened. Almost every automobile that I have restored has been a multiple show car winner at national concours events across the United States. To restore them to that level has always required lots of research. Even though it is not a particularly valuable car and probably wouldn't be invited to the major concours d'elegance events like some of my other cars, the approach I took for restoration of my Caravelle was no different than the approach I would have taken for restoring other rarer and more valuable cars. I collected manuals, parts books, period magazine articles and other documentation on the Caravelle. Since I travel to Europe frequently, I was able to secure 7 additional out of print books on Renault from used book dealers. One of my French employees was even able to pick up an original parts manual for the Caravelle at his local flea market in Rennes. All of the literature described, discussed or cussed the Caravelle. Most of the material was in French which

wasn't a problem for me to read, but the germane parts required translation for the people who would be working on the car under my direction. All of the pertinent data was subsequently communicated to my restoration team.

In addition to doing a literature search I began collecting the parts for my Caravelle which I knew were missing when I purchased the car. This included the chrome side moldings, the original tools, the pans that cover the under carriage, etc. I knew I would have to find other parts later on during the restoration process, but I didn't worry about identifying them in the beginning. Their absence would become obvious as we analyzed the car and compared it to the parts manual during reassembly following restoration of the individual parts. I also knew that in all probability we would have to fabricate some parts that had deteriorated on all of the cars and were currently not available as replacement parts, but again I didn't worry about that problem at the outset of the restoration. I would deal with parts availability problems as they arose.

Early on I decided that if I were going to truly enjoy the Caravelle I would also need to enhance its performance as recommended by Cahier. The car had so much more potential than the engine in its current form delivered. The proof was in looking at the performance of the 1963 Alpine with its 1100cc engine, or the Gordini Renault Dauphine. Even though these cars had the same basic engines found in other Renaults, they had been "tweaked" to deliver performance. I read Jacques Lynn's articles in the Renault News, Aug.- Sept. 2001 Vol. 61 p 10-11, Oct. - Dec. 2000 Vol. 58 p 6-7, and July - Sept. 2000 Vol. 57, p 6-7, in which he described combining parts from two different Renault engines to form a modified power plant. Initially that seemed like a reasonable approach to increasing horsepower. I rode in his car with the modified engine and was impressed with its performance. Consequently I acquired the two engines he described in his articles with the idea of duplicating his plan. Before I started to build the modified engine, however, I decided to take a different direction which would have been more in keeping with my restoration philosophy of maintaining originality.

While other automotive companies have taken a similar approach to increasing horsepower, the concept I decided to follow was most evident in the Honda Accord. The 2000 Honda Accord has a 3 liter engine which produces about 200 horsepower. The 2003 Honda Accord has the same 3 liter engine, but the intake manifold and exhaust manifold were redesigned by the company to produce an additional 40 horsepower.

As I thought about that, I realized that in the 1960's, Renault had probably manufactured a lot of performance engine parts to support its racing efforts. Furthermore, Renault had access to many performance parts designed to fit Renault engines but manufactured by other companies. A little bit of research led me to discover that the 1963 Alpine had used exactly the same R-8 1108cc engine that was in my Caravelle but instead of the anemic 54 horsepower claimed by the Caravelle, the Alpine generated 87 horsepower. When Gordini modifications were made, the horsepower was increased to 127 horsepower. I wondered if these



Renault accessories had ever been available directly from the dealer for installation on other cars. (While Renault did not own the Alpine Group during the 1960's, the Alpines were sold and serviced through Renault dealerships, so it seemed logical that the performance parts needed to support the Alpine would have been available through the Renault dealers.) Assuming the Gordini and Alpine performance parts were available from Renault dealers in the 1960's I wonder further if they could have been bolted onto the Caravelle engine to improve its performance without destroying the originality of the engine. To me that logic made sense because, as noted above, both the Alpine and the 1967 Caravelle shared the same basic engine just as the 2000 and 2003 Honda Accord share a similar engine. After satisfying myself that I could indeed have purchased a large number of Renault performance parts from certain dealers in 1967, I developed a plan to duplicate what I believe could have done in 1967.

I recognized that for the purist I would not be restoring the car to the condition it was in when it was sold off the showroom floor, but in another sense I would still maintain its originality. I decided that I would do nothing to the car that could not have been done by a Renault dealer prior to delivering the car to me in 1967. If I had known then what I know now, I would have probably ordered a modified car new and had these dealer changes made before I picked it up. That eased my conscience a little. Ultimately when I finished the restoration of my Caravelle, the only visible irreversible modification that I made was to manufacture a custom engine pan on the driver's side to accommodate the Alpine exhaust headers that I had installed. I suspect that if the dealer would have modified the engine as I had, he would have delivered the car without that engine pan, particularly if he had put headers on the car as I had done. In spite of that, I wanted a pan to protect the engine compartment because it had one originally and secondly, a pan would reduce the amount of road water and dirt being thrown into the engine compartment. But I am getting ahead of my story.

I removed the 1108 cc engine from my car and completely disassembled it. The block was cleaned and inspected. Since it had only traveled 26,000 miles, it did not require any supplemental attention. The flywheel was lightened and resurfaced. New bearings and a new timing chain were installed. Light weight racing pistons replaced the original pistons and a mild stage 2 street racing camshaft was installed. Next I focused on the engine head. It was ported and polished. Inlet valves were increased to 33.5 mm and exhaust valves to 30.0 mm for more efficient flow. Heavy duty valve springs with solid lifters were installed. I replaced the original 29cd single barrel carburetor with a 36cd Weber dual barrel downdraft carburetor. That necessitated sourcing a different intake manifold from the Renault performance division. The intake manifold had to fit the engine and still accommodate the larger carburetor. (I had decided not to install multiple carburetors seen on Alpines because, while they looked "cool", they were more difficult to keep synchronized. I also remembered that G.M. claimed to have obtained more performance out of a single 4 barrel carburetor with a redesigned intake manifold in its

1967 Pontiac GTO than it did with 3 two barrel carburetors in 1966.) The air filter for the new carburetor was also changed to a performance design. Finally I installed an oil cooler which was probably over kill, but I didn't know how much additional heat I would generate from the performance engine. All of these changes resulted in increasing the performance of the Caravelle engine from its original 54 horsepower, to 96 horsepower on the dyno stand.

I still wasn't satisfied. I remembered that Honda also changed the exhaust manifold on the 2003 Accord to further increase horsepower. I decided to install exhaust headers and a performance muffler on my Caravelle. Since



they were no longer available in the United States, both were sourced from an Alpine restoration shop in France. The performance muffler would not fit in the area originally allocated for the Caravelle muffler. Consequently I relocated the new muffler transversely across the back of the car underneath the bumper and built new brackets to hold the muffler just as was done on the Alpine. I used existing bolt holes so no new holes had to be drilled. Due to the shape of the headers, which were coated to improve exhaust flow, the left side engine pan had to be redesigned, as I mentioned above. While horsepower hasn't been measured since the performance exhaust system was installed, I suspect the car now produces about 110 horsepower. That's not quite as much as the later Alpines, but it sounds like a lot when the engine is running and the car is accelerating. Heads turn as the car screams by. The car sounds a lot like an Alpine. I am finally happy with the way the Caravelle performs. The engine delivers what the beautiful body has always suggested was possible.

Having modified the engine with mostly bolt on parts motivated me to make some additional changes to the car which I believed would enhance the beauty of the Caravelle body. Originally, my Caravelle was painted silver by the factory but when the chrome trim pieces were removed from the sides by a previous owner in order to achieve a custom look, he painted the body red. Rather than repainting it in the original Renault silver or even in the flashy Renault Red that it currently wore, I decided to use a period correct paint, but not Renault paint. I chose a 1965 G.M. color called "Midnight Orchid." It was one of the first "flip flop" paints offered by a car manufacturer. Custom flip flop paints were previously available from specialty houses but not generally from car manufacturers. I rationalized that if a future owner wanted to repaint the car silver, he/she could. My choice of a G.M. paint would not damage the car but instead emphasize the sculpted body.

Midnight Orchid paint has a silver base with a lilac tint. In the bright sunlight the car appears to be metallic silver. The sculpting of the sheet metal creates shadows, even in bright sunlight. These shadows emphasize a light lilac tint. The result is stunning. Everyone comments on how beautiful the car is. On a slab-sided car I don't think Midnight Orchid works the way G.M. envisioned, but when a car body has a lot of contours, as with the Caravelle, the paint is ideal. The body color changes from silver to lilac depending on the light and its position in relation to the car.

During the restoration process several people, who visited my shop and who were unfamiliar with Renault Caravelles, thought my car may have been an Amphicar which traveled on both the road and water because both automobiles share similar appearing solid front nose panels. I decided that the Caravelle needed a different nose panel to give the car a more traditional appearance. Again I did not want to put anything on the car that was not available from Renault. Any modifications to the nose panel had to be a bolt on modification that would have been available from Renault and could have been installed by the dealer.

In the course of my research I found a French publication enumerating several options that were not generally seen on the Caravelles but were available from



the dealer. I have subsequently found period photographs showing these options installed on various Caravelles. One of these options was a false front grill. The grill was made by the Georges Hericourt Company in Courbevoie near Paris and was offered as a dealer installed option. The original grill was expensive so very few were actually sold, making it a very rare option. I decided that I wanted to put that grill on my car. With the help of Jacques Lynn we found an original grill in used condition in Holland. I purchased it. When I received it from Europe, I found that it needed extensive reworking in order to fit on the nose of my Caravelle correctly. It was used and abused. In spite of the extra work I was still thrilled to get it. Once it was fitted to my car, I had it rechromed and then installed it on my car. It looked great, but it was missing the badge that was seen in the period photographs. The hunt was on again. The badge was a plastic insert with a chrome bezel. I obtained the insert from one person and a few months later found the bezel from another. The plastic insert was in good condition but the pot metal bezel had to be rechromed, which presented new challenges. When the restored false grill with the badge was installed on my car, the appearance of the Caravelle was completely changed. The car no longer appeared to be an Amphicar. Most casual observers now think the engine is in the front and are surprised to discover it at the back of the car.

Next came the wheels. First, I wanted original tires on my Caravelle. The white wall tires installed on the 1967 Caravelles sold in the United States were unique to that car. I quickly found that no tire company in the United States continued to offer such a tire, including the manufactures of obsolete tire designs. Undaunted, a little investigation uncovered the fact that Michelin was still producing the original white wall tires in its old tire factory in France. I purchased 5 brand new original appearing tires and had them shipped to me from France.

Another change to the car was the hubcaps. I was never fond of the dog dish hubcaps that originally came on the Caravelle. I learned that N. J. Industries in Duffield, Virginia had manufactured an optional wire wheel hubcap which was offered through U.S. Renault dealerships. I obtained a N.O.S. set from Jacques Lynn and installed them on my car. While they don't fit as well as I would like, they nevertheless improve the appearance of the car over the original hubcaps and give it a more sporty look.

I next had to address the interior of the car. Originally I thought I would simply refurbish the interior because, while the car was 40 years old, it had seen little real use. I found, however, that no amount of dressing would return the interior to a "like new" appearance. Consequently I decided to re-upholster the car in the correct black vinyl which quickly became a challenge. Black vinyl was not hard to get, but finding black vinyl with the correct grain in order to duplicate what Renault had originally used was very difficult because that pattern was no longer made. Fortunately I found a supplier that had some of the old vinyl still in inventory and I purchased it.

In photographs of the earlier iterations of the Caravelle I noted that Renault had used a contrasting piping on its seats and doors. Even though Renault discontinued

the contrasting color theme on later Caravelles, I decided to copy the earlier Caravelles and upholster my seats and doors with the contrasting colored piping. I decided if a future owner wanted the monochromic appearance of the later cars, it would be a simple thing to paint the piping black. I choose a silver piping with the correct grain to tie to the body color.

The silver piping also ties to the silver vinyl kick panels on the doors. The hatch design on the vinyl used on the kick panels of the doors hasn't been made for over 30 years. Finding N.O.S. vinyl with the correct hatch design was another challenge. Again I was fortunate. I found a supplier in Salt Lake City who had a few yards of the original hatch patterned vinyl still in inventory. I purchased his entire inventory and subsequently painted it silver just as Renault did originally before installing it on the doors.

Originally the Caravelle had a rubber floor mat in the front and European manufactured square weave carpet in the back. The rubber mat is no longer made which presented a problem because my original mat was worn and torn beyond reasonable repair. Short of finding a replacement mat the car would have to be carpeted. Using my various sources in France, I was ultimately able to find a N.O.S. rubber floor mat for the Caravelle. As far as design and fit are concerned, it look just like the original mat that was in my car, except it is new.

I was not as fortunate when it came to the 3 piece rubber mat in the trunk. My trunk mats were worn in spots and had several tears. Battery acid had also taken its toll





on one of the mats. I could not find new replacement mats and the used mats I looked at were no better than what I already had. Thus, I decided to restore my original trunk mats. It took a lot of work to return them to an almost new appearance, but I am pleased with the results. If one looks closely, one can still see where the mats have been repaired, but with a quick glance they appear almost new.

Another challenge was reproducing the decals that Renault put on this Caravelle. Some of them were partially destroyed and had to be reconstructed by an artist after they had been scanned into a computer. Once the scanned decals were in the computer, I had a sign shop reproduce the decals which I then installed on my car. While the process was expensive, they look very good, particularly the decal on the battery box in the trunk which had been partially destroyed by battery acid.

The above by no means exhausts everything that I have done to my Caravelle. N.O.S. rubber weather-stripping was used throughout. Some of it was sourced from the United States and the rest from France. All of the electrical systems, such as the optional radio and windshield wiper motor, were rebuilt. The mechanical systems, including the transaxle, disk brakes, etc were refurbished, where possible, or replaced or rebuilt, where necessary. The car was completely rewired with period correct wire. All of the glass was either polished to remove scratches or replaced. Plated parts were rechromed or polished. And the list goes on.

While engaged in researching my Caravelle I learned that while under contract to Ghia, Virgil Exner, Jr. had designed the Renault Caravelle. Mr. Exner was still alive so I contacted him and asked him about the car. In the course of our conversations and letters I asked Mr. Exner to autograph the car. He agreed, so I sent him the glove box door which he signed. His signature on the dash sets the car off and makes it special. I have always felt that the Caravelle is a rolling sculpture and now I have the artist's signature on that beautiful sculpture.

Restoring this Caravelle was an expensive labor of love. I have put more money into it than I could ever recoup if I were to sell it. Restoring it to sell it to someone else was never my objective. It was a car I loved in the 1960's, and I wanted to preserve an example in a way that reflected my admiration. I have done nothing to destroy the integrity of the car. It can easily be returned to an original showroom Caravelle by repainting the body and interior piping and unbolting the performance engine parts and replacing them with the original engine parts, all of which I still have.

I probably will never return the car to this original stock condition. I am only a temporary caretaker for this car, however, and since the original parts that were replaced by the performance parts will remain with the car, someone else may wish to do so when the title is passed on to that person. That will be his/her prerogative. In the meantime, I now have the perfect Caravelle.



JEAN PATOU
Une haute ceinture relie le boléro et la jupe évasée de la robe, l'un et l'autre en même lainage « Scotly » de Rodier.