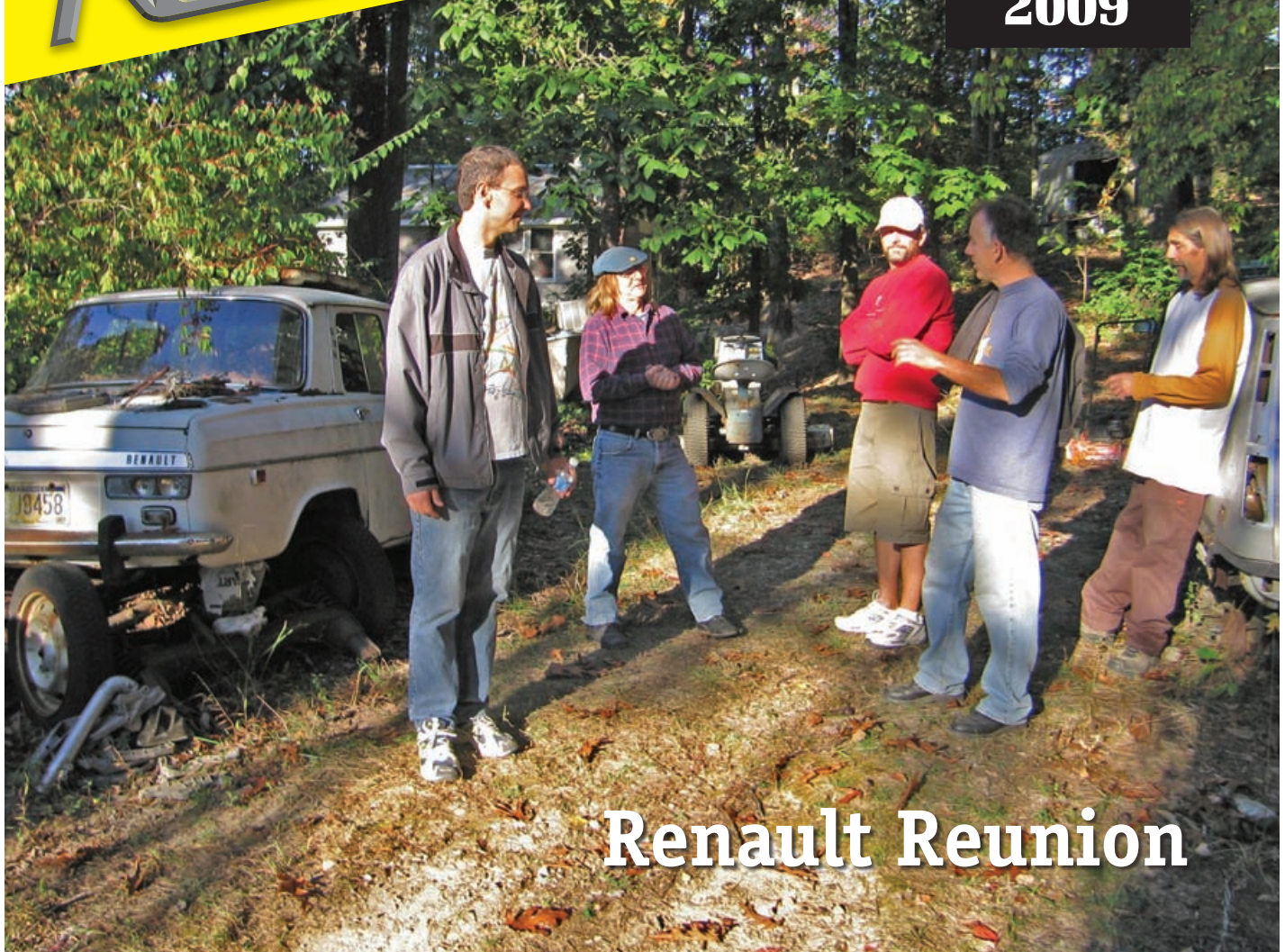


RENAULT NEWS

90
Winter
2009



Renault Reunion

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Renault News is the newsletter of the Renault Owners Club of North America. This newsletter is published quarterly. We are a non-profit, all-volunteer club. Our purpose is to help one another keep our Renaults in shape and on the road.

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Membership Dues

Ever since the club was founded by 10 original members chipping in \$20 to get the club started way back in 1991, our annual dues have been \$20. Unfortunately since then the price of a stamp has gone from 29 cents to 42 cents. Now we are told effective May 11th stamps are going up to 44 cents. While we have known for a few years that due to the steady increase of postage that we were going to have to raise dues. With the economy today, this is absolutely the worst time to raise rates. After much discussion we have decided that effective June, 1 2009 we will raise postal memberships to \$25 in North America, and \$30 for International postal members. However we are going to leave our online membership at \$15 for the foreseeable future. We really appreciate our members, and hope these rate increases don't cause you undo fiscal hardship. So if you wish, when you membership is up for renewal you can change to an Online Membership and pay only \$15 a year, or you can do an early renewal between now and the end of May at the current rate of \$20.

Thanks for continuing to support the only general interest Renault Club in North America!

My Floride

By P eter Biland

This car was imported by my father in September 1961 from France via a local Renault agent in Hamilton, New Zealand and has been in the family ever since.

It was used extensively by him for many years as his mode of transport to and from work. On one occasion he returned early complaining that there was a 'meowing' sound coming from the engine. Upon checking he found our cat had climbed onto the splash-pan beside the engine while there was some residual warmth, and upon engine start in the morning was too terrified to get out.

About three years later, he purchased a Caravelle, and my mother took over use of the Floride.

Upon their deaths, my brother and I had to decide what to do with the cars, and since the Floride was the prettier car, the choice was not difficult.

I used it for many years and one day a tooth came off first gear (anyone got a spare?), and the passenger window got broken; so the car went into storage. Working full time made restoration difficult, but slowly progress was made, and about ten years ago the body was finally stripped and repainted; and I started to collect spare parts. At a time when I was a tutor at what is now MIT (Manukau Technical Institute, not Massachusetts etc), I had parked the car and was promptly accosted by another tutor saying he had a car like mine to which he was going to fit with a VW engine, but was returning to Canada. "Do I want the car?" Well, yes. He sold the body and I trucked heaps of bits home. Four-speed box, engine and many suspension bits. Obtaining parts here is a real problem, even though the Dauphine (same running gear) was assembled in New Zealand in the 1960s: they were French and never popular and most of the remaining parts got dumped.

In 2001, I quit work and now had time to get things done, but did not really get started till returning from a wonderful holiday in Wyoming and Hawaii in November.

There are very few of these Caravelles/Florides in NZ and work was very much in isolation, until!.. One day I took the gearbox to an engineering shop to be cleaned. A customer came by the shop, saw the gearbox, recognized it, phoned a friend who was looking for one (he was running one up-side-down in a Cooper open-wheeler racing car), and things took off. "Out-of-the-blue" phone calls came about the car and my circle of contacts and offers of help increased enormously. Amazing who has these cars tucked away.

I have been recently involved in stripping a Caravelle with a broken back and obtained many more parts. Also I

obtained some parts from a heavily "butchered" car that came in from South Africa that had a tree fall across it.

I joined the RCCC (the UK Renault Classic Car Club) and had enormous help and encouragement from them, as well as technical info and parts. Also I had great assistance from Jacques Lynn, with whom I happen to share a christian-name. Some parts also came from Caravelle Motor Imports in Melbourne Australia.

Since then I have identified eleven of these cars in the country here, none of which seem original (mine is) and only a few are actually on the road. I have spoken to only six of the owners so far. All the 850s I have heard of, have been repowered with 1100 or bigger motors.

The specs of the car are- Oval plate number R1092 37 236, 850cc engine type 670-05, four-speed box type 318-13, 32PIBT Solex carburetor, drum brakes and 6 volt electrics..



I Fell for a Caravelle

By Rick Cochran

It all started when I first saw a Caravelle, didn't know what it was. I pulled into the farm, the man said it was a Renault Caravelle, but it was not for sale. I was looking for a Sunbeam to restore, but this little car was stunning. Went home, did a search on the computer and got lucky found one in a barn in KY. The rest is history. I had to get it some how. The owner had taken it apart in order to restore in the 1980s. Thirty years later, still in pieces (we have all been there). Decided to get the car so I headed to KY. Bought the 1966 car and title for \$400 and hoped all the pieces were there! Having had several old sports cars at times (that always need repair) the car went together pretty easily with basic knowledge.

First, I had to hear that massive 1100cc motor come to life. Of course, the cylinder head was warped so I ended up checking the bottom end bearings and re ringing the pistons. The head was repaired, started right up! Then the wiring nightmare, all three harnesses were in a box with the little stick on numbers in the bottom of the box. (I guess the glue doesn't last 30 years) but they lined up pretty easily once I got over my fear of wiring. Then on to the rack & pinion (easy). This was a fun little car to work on, not as hard as my old MGB. The body was in good shape, just a couple of dings, a little metal work on the doors and floorboard. Then off to the body shop, \$2000 later it was lookin' good. The work went faster once it was pretty my wife started calling it her car (it was mine when it looked like junk). The car has three very different looks, hard top, soft top and no top (I like the latter) I would like to thank Jacques Rear Engine Renault for all the help with parts, manual, etc...

So here it is, total about \$3500 investment for a little car that gets 40 MPG, 45 horse power and stops traffic with its looks. Not many of them left out there. Good hunting...
Rick Cochran, Daytona Beach, Florida. 🍷



Clásico de Altura

By Francisco Miranda

Last weekend we went to Clásico de Altura which translated to English means "A Height Classic" which doesn't make a lot of sense. However the event was in Toluca. It is on the same road as the one we drove to Huixquilucan just a bit further on, which is higher in elevation than Mexico City.

Anyway, we met with some friends of the 3 clubs, Alpine, Gordini Sport, and French Car clubs. Then as we were getting close, we were joined by some other Renaults. We finally arrived at about 10 AM and parked in a nice spot by the fountain, so we had a nice fresh breeze, as it was pretty hot that day.

Unfortunately it was not as much fun as in previous years, because it was very, very crowded and some of the visitors were not really car lovers, as they managed to scratch some cars (my GT4 included) and many people started "Braille Watching" the cars (with their hands all over). You can imagine how dirty they finished and how nervous we all were! I forgot to lock the Dauphine's engine compartment, and all of a sudden I saw some guys opening it. Absolutely no respect at all!

In the short walk we took around the grounds, we saw far too many cars in bad shape. Of course there were a few interesting pieces, but they were the exception. My family and I left at about 2:30 as we had an invitation for lunch with some friends who live over there and the other guys left soon after.

It is a pity this happened, because there was no security for the event, some people get stupid. I do not think we will be attending next year, and we feel sorry for this, as we liked very much going over there and enjoying the grounds, with the three museums: Mexican Charro and Horse related, Handcrafts, and Modern Art, and of course the swap meet for finding rare parts.

Well... It is good there are other nice events still for real car lovers, that we can gladly attend and enjoy our day. Can't win them all!

The nice part of this day was that we had a nice chat with our friends and family, we also ate some traditional Mexican food and a nice cup of coffee. The cars behaved very nice with no fault whatsoever. We returned to the city at about 8 PM. It is always very nice to drive our Renaults on the highway. 🍷





Ford Corcel, the Brazilian Pony Car

By Renan Uflacker

The successful Ford Corcel project was in fact a development of Willys-Overland do Brazil (WOB) in partnership with the French company Renault. In France, Renault was developing the Renault R12, called Project 117, and in Brazil a similar project was under development and was secretly known as the "M Project". "M" stood for medium size car. WOB had been assembling under license the Renault Dauphine/Gordini, in Brazil, since 1959 and had a solid relationship with Renault, which had 9% equity in WOB. By 1967 when the Ford Motor Company acquired the WOB operations in Brazil from the Kaiser Corporation, the "M Project" was well advanced, and the Renault Gordini replacement was almost ready for prime time, but not quite. The year before, in 1966, when Ford was negotiating the buyout of WOB they had just introduced the new Ford Galaxie 500 (first year of production was 1967), released simultaneously in the U.S., and needed a lineup of compact and subcompact cars more suitable for the Brazilian market, not available in the Dearborn family of cars. After WOB acquisition, the worn out Gordini was produced without major changes in the 1967-1968 period, except for the pioneering utilization of front disk brakes as standard feature, but lost the "Renault" badge name and was scrapped at the end of 1968 when the Corcel was finally released somewhat prematurely. The development of the "M Project" by the Willys' Brazilian engineers and stylists was not easy because Renault kept a firm control on the development and required approval of all new ideas and improvements, but didn't quite understand the needs of the Brazilian consumers and the conditions on the ground that made the European designed cars look so fragile driving on the more primitive Brazilian roads of the sixties. With the acquisition, Ford took full control of the "M Project", which was already in the vehicle testing phase, and added more than 900 modifications to the project.

Ford faced many challenges when they took over the "M Project". The first challenge was to dissociate the new car from the image of the Gordini, at that time already outdated and with a bad reputation of being breakable and fragile for the Brazilian roads. Ford was fortunate to scrap, almost by chance, the initially proposed name for the new car, "Fordini". Eventually the Corcel name, which stands for a charging horse in the Portuguese language, surfaced as a very viable alternative, and enjoyed some of the prestige and the sportiveness aura of the Ford's Mustang brand name from the immensely successful American pony car. The similarities with the R12 project were cautiously concealed with a quite different and more attractive body design developed by Willys' styling department, but the mechanical platform and power train had been basically designed and developed by the French company. The second challenge was to improve on a platform which resulted from the struggle between two different lines of thought, the French and Brazilian, caught in a transition following the WOB acquisition. The resulting car presented some flaws that could be easily avoided if the project had been managed more professionally and with more time. However, in December

1968 the Ford Corcel was presented to the public at the VI Brazilian Automotive Industry Show in São Paulo. The French car, the Renault R12, was released only in 1970 with a much less attractive styling. Despite the initial flaws and a premature release, the Ford Corcel had a unique style and appeal, and ended up being a much better car than the R12, with a heritage that lasted more than a quarter of a century.



The first year of production of the Brazilian Ford Corcel was 1968. It was a four door monocoque body sedan with a somewhat weak, 1.3-litre, 68 hp-water-cooled engine for five passengers. The engine was placed longitudinally ahead of the front wheels, essentially a much improved version third generation of the efficient Renault Ventoux engine developed originally for the Renault 4CV and subsequently used for the Dauphine and Gordini series. The engine in reality was a further development of the R8/10 Cleon engine from 1962, with five main bearings, an alloy cylinder head and wet cylinder liners, but with a different disposition of the gear box and differential because of the location in the front of the car. The car had some interesting solutions such as a sealed cooling circuit, which was a first for Brazilian cars enabling the engine to work on more optimized temperatures with better efficiency. However, the expansion container of the first cars was made of glass, which often blew out within the engine bay.

Another interesting but not pioneering feature was the



front-wheel-drive, already proved to be the most adequate for small and medium sized cars. The front-wheel drive power train allowed for improved drive train efficiency, less weight and fuel economy, plus additional internal space within the cockpit and trunk, due to the absence of a driveshaft tunnel and rear differential. But the combination of steering and driving with the front wheels proved to be the biggest challenge for the Corcel design. It increased significantly the tire wear and made the front wheel alignment difficult. More important, however, was the fragility of the universal joints, which wore out quite early in the life of the car requiring expensive maintenance and replacement. The suspension, however, was supple and comfortable, and the long front suspension travel on a Macpherson style system, with a long shock absorber and an upper coil spring, provided a pleasant ride without compromising road holding. In the rear there was a light but rigid axle, located by tie-rods and a triangle, coil springs, and hydraulic shock-absorbers. Despite initial success, the difficulties with the front wheel alignment and premature tire wear aroused concerns about reliability of the car. In 1970 the American Joseph W. O'Neil became president of Ford in Brazil, replacing William Max Pearce, father of the Corcel project within Ford Motor Company. The new president of the company wanted to resolve immediately the problem of the Corcel's front suspension, and Ford, in a pioneer initiative (for Brazil), promoted a recall of all 65,000 Corcel cars in circulation, offering a free upgrade of the front suspension, restoring credibility and turning the car into a renewed success.



in engine power. In 1972 the engine displacement upgrade was extended to the whole Corcel lineup. The taillights were changed to double square format resembling the original Galaxie 500 taillights, but in much smaller size.



Already in 1969 the two-door coupe version of the car was released with instant success, becoming a preference of the consumers. The Ford Corcel Coupe was very elegant and proportionate -- a deluxe version and a GT version followed. The Corcel GT was released with vinyl-covered roof, fog lamps, more engine power, and additional gauges in the dashboard with deluxe finished interior. A station-wagon version of the Ford Corcel, the Belina, was eventually released in 1970 with moderate success.

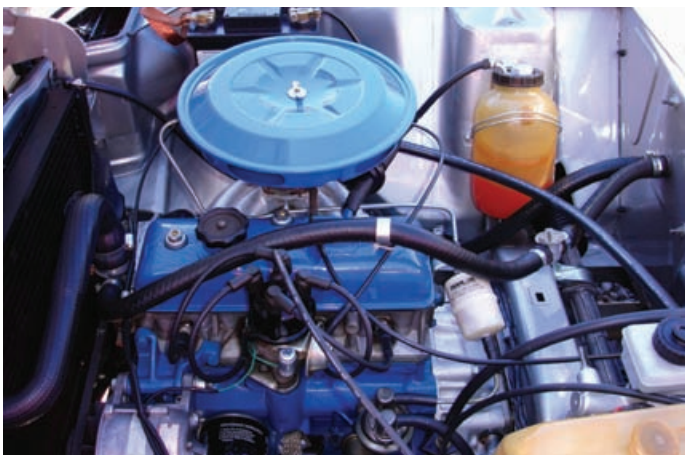
In 1973 the Corcel lineup underwent changes in body trim and grille with a square format resembling the Ford Escort (1968-1974) made in England. The taillights returned to a single large design unit flush to the body with coupled rear white lights.

In 1971 the Corcel GT had the engine upgraded to 1400 cc/85.4 cu in and a double barrel carburetor, gaining 17 hp

In 1975 new changes in the taillights and grilles were done with some impact on the car's looks. At that time a more luxury car version was released, the LDO. In 1976, however, an important mechanical improvement was made; the old, breakable universal joints of the front wheels were changed for the homokinetic or "Constant-velocity" (C-V) joints, finally resolving the problems of reliability of the front wheel drive system of the car. However, by the mid 1970's the Corcel was facing stiffer competition from a new generation of more ad-

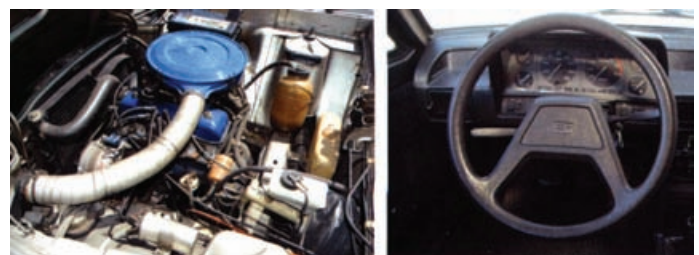


vanced and modern automobiles such as the Chrysler's Dodge 1800 (derived from the Hillman Avenger also known as Dodge Polara) and the VW Passat. Ford's reaction was to launch the locally developed Corcel II in 1977, with excellent results.



Using the same Corcel platform, a new two door five passenger monocoque body with straight lines, anticipating the Origami style of the 1990's, was designed and was very attractive but heavier than the original Corcel. The performance was not as sharp as in the previous Corcel cars as the customers would have liked. The style change was significant, and the original Corcel design was lost. The new Corcel II front bore a strong resemblance to the Ford Cortina Mark V (1979-1982) sold in Europe. In 1979 the engine was improved with the displacement increased to 1,600 cc/97.6 cu in and 90 hp. At that time a 5-speed gear box was also offered. The engine was fuel efficient, and by the early 1980's, when the whole country switched to ethanol for cars, the Corcel's engine proved to be dependable and reliable using pure alcohol as fuel.

A derivative of the Corcel II was the pick-up truck named Ford Pampa, launched in 1982/83, which would eventually be available with a four wheel drive system but with questionable reliability. The Ford Del Rey was released in 1981 as a more sophisticated sedan version of the Ford Corcel II, and despite the success, it was somewhat sluggish due to the small sized 1600 cc engine. The heavier weight, and the air conditioning system and automatic transmission which became available in 1983, further deteriorated the performance.



The Corcel and the Del Rey platforms were essentially the same and the low engine power became more noticeable on the Del Rey version. With the development of the Belina Del Rey station wagon the under powering situation turned out to be even more critical. Later that year the Corcel engine spawned an unexpected sequel named CHT - meaning compound high turbulence, designed by Ford of Brazil. In 1984, with the launching of the Ford Escort (similar to the Ford Escort Mark III-1980-1986 sold in Europe), the CHT engine was successfully used and proved very reliable. The advantage of the engine with eight overhead valves was to create an internal turbulence inside the cylinder chambers so that a higher percentage of the fuel was burnt. It was very robust and economic but still gave modest performance compared

to the competing engines from Volkswagen. The main difference between the old engine and the CHT engine was the



higher average torque, and therefore, being capable of running without much loss of power in low or high RPMs, which was enough for the heavier Del Rey. Meanwhile in Europe, Renault continued to improve a similar engine, resulting in the equally economic and reliable Renault Cléon engine introduced with the Renault 5, with overhead valve design and wet cylinder liners. By 1985 the Del Rey car line was slightly restyled, and in 1987 the Del Rey with a face lift by Ghia sadly replaced the Corcel after the production of 1.4 million cars.

Having exhausted all the resources of further developing the "M Project" Ford didn't have a plan B. Having that in mind and experiencing a downturn in the economy, in order to contain costs, Ford entered into a joint venture with Volkswagen, in 1989, creating the so called Autolatina. The first benefit for the Del Rey line was the use of the VW AP 800, 1800 engine, much more advanced and powerful than the CHT engine, which allowed the Del Rey Ghia to survive into the early 1990's. In 1992 a smaller version of the CHT engine was released for the Escort and the VW Gol. The Pampa pickup truck survived longer and was retired in 1996, effectively ending Corcel's automotive history. The Del Rey and the Belina were replaced by the Ford Versailles and Ford Royale, face lifted versions of the Passat B2, from the Volkswagen family of cars.

Personal story with the Corcel:

It was December 1968, already summer below the Equator, and I had just finished taking the entrance exams for the

Medical School in my hometown of Porto Alegre, in the south of Brazil. The admission process to the university in Brazil was quite different from the United States, and required a very competitive entrance exam with fifty candidates per spot for a class of 120 lucky students. You either pass and enter the university, or you fail and have to start all over again preparing for next year's examination, an all or nothing type of deal. University was free, but difficult to get in. You can probably see the problem I was facing. At a time when computers were IBM main frames, and perforated cards were used for communication with the machine, it usually took two or three days before getting the results. Those were stressful days, to say the least. After the results you would either go on summer vacation or start to arrange things for next year's work in preparation to repeat the exam. You get the picture. The day after the exam, my father approached me and continued a conversation that was recurrent already for a few months and started talking about buying a car for us, my brother and me, before the results of the exam. His rationale was if we passed, (my brother was also seating for the Law School entrance exam) we deserved the car. If we failed, we didn't deserve the car and he would not buy it. The problem was that he wanted to buy the car because he thought we needed it. Therefore he decided to go with us to the Ford dealership and buy this new car, just launched a few weeks before, in advance to the great day of the results.

My first car was a 1968-white-four door Ford Corcel. The car was comfortable, attractive, and different from everything else available. The 1300 cc engine, at the time, sounded like a powerful machine able to take the car to extreme speeds. In a market saturated by VW Beetles and two stroke engine DKWs, it was THE CAR. The only problem was that I had to share it with my older brother but he didn't know how to drive at the time, and I was ready with my driver's license. No problem, when he had a date I only had to find a date for me as well to drive them around or go along with the sister of his date, which sometimes worked. If I had a date of my own and he didn't, I would go out with my date by myself. In 1968 it made a difference to have a chick magnet. Nowadays our kids take it for granted and don't think about that anymore.

The first generation Ford Corcel had an aura of mystery originated from the "M Project", which was carefully staged, initially by WOB and Renault, and continued by Ford after the acquisition. The marketing was phenomenal and the young generations were excited to have a Ford Corcel. The Corcel was easy to fall in love with but difficult to get. The demand was high and the availability was scarce in the dealerships. Anyway, mine was not so difficult to get and buying the car was a sound investment in two solid students. First thing in our minds was to customize the 13 x 6.5 inches in wheel rims to 8 inches in width, replace the regular tires with Pirelli Cinturato tires designed for a 13 X 6.5 inch rim, stretching a bit. We also changed the front seats into something sportier, which didn't leave much room for the rear seat passengers. We also replaced the steering wheel with a Nardi type of wheel produced by Emerson Fittipaldi, who was in business before he

became a racing driver and F1 World Champion. The air filter was changed to a different type to allow more breathing room for the small engine. The suspension was supple and adequate for road and city driving, but certainly not good enough for racing, which was not the intention to begin with. The disk brakes were excellent, and for the first time I had to clean brake-dust from the wheels, with some surprise.

The launching of this car was certainly premature, and the first thing to break in my car was the driver's seat rails, which required the first visit to the dealership. The rubber mats were not very resistant and required continuous attention. The turning blinking lights had chronic electric problems and several replacements of the relay were necessary in the three years of ownership of the car. When 6,000 Km were reached in the odometer, the car started to overheat and mixed oil with water, due to a blown head gasket. That problem repeated itself twice over the next three years. Of course the front wheels were impossible to align, and the overstretched tires lasted only 6,000 or 7,000 Km, which was kind of expensive for a student at the time. The universal joints wore out quite early in the life of the car, about 20,000 Km, and required expensive replacement, but the most annoying problem of the car was the fuel pump, which had some type of rubber valves inside. During hot weather, after driving for 2 or 3 hours on the road, the engine would stall and refuse to work for at least 45 minutes until it cooled off somewhat. The car was taken to the shop several times, and the mechanic could not find the intermittent problem until Ford sent a newsletter with information on the fuel pump. After some time the fuel pump was modified and worked better thereafter. Despite all the problems I was happy with the car. In 1970 my father bought a Corcel GT for his use, a beautiful two-door coupe styled car painted baby blue with a black vinyl cover on the top and black stripes on the side. At that time there was much improvement in the Corcel line up. In spite of that, when my father was parking the car half a block from our house, and while he was trying to engage the gear to back up the car by the curb, the stick shift got loose and dropped through the car's floor, reaching the pavement underneath. My father got so mad that he left the car and told me to go get the car, fix it and keep it. He went and bought a Dodge Dart; he had enough of small cars. My brother finally learned how to drive and ended up wrecking the white car, which he fixed and subsequently sold. By now I had the baby blue Corcel GT all to myself. The Corcel GT was a wonderful car with a slightly tuned up suspension and engine, a double barrel carburetor, sports steering wheel, sports seats and aftermarket magnesium alloy wheels. It was a true chick magnet for the time. If I remember correctly, this car only left me stranded on the road once. The spring for the accelerator return on the carburetor broke and the engine got stuck at 5000 or 6000 RPM for several seconds. It was pouring rain and I got really wet. My girlfriend was really scared. She was gorgeous, and at the time she was wearing a beautiful pony tail. I used the rubber band of her pony tail to replace the spring in the carburetor to get home. She thought I was MacGyver.



My third Corcel was a black 1973 coupe with the square frame around the head lights and a square front grill resembling a British Ford Taunus of the era. The car was comfortable and reliable but eventually it did blow a head gasket and required a visit to the shop to be fixed. At a certain point early in the use of this car I did hit another car from behind causing some damage to the front grill, fenders and hood. The damage required some restoration to the front end of the car, which needed some time in the body shop.

This was probably the most important and unforgettable car of my life because that was around the time when I met my future wife, and we had memorable times together driving the black Corcel. Due to the unfortunate wreck when I rear ended another car I actually didn't have a car to drive when I arranged to go out with my future wife for the first time. I had to borrow my father's car, which was not always available. However, apparently she was not interested in the car, but in me. The black Corcel served us well for 4 years, and we travelled a lot with it. One day, after driving about 800 miles with the black Corcel I made a pit stop for "input and output" on a roadside restaurant. After lunch when I got back to the parking lot I realized that I was locked out of the car with the keys inside and without the spare keys. Fortunately, the car was not robbery proof and I managed to open the small rear window with my own hands and sneak in my arm to pull the door handle inside. Unfortunately a highway patrol car was passing by and stopped to check while I was trying to break in into my own car. I had some explanation to do but they finally left me alone after producing the documents locked inside the car. The black Corcel was sorely sold in 1976 when I went to Europe. I wish I could find it now.

After a couple of years, I came back to Brazil and bought my first Corcel II in 1979. It was a red two-door coupe car which was more adequate for a married man starting a family. The car was in general good but not very fast. The only problem I had with this car was with the internal rear mirror, which was super-glued to the windshield, and every summer it would fall on the floor of the car when parked in the sun. In 1982, I bought a gasoline powered white Coupe Corcel II which I kept until 1985 without significant problems. By then gasoline was

expensive, and the whole country had switched to ethanol. I traded in my last Corcel II for a 1985 silver-gray-two-door Chevrolet Monza Coupe (similar to the Opel Ascona C, manufactured in Germany from 1981-1988) with an engine specially designed for running on ethanol. The ethanol powered Monza was the fastest locally produced car at the time, the bestselling car in Brazil from 1984 to 1986, and had a 14-years lifetime in the South American market. The Corcel didn't have a chance to compete with the Monza. By the way, I did pass the entrance exam for medical school, in 1968, if you didn't guess, but that is a different story.

Figure legends

Figure 1. Ford Corcel 1970 L, Deluxe Green sedan with four doors. Note the center of the original grill resembling an Alfa Romeo shield. The black badge at the top of the hood shows a little silver horse. (http://www.carroantigo.com/foto_associados/1970_corcel.htm)

Figure 2. The 1970, 1.3 Corcel engine with 68 HP. Note the large air filter on the passenger side and the glass expansion bottle for the radiator cooling system on the far left of the picture with a long hose connecting to the radiator. The intake manifold and exhaust resemble the Dauphine/Gordini's manifold. (http://www.carroantigo.com/foto_associados/1970_corcel.htm)

Figure 3. Ford Corcel Belina 1971, the Station-wagon version of the Ford Corcel. Note the change in the front grill, comparing with the original grill seen in the 1970 model, in figure 1. No changes in the engine bay. The engine is clean and well painted in red. (http://www.carroantigo.com/imagens/VEICULOS_CCAL/1972_belina_frente.jpg)

Figure 4. Comparison of the rear end of the 1970 Ford Corcel Coupe (left) and the 1972 Ford Corcel Coupe (right). The 1970 model had single tail lights with a chrome trim between the tail light and the license plate. This trim detail appeared in the 1970's model, the 1968 and 1969 did not have it. The 1972 model introduced two separate tail lights on each side, resembling the tail lights of the Ford Galaxie 500 at the time. This change did not last because it was not popular. Note the two rear white lights below the rear bumper. (From Fabio Steinbruch, in *Some Aspects of the History of the Automobile in Brazil*, 2008)

Figure 5. Ford Corcel GT/XP 1972, GT for Grand Touring and XP for Extra Performance. This two door car had a 1.4 engine and 85 HP, with larger valves, double-barrel carburetor and larger intake and exhaust manifolds. Note the double tail lights unique to the 1972 model, the vinyl cover for the hard top and the black painted hood with a faux air intake. The GT had round fog lights incorporated to the front grill. (Provided by Antonio Lira Carvalho)

Figure 6. Three quarter view of a red Ford Corcel GT 1973. Note the square front grill and the square frames of the head

lights. The fog lights were rectangular. The tail lights were flat, flush to the body and incorporated the rear white lights. The engine bay showed a new air filter with a chromed lid. The expansion bottle was still located far away from the radiator. The interior was more sophisticated than the regular coupe, with a sporty steering wheel and several additional gauges. (From Fabio Steinbruch, in *Some Aspects of the History of the Automobile in Brazil*, 2008)

Figure 7. Three quarter view of the Ford Corcel GT II 1978. The 1978 model showed a radically different body style with square surfaces and long straight lines resembling the origami style developed in the 1990's. The head lights were large and square, connected by a wide plastic grill with a special design to improve refrigeration at different speeds. Note the external finishing in two colors, with multicolored stripes separating the top and bottom. The fog lights were moved to the underside of the front bumper. Although the engine was more powerful it was still insufficient for the new design's weight. Note the change in location of the battery to the driver's side of the engine bay. The water expansion bottle is still in the same place but was made of plastic. (Provided by Antonio Lira Carvalho).

Figure 8. Ford Del Rey 1982. The Del Rey had the same Corcel II platform with four doors, and a facelift in the front and rear ends. The front grill was vertical and chromed. The interior was luxurious with leather seats and chrome trim on the doors. The engine bay showed some attempts to improve performance, such as a new air filter system with a fresh air collector besides the radiator. Note the new servo assisted brakes set up. (From Fabio Steinbruch, in *Some Aspects of the History of the Automobile in Brazil*, 2008).

Figure 9. The final Ford Del Rey Ghia 1987. Note the significant cosmetic improvement at the front and rear designed by Ghia. The facelift gave a more modern and updated style to the car. Note that the car now is two doors as the original Corcel II, but the top has more square lines and the rear window is larger. New trim with rubber and metal surrounded the body of the car. (From Fabio Steinbruch, in *Some Aspects of the History of the Automobile in Brazil*, 2008)

Figure 10. Picture of my future wife Helena leaning against the black Ford Corcel 1973. Note the typical square front of the car with the round badge and the aftermarket magnesium wheels. This was the Corcel I liked the most. I regret that I sold it. (Personal archives) 📍

Luke Hall's Unique Collection

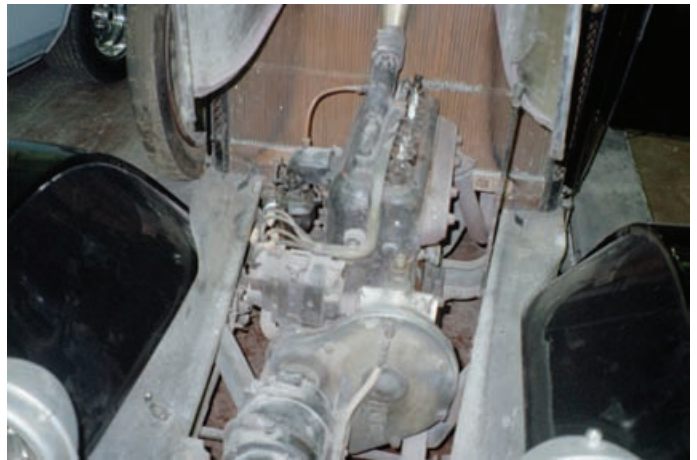
By Marvin McFalls

I recently received a call from Sam Stuckey about a local collector who recently purchased a 1916 Renault. Sam told me the car was in Oliver Springs, Tennessee. I told him I believe I knew the place. So we decided to go over and check it out. We met up and drove over to see Luke Hall. He is a well known local collector and he has what can be best described as a dealership inside an old grocery store in Oliver Springs. I have stopped by his showroom a couple of times over the years, and I wasn't surprised to find such a unique car in Luke's collection. While most of the cars in Luke's collection are what you call American Classics, he also has several European models in his collection including a Rolls Royce, Jaguar, and a Mercedes Benz.

Luke has owned hundreds if not thousand of cars in his 78 years, but this 1916 Renault is the oldest Model he has ever owned. The car was previously owned by MGM studios and believed to be last used in 1970 in the movie "Darling Lili," starring Rock Hudson and Julie Andrews. It was sold a few years ago in a bankruptcy auction. The car has a 122 inch wheelbase with 24 inch tires. It has a four cylinder engine with three speed gearbox. Its electrical system has been converted over to twelve volt. The gear box is much different from a modern one, all three forward gears are lined up in the same row, so it's hard to tell what gear it is in. So Luke jacked up the car before starting it. Luke adjusted the choke, which is on the steering wheel, and fired her right up.

After checking out the Renault he showed us some of the other cars in his collection. He had a lot of standards including: a 1957 Chevy, a Model A Ford, and a very nice 54 Dodge. If that is too run of the mill, he has a 1957 Ford Ranchero with a green flame job. Or if you want something bigger, how about a 1959 Edsel Station Wagon. He said that he had owned it at least five times over the years. How about smaller? He has a nice 1963 VW Bug that comes with vintage luggage on the optional luggage rack. What about some muscle, maybe a Plymouth Fury or Dodge Charger with a 440 might do the trick. Just like Sam, many of the cars he has had for a while he has named. I was kind of partial to Rufus, his Purple and Black 1950 Ford pick-up, but maybe Claudine the '57 Chevy is more your speed.

While we were there, Luke had a customer come by. Out front he had low mileage 1992 Geo Metro Convertible for sale. He took the potential buyer for a test drive, but didn't make a sale. We continued to talk about some other cars he had owned over the years. He told us a story about a 1954 DeSoto he had traded in on a Rolls Royce. The man who bought the DeSoto quickly traded it and it passed hand four more times before the latest owner contacted Luke and asked him if he wanted his DeSoto back. Luke Said sure. It turned out that the car was still in a showroom and only the title was being passed around. The car



was so well known that five people had bought the car without even looking at it.

Luke asked me if I would find out the history of his car. I have tried doing some research on the car, but pre-war cars aren't my specialty. Especially pre-Great War cars.

What I have been able to determine so far is that somewhere around July 1914 Renault quit building car chassis and focused on the war effort. Many and various coach builders purchased these chassis and did the coach work. As I have become aware there are at least thirty different variants of these chassis and none of them exactly match this car. I currently only have a couple of photos, but I will do a full pictorial of the car in the near future. I contacted some associates in Europe so hopefully we can find out more about this car. It is very rare to see a Renault enclosed Limo here in the US. Most were open with a lot of brass much like the 1914 model we featured in issue #88. If you have ever seen this car before, let us know about it. ●





Memories of the Medallion

By Marvin McFalls

The other day I received a phone call from an old friend, Gilbert Jahier. Gilbert has been a Medallion owner for as long as I can remember. He is a French Chef in Kansas City. I asked him how is my Medallion? He told me it is still running good. I probably shouldn't have sold him that car. He has had it for more than five years and I don't think I sold him more than two or three parts. Then I saw a tragic story about a young man who bought a Medallion and was trying to sell it on eBay. Unfortunately he cooked the motor before the auction ended. This made me think about my days driving, repairing, and selling Medallions.

I bought my first Medallion, a 1989 sedan sometime in the mid-nineties. Similar to the poor fellow I mentioned earlier, it too had been overheated enough times to finally blow a head gasket. I fixed the gasket and fixed the problem by replacing the cooling fan switch with one with an early 80's Peugeot diesel. The Medallion had a two-speed fan switch so I only reconnected the high speed. After that I was back on the road again.

Later I had to replace an automatic transmission, a.k.a. the "Achilles heel" of the car. What a pain that was, after replacing the transmission with a used one, it leaked. So I pulled it back out and replaced the front seal, put it back in and it still leaked. In a last ditch effort, I completely rebuilt another transmission, put it in, and it too leaked. So after that I bought stock in Dexron Mercon III transmission fluid. For the rest of the life of the car I added fluid. When I brought the car back to the Renault farm, a guy called me about a transmission. I told him I had one that had been rebuilt but it had a leak. He bought it from me and the leaker could still be staining driveways somewhere.

That Medallion remained in the family for many years. I drove it to the 100th Anniversary celebration in 1998, and Mother drove it for a couple years in the new millennium. After that I sold it to a friend who drove it for a while before finally finishing off the engine. I bought it back from him and it is still on the Renault Farm today.

I also owned several Medallion wagons. I traveled as far away as Ohio to get them. Unlike the sedan that I had for years, I never owned a wagon more than a couple of months. There is actually only one wagon at the Renault Farm, and the only reason I didn't sell it was because it was too rusty.

My favorite model of Medallion had to be the Wagon with a five speed. Those motors could run all day 80 mph at around 3000 rpm. I once drove a 2000-mile trip in that car and nearly averaged 35 mpg. My friend, Gilbert used to drive his car from Kansas City to New York several times a year to pick up wine for his French restaurant.

I sometimes wish I could find another good Medallion, but I have so many cars and so little time these days. I guess you never can tell what the future will hold. Anyway, I definitely have a lot of fine memories of the Renault Medallion. 🍷



Renault Reunion

By Marvin McFalls

Back in 1998 when Renault was celebrating their 100th Anniversary, we had our first meet outside of Southern California. It took place, in Lenoir City, Tennessee, and we had members travel from as far north as Canada, as far south as El Salvador and as far west as Austin, Texas. With 2008 being the tenth anniversary of the event we decided to have a reunion. We attempted to contact everyone who attended the first event, as well as invite friends we have met since.

Unfortunately, gas prices spiked to over \$5 a gallon in September here in Tennessee, and I think this hurt our overall attendance. By the time October 16th arrived we had several cancellations. However, it doesn't take a lot of people to have a good time.

Around 7PM, my friends Claude and Marc Campus arrived from Atlanta. The previous day they had flown in from Paris. It wasn't long before Brent Bartley, and Dan Barton arrived from Ohio. Since it was a nice evening we decide to eat at an outdoor café. We headed downtown and had a wonderful meal. After eating we returned to my house where the conversation turned to everything Renault and Claude showed us several websites in France. As it became midnight, we decided to retire and prepare for an exciting weekend.

When we awoke, rain had made its way into East Tennessee. We went to Shoney's in Lenoir City and met up with Phil Ross and Gary Goldstein. Phil had attended the original meet and brought his R8 Gordini. Unfortunately, the car had not been driven much in the last ten years and he tried to get it ready in time for the show. He was able to address all the major problems with the car and got it running, but the carburetors wouldn't adjust well enough to drive. Gary also came but not in a Renault. He rented a Ford Edge and drove up from Atlanta.

After eating breakfast, we sat around and talked as many people were meeting Gary for the first time. As the rain seemed unwilling to let up, we changed our route and headed for the Cherohala Skyway. The skyway was still under construction a decade ago, so we hadn't visited it. But with all the rain it would not have been wise to take on "The Dragon." So we came up the Skyway. We took my Renault GTA Convertible, my Mazda MX-5 and Dan's Ferrari Mondial. Every ten miles or so we would stop and trade cars.

By the time we made it to North Carolina the rain was about over. We gassed up and headed for Fontana Dam. After stopping by the visitor's center, we went across the dam to a scenic overlook. After a nice picnic and few photos we headed for "The Dragon." While stopping at the Dragon's Den we met up with Sam Stuckey. Sam and his friend Mike had just come up from Knoxville in his Renault 18i wagon. After buying souvenirs we decided to take on the 318 curves over



eleven miles.

There was a lot of traffic, but Marc and Claude were able to pass some of the slower cars while the rest of us were stuck. Phil and I would pull off at every wide spot in the road and let the traffic get ahead of us. We would be able to speed through a half-mile or so at time. By the time we finally reached the end of the road, we had become separated from everyone. Sam, Brent, and Dan had headed back to Knoxville, Claude and Marc had gone sight seeing. By the time we were found Sam, Brent, and Dan as if on cue, the sun finally made an appearance.

As it was around 4PM, some people were getting hungry so we headed back to Lenoir City. With Marc and Claude still M.I.A. Dan, Brent and I joined everyone for cocktails before heading for my parents' house. My mom and dad had planned a spaghetti dinner, and we also needed to lubricate Dan's throttle cable on the Ferrari. We arrived about 6:30, and just before 7PM Claude and Marc finally made it. They had spent about an hour in Kingston trying to find directions to Dogwood Valley Road. Finally a nice lady at one of the local hotels found someone who knew where it was.

Wow, what a wonderful meal! My mom had gone all out with the homemade sauce and meatballs, followed by some fudge brownies for dessert. Claude and Marc had brought some wine and some duck legs from France as a gift for my parents. To work off all that food we went out to the garage to work on Dan's throttle cable. Claude was able to get it lubricated somewhat, but when he made it home we recommended he take the cable off and use some graphite. As it was starting to get late and Claude and Marc were still getting over jet lag, we decided to head back to the house and get some rest.

We awoke early the next morning. Marc and Claude headed straight to Nashville to do some sight seeing, while Brent, Dan, and I headed down to Lenoir City. We met up with Marty McKee and his nephew Aaron. Marty had attended the original back in 1998 and his nephew Aaron was also there although he probably didn't remember being he was only six years old at the time. Now he is sixteen and his first car is a Renault. He is working on my old Green LeCar. He recently installed a new clutch and he has been tearing up the vacant lot next to Marty's shop. They are talking about having the car skinned with a French Flag similar to a Mini Cooper.

Gary and Phil also joined us. We were ready to go, but Sam still hadn't arrived. In typical French car owner fashion he was running late. Finally he arrived and we headed for Nashville. Since we hadn't eaten anything, we stopped on the way for a southern style breakfast. Since it was my birthday, the guys decided to embarrass me so they got the waitresses to sing happy birthday to me. We were soon back on the road on our way to the Lane Museum.

Like us, the Lane Motor Museum was also celebrating a



milestone. It is hard to believe, but it has been five years since they first opened to the public. I first visited the museum before it opened in January of 2003 and we also had our 2004 National meet there. Since then, every time I pass through Nashville I will try to stop by and see what is new. For their fifth anniversary Jeff and his staff went all out. They offered rides in a classic 1963 Fiat Multipla, and both a 1966 and 2008 Fiat 500. They also had a demonstration of a 1925 Tatra Targa Florio racecar. If this wasn't enough excitement, they also offered a guided tour of the museum basement.

Even before we arrived I began getting phone calls. First I heard from Jonathan Burnette, who was still west of Nashville driving in from Texas, next came Joe Wagner who had driven from Cincinnati in his Renault GTA, and finally I heard from Marty who was in a bit of a hurry to get there as he and Sam had been running about 85mph since we finished breakfast. Around 11AM, we finally arrived. We parked our cars and joined everyone inside. After signing up for the basement tour and a ride in the Multipla we decided to check out the collection. While the layout of the museum hasn't changed much in five years, every time I visit I get excited. As expected, we became so interested in the collection we missed our ride in the Multipla.

While we may have missed our ride, we continued to see more friends. Next we ran into Michael Heather. Mike had flown from California to Atlanta and driven up to Nashville. He has taken a bigger role in the club as he has taken over the position of Print Editor along with Moderator duties on the Club Forum. After talking a little club business we began to talk about the collection. It wasn't long before we ran into another club member. When we walked outside to see the Tatra demonstration I noticed another familiar car in the parking lot. Lloyd Mathis and his father had made the drive from St. Louis in his black GTA. We had seen Lloyd in Carlisle back in May and had invited him to join us in Nashville. At this point it was about every five minutes I would run into another friend. Next Jonathan finally made it. He was delivering his R8 Gordini to Brent, and was towing it with his father's old Datsun diesel pick-up.

Finally Marc and Claude arrived. After signing them up for the basement tour, we took a quick look around the museum. Next we headed outside to see some of the other cars. As if on cue Jeff Lane comes walking toward us. I introduced them to Jeff and told him we had missed our ride in the Multipla, but he said "No problem I will take you", so off we go. Claude and sat in the back and Marc rode up front with Jeff. Also in typical Jeff Lane fashion he takes the 600cc car on the freeway and takes us for an extended tour. Marc said we reached a top speed of 105kph, which is around 65mph. So I am fairly certain that Jeff had replaced the de-tuned 600 that came in the car. Claude really enjoyed the ride. It was definitely one of the highlights of our visit.

We returned to the museum just in time for the basement



tour. They said for insurance reasons they limited the tour to only 50 people at a time, but I think there were more like 75. Every member of the Renault group was on the tour. This became more apparent when the official tour ended. I was talking with one of the museum staffers, and then I turned around and the only people in the basement were members of our group. Only by going to the basement do you really see just how many cars Jeff has. To my knowledge he has the largest collection of Tattras, Citroens, and Renaults in North America. He also has a large collection of micro cars as well as military vehicles.

Following the basement tour we had a swap meet behind the museum. It wasn't to long before everyone had gathered around Jonathan's R8 Gordini. After everyone checked it out, we sort of had a ceremonial passing of ownership from Jonathan to Brent although the actual changing of hands didn't take place for a couple more days. We decided to head back into the museum for one last look before returning to Knoxville. By this time most of the guests had left. I determined this after one look around the Museum and once again mainly all I saw were Renault people. So I called everyone over for a group photo.

After the picture, Joe Wagner and Michael Heather decided to head out. Everyone else headed around behind the museum where we had our makeshift headquarters. Claude and Marc then headed back to Nashville to do some more sightseeing, while the rest of us discussed where we wanted to eat. Next thing you know, Jeff Lane comes driving up in another unique French car. One of his latest acquisitions, a Smart Roadster. It was a limited production model that featured more than 100 hp. Needless to say he said it was fun to drive. He had just returned from the Nashville Speedway where they were having a special event. After everyone checked out the Smart car, we came to a consensus about what they wanted to eat. Barbeque was the choice and Jeff recommended a place, so off we went.

Once everyone filled their stomachs, we settled in for what seems like the never-ending long drive back to Knoxville. It something about the time change that make the trip back about twice as long as the trip over. Anyway, we finally made it back to Knoxville with only a few hours left in my birthday. Dan recommended a Bourbon tasting party. After a quick stop at the local package store, we headed back to the house. The party went well past midnight. Poor Jonathan had just drove more than 1000 miles so he retired early, but Brent, Dan and I kept it going as long as we could.

To say the least, we had a bit of a hard time getting started Sunday Morning. This caused us to be late to our breakfast rendezvous. Luckily Gary and Phil were on time, Michael Heather was also there, but he didn't see them. We were not able to catch up with him the rest of the day. He made several attempts to find us, but we just missed each other. He decided to head back to Atlanta to catch his flight.



After filling our stomachs and washing our cars, we finally made it to Fort Loudon Park. My parents were already there and everyone enjoyed seeing my dad's 1953 Chevrolet pick-up. While everyone was getting acquainted, I hung the club banner, and began getting ready for the picnic. It wasn't long before Claude and Marc arrived as well as Sam and Mike. They had run into each other on the way to the park.

At noon the annual swap meet began. Jonathan was a big hit selling lots of parts and I was able to sell off some various Renault collectibles. By the time the swap meet ended we had some more guests arrive. Marty McKee had brought along his nephew Aaron, as well as his dad Steve and another friend. Also, my brother Greg, his wife Lori, and my niece Whitney stopped by.

Everyone seemed to enjoy a beautiful sunny fall day. Around 1PM we had some hamburgers and hot dogs. We followed that up with some birthday cake. Everyone sang happy birthday to me again. We were having so much fun we hated to end the party. But there was one last stop before we called it a weekend.

We had saved the best for last. It was nearly 3PM by the time we reached the Renault Farm. Almost everyone had visited before, but for Marc, Dan, and Gary it was their first time. So we turned everyone loose, and they fanned out in different directions. Claude was checking one of the many different Renaults when he made a new friend. He opened the hood on an Alliance and found an Opossum. The little guy must have liked Claude because he just stared back at him and even let him take his picture. Being from France he had never seen such an animal, and under normal circumstances he probably would have hissed at him and showed him his teeth or even worse. Another memorable moment from Claude's visit for sure.

Jonathan and I were in search of parts. He needed a hood for his Fuego, and I needed several parts including a windshield for the Fuego we were planning to drive to California. As we checked out the selection of used hoods, none really fit the bill, so Jonathan and Sam climbed up in the attic. Not too surprisingly they came back down reporting they had found a new hood. So while Sam and Mike opened the attic, we cut out a windshield.

As it was starting to get late and most of our guests were getting ready to leave, we went to say good-bye. First Claude and Marc left. They were heading to Columbia, SC to visit friends. Next Dan and Brent packed up the Ferrari and left for Ohio. Phil wasn't far behind as he too was returning to Ohio. Finally Gary was ready to go, he had been the first to arrive on Friday, and was the last to leave. This was his first visit to the Renault Farm; we hope he will come back soon.

With everyone gone, Jonathan and I gathered up some more parts and began to load up his truck. We got almost every part on our list except the very first item a spare radiator.



As it would turn out, this would nearly come back to bite us, but you will hear more about this in another story.

All and all it had been a very fun weekend. What we lacked in numbers we definitely made up for with spirit. If you ever find yourself in Tennessee, we hope you will stop by for a visit. The mountain roads, Lane Museum, and the Renault Farm are a must see for any Renault fan. We hope to see you soon. 🍷



Return to Frazier Park

By Marvin McFalls

Each year as the calendar turns to November we make our annual pilgrimage to Southern California for the Best of France and Italy Car Show. In recent years a side trip to Frazier Park, California has become an annual occurrence. Frazier Park is a mountainous town of around 2,000 people about an hour north of Los Angeles. Each year on Friday before the show we make the drive up the 5 to Dene and Pat Barrett's place. Dene and Pat are French car enthusiasts, owning a Caravelle and R10, as well several 2cv Citroens including a truckette and Mehare among others. As if it isn't strange enough to find one French Car enthusiast in a small town, how about two? Shin Yoshikawa moved from Japan to California about 25 years ago and eventually settled in Frazier Park, where he and Dene became friends.

Now, each year we look forward to the trip to Frazier Park almost as much as the show. Dene, Pat, and Shin are great hosts, and we always have new friends join us as well as many regulars. This year along with Jacques and Sharon, Brent, Jonathan and I made the drive from San Diego. As usual, we had a late start and encountered a lot of traffic, but we finally arrived around 5PM. As we drove into town, I saw a very interesting French car parked in front of the local motel. Jonathan and I doubled back to see if we could find the owner but he was not there. Since we were so late arriving we found that Dene and Pat already had appetizers set out on the table, so we gathered around and began to catch up. It wasn't long before Shin joined us, and we met the man with the mysterious car.

Bob Baker, a retired college professor from Colorado, had driven his Simca 8 down for the show. Bob is another French car fanatic. Over the years he has owned dozens of different French cars. Currently he owns a 1959 Floride as well as several Citroens and the Simca. Bob found this car in a field in Colorado without a drive train, in very rough condition many years ago. He wanted to restore the car and whenever he traveled to France he would buy whatever parts he could find, but without a drive train it didn't look like he would ever be able to get it back on the road. One day he came across a wrecked Triumph TR3A. After looking at the car and measuring the wheelbase, he discovered that maybe the Simca body would fit on the Triumph frame. Fast forward several years and lots of modifications later and you have a restored Simca with a Triumph chassis. To say the least, it is one of a kind.

By the time Bob finished telling us about his jewel it was time for dinner. Sharon and Pat and Shin's wife Mishiko had prepared a wonderful spaghetti dinner. We all ate and continued to talk about various things Renault and French. Shin suggested we move down the street to his house for dessert and he invited Brent, Jonathan, and I to spend the night. After a nice dessert everyone decide to retire, so



Brent, Jonathan, Shin and I talked for a while, but Shin was fighting a cold so we called it a night.

The next morning we awoke early and discovered that for the first time in about six months it was raining. We were looking to get some breakfast, and decided to try a new restaurant. It was crowded, so they invited us out back to their tearoom. Needless to say, a bunch of men with a couple of ladies looked a little strange in a room with pink decor. We had a good breakfast and headed over to Shin's garage to see what was new. He had recently purchased a Caravelle, and he and Bob are trying to work out a trade. Bob has an R8 Gordini motor in his Floride and it won't run right in the higher elevation in Colorado. So Shin is going to install a Fuel Injected motor in Bob's car and probably put the Gordini in his car. Hopefully by next year, both cars will be done and they will bring them to the show. Shin also was working on a restoration of a Toyota Land Cruiser.

Next we checked out the Toyota 2000GT with the aluminum body that Shin had started last year. It was a lot smoother, but it is still not near completion. Since it was raining, we decided to bring Jacques' car in to add some gear oil. Shin recommended that we put it on his lift so we could get a good look at "Butter Pat." After checking out the 4cv we decided to give Bob's Simca Triumph a once over and replace a burned out head light. As it was almost 1PM by then, we headed back to Shin's house for lunch. Pat and Sharon had picked up some barbeque pork and Mishiko had made sushi. After eating, Sharon, Pat, Jacques and I returned to Pat's house, while everyone else went out to the shop of a friend of Shin's. He had come up with a kit to modify the transmission to a modern five-speed, I believe using a transmission from a Toyota Celica. When the guys came back they were quite impressed with the operation, but Bob didn't seem too fond of the price for the conversion.

Now it was time to visit Pat and Dene's nearly finished house. This has become a ritual of sorts over the years. For as long as I have know Dene, he has been planning, and now building his and Pat's retirement home. About five years ago when they decided to break ground, they couldn't find a contractor willing to build it. This was during the big housing boom, so they decided to build it themselves and hire out sub contractors as they went along. Now five years later, the house is nearly complete. Here is hoping by next year they are settled into their beautiful new home.

We headed back down the mountain and decided to go out to dinner. Being there are only about four restaurants in town we decided to try the Mexican place. Again we had another great meal. I guess you have figured out the theme: we go to Frazier Park, we talk about cars and eat a lot of food. Wow, what a good time. Thanks again to the Barretts and Yoshikawas for having us, hopefully we will be invited back again next year. 🍷





Jesse's Corner: A/C and Transmission repairs

By Jesse Patton

The last time you heard from me I was going on about my air conditioning situation in the Alliance. Getting back to the problem, I installed a new thermostat probe and an expansion valve in the A/C system. I still had warm air coming from the vents on the dash with the A/C button engaged and down below on heat. This with the system fully charged with R134a refrigerant. All of the components were doing their job. After eyeing the climate control I began to expect one of those hidden problems, like a broken air mode cable that controls the door, which opens and closes with the flick of the console switch. After removing the center console which includes the radio and floor shift, I came face to face with a working and intact cable with loops on either end, but with a broken male plastic shaft that engages the cable loop located on the heater door, also conveniently made of plastic! Well, what to do? Remove the entire dash and heater and install another heater and door with male shaft intact. We decided this wasn't the way to go so instead we cut off the existing stub of the shaft, then drilled a hole through it. Then we drilled a hole through it and with a nut and bolt (both small) engaged the cable loop through it. An interesting experience, but brother do I hate plastic. My cold air is now back.

The other item of interest was the replacement of the speed sensor down below. It is a part of the transmission computer and its line runs from the MB3 transmission to the transmission computer. It resembles a right angle spark plug wire rubber. They normally go bad by hanging up your car in first gear when hot. While cold it would shift the vehicle normally, in this case a three speed automatic. What troubled me was that while coming up to temperature, the car would stay in third gear for about a minute and then when hot it would then stay in first gear mode. Strange! When stuck in third gear at all speeds this signifies a wiring problem on the computer itself going bad. Luckily the speed sensor was at fault and a \$60 kit (which is no longer available at the local dealership) did the trick. Simply cutting the sensor wire and connecting on the sensor head fixed the problem. By the way, there were some four of these kits still around at various dealerships and still for sale if needed.

I still had one surprise left in store for me. On the day I was at Jerry Vella's Dealer Solution (An old friend of mine who specializes in Renault troubleshooting and repair in Farmingdale, NY) to have my A/C fixed. I found that my driver's side window (electric) wouldn't go down or come up, jammed solid. So we pulled off the door panel and lo and behold the base bar holding the door window is cracked through, and catching on the door's inner sheet metal. Welding that bar was easy enough, but along with the window removal came the window channel which after 16 years of hard service was tattered on either end and in

the middle section of it wasn't any good either. The rubber caps on top of the convertible windows just about fell apart. They screw in normally but the screws seemed to be long gone. We found hard rubber blocks, and after splitting them for the window to raise into, we formed it into what resembled the last block there. Incidentally, if anyone out there has any dealer replacements please contact me and I will buy them from you.

Editor's Note: With the return of Jesse's Corner in our last issue, I was quite excited that maybe it would become a regular staple in our newsletter once again. Unfortunately, a car hit Jesse over the Thanksgiving weekend. The good news is that he is on the mend, but it will be a while before he can get back behind the typewriter. I decided to look at some of his old stories, and I chose this one for your perusal. Jesse, get well soon old boy. 🍷



Greetings from Australia

By John Waterhouse

Unfortunately not much to report for this issue. I'll write an article on the 2008 French Car Day in Perth and send it in soon. There were a couple of interesting cars I have recently seen around here. The first was a R12 Gordini, it is one of only 6 RHD factory Gordinis ever built - I can't believe it is here in Perth. Next was a beautifully restored Caravelle. I really like the the bright yellow paint, you definately won't miss it. It is quite interesting, I travel all over the world to find interesting Renaults, and I find a couple of gems in my home town. Enjoy the photos. 📷



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