

# RENAULT NEWS

**93**  
 Fall  
 2009



## Best of France & Italy 2009

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(U.S. only)

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Or send payment, along with details about your cars to:

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**Issues 1 to 57 only \$7**

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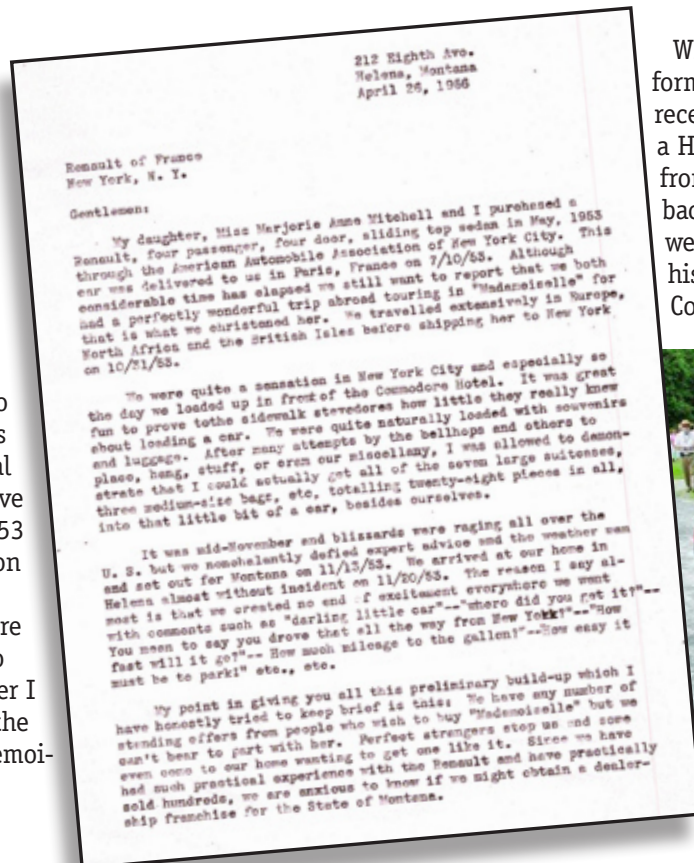
### November 2009, Renewals

Bacus, Jade	Perryman, Richard
Burnette, Jonathan	Robinson, George
Cardaciotto, Nick	Stolarun, Alan
Curtis, Stanley	Weaver, Joseph
Hensley, Don	

## My Apologies to Hemmings and Mademoiselle

By Marvin McFalls

In the last issue I featured recent Renault activity in Hemmings Motor News and Hemmings Sport and Exotic Cars. I jokingly accused the writer from Hemmings who is a friend of stealing the name Mademoiselle, as our Club Treasurer's car also has the same name. As it turns out the original owner Virginia West gave it the name back in 1953 so as it turns out Sharon was a little tardy. At this point I believe there is enough room for two Mademoiselles. However I hope everyone enjoys the story of Virginia's Mademoiselle.



While in other Hemmings news our former Marketplace Editor, Mark Nicotera recently won the Best French Car award at a Hemmings Cars Show? We haven't heard from Mark since he left Texas and moved back east. However with his sudden fame we are now back in contact with him, and his R5 Turbo is defiantly a show stopper. Congratulations Mark! 🍷



# Larry Newberry's 4CV Racer

By Marvin McFalls

**A**nyone who has ever owned a micro car is probably familiar with Larry. He lives in Knoxville, Tennessee, owns more than 100 cars and who knows how many scooters. Currently, he specializes in Vespa 400 micro cars that were built just outside of Paris. Back in the 1980s he was into Renault 4CVs. He owned several of them and raced a Tennessee Orange 4CV. Recently, Larry was looking through some old photographs and he found one of his little 4CV. He wondered whatever happened to that car? Back in the late 1980's he sold his entire collection of Renaults to Bob Baker in Colorado. A few days later he was on eBay and decided to type in Renault. Lo and behold, there was his Orange 4CV. If he had this idea a week earlier or later he would have missed out. It seems that it was destined for Larry to be reunited with that 4CV.

If this story seems unusual, the story how he originally became the owner is also interesting. The car had been listed for sale in Hemmings Motor News by a former Renault Dealership in Texas, but for one reason or another Larry didn't see the ad. Several people spoke with the seller and asked him if he had spoken with Larry about the car. After hearing from three or four different people recommending that Larry should be the new owner, he decided to give him a call. When the man called Larry, he told him it seems like I have your car, explaining that everyone who had spoken to him about the car recommended Larry. The dealer decided that he would give the car to Larry if he raced it for one season.

So Larry took the little car out and raced it with Banshee Renault logo on it. He had fun so he decided to make some modifications, and over time he moved the 4CV up to A Modified class. With a 900cc engine he was racing against Corvettes and other larger, more powerful cars. When he started winning with the Renault the other racers protested, as Larry spent so much of his time on only two wheels. After trying to fight the SCCA disqualifying him, he retired his 4CV. He sold the whole collection a few years later.

Fast forward a couple decades, he bid on the car and became the owner once again. It turns out that Bob Baker had owned the cars until about a year when he decided to sell off part of his collection. The new owner hadn't done anything with the car, so he put it on eBay. When Larry was finally reunited with his Renault, he found that many of parts had been changed, or borrowed. The rear brake assemblies were missing. The large two barrel carb, had been replaced with small one barrel, probably because of the thin air in the Rockies. The biggest problem Larry had was that one of the radiator tanks had sprung a leak. After getting no less than three radiators, he was finally able to make one good one.

With the radiator now in the car he was able to run the motor for more than a few minutes. However, after his first test drive Larry discovered the Radiator cap wasn't sealing properly. After having no luck finding the signature logo cap, he was able to find one for an old truck that fit at a local parts store. So for the first time in twenty years Larry is back behind the wheel of his 4CV Racer. While Larry's racing days are behind him, he now has more than just the memories of driving his little Orange 4CV. 🏁



# 4CV Beach Buggy

By Marvin McFalls

**B**ing Crosby drove one while golfing in Baja in the Sixties. The 4CV was covertly designed by Renault personnel during the German occupation. In anticipation of the grueling years they knew would follow the ravaging of Europe, they kept it under wraps until its introduction at the 1946 Paris Motor Show. By the time it finished its production run in 1961, the diminutive 4CV had sold over a million units, and with a small surplus of parts and materials already at hand, it was briefly reincarnated as the Renault Beach Wagon.

Only 50 copies of the Beach Wagon were built in Florida for a beach resort that never got off the ground, making it even more rare than the seldom-seen Fiat Jolly. Fewer than twenty are known to have survived to this day. With the resort's failure these cars were probably spared from what would have been a typically hard existence as a sand-scrubbing utility vehicle, but the one featured here is a delightful little vehicle in particularly good condition.

Motive power is supplied by the 4CV's tiny "Ventoux" inline four, which in its earliest form displaced approximately 45 cubic inches and generated 21 horsepower; a three-speed transmission drives the rear wheels.

Finished in bright Coral (or Salmon depending on your perspective) with some runs in the paint, instead of that original pink, this Beach Wagon is fitted with durable tube-framed Wicker seating front and back, a woven jute floor mat(not in an original model but a very nice addition), and a removable canvas sun shade, making it a great little utility car for roving the beach or more likely today to be used in gated communities or on golf courses.

This Particular beach buggy was on sale at the Mecum Auction at the Monterey Hyatt Regency on August 15. When we arrived they were attempting to get the car started as we could smell that it had old gas and the car hadn't been driven enough to charge the battery. Nonetheless, Mecum mechanics were able to get the car running and drove it across the block where it was sold.

Also sold that day was the European Champion Shelby Daytona which brought a record 7.25 million. The most money ever paid for an America car at an auction. It was nice to see a Renault at such a prestigious auction. 🍷



# Best of France and Italy 2009

By Marvin McFalls

**W**ell if it is the first of November, it must be time for the Best of France and Italy. I guess we awoke around 5 AM. Jacques Lynn, Sharon Desplaines, and I packed up and Mike Deak and Jonathan Burnette arrived around 6:30 AM. Dene and Pat Barrett arrived soon after. Jonathan and Mike needed to clean their cars so Jacques and I decided to go ahead and drive Gordi his Dauphine Gordini, and we were on the road by 7 AM.

We were heading for Jerry's Deli on Ventura Boulevard. We arrived a couple minutes after 8 AM, Chris Davidson (GTA) and Mike Heather (LeCar) were waiting for us in the parking lot. A few minutes later both Kurt Triffet and Joe Hernandez pulled up in their Caravelles so we headed in to eat. It wasn't long before Jim Miller and his friends arrived. As the waitress took our drink orders we caught up with what everyone had been up to since last year. It wasn't long before Sharon, Mike, Jonathan, Dene and Pat joined us, just in time to order.

Following a good breakfast, we headed over to Woodley Park. Unlike last year's rain, this year it was a picture perfect Southern California day. The show was already packed with cars; this was possibly the largest crowd ever. We hung our banner, set up a couple of tables and spread out our club literature. We were ready for business.

With such good weather we had a great turnout of cars. All told, we had four 4CVs, three Dauphines, three R8s, three Caravelles one R10, three R5s, (including two R5 Turbo, and a LeCar Sport) one Fuego Turbo Diesel and a Renault Alliance GTA. This year we also had two Alpines, one was an A110 in rally trim and the second was Mike Deak's GT V6 Turbo which was a big hit, being the first time one was ever at the show. Finally in the Antique section was a 1921 Renault Boat Tail. It looked to be in very good unrestored condition. It had a For Sale sign and I was told they were only asking \$12,000 which sounded like a fair price.

As usual, the booth was very active; we almost ran out of newsletters and applications. During the day we had several members stopped by. We had Shakib Alanoori, who had driven his nicely restored 1963 R8 over from Encino. It was also nice seeing Chris Davidson and his brother in Chris' new GTA we featured in the last issue. We also saw Larry Peacock in his 4CV. While he was wearing Citroen colors we allowed him to hang around. Finally Brian and Shannon Peters flew in from Washington D.C. They are regular attendees of the Carlisle Show. They had asked me about the BoF&I when I saw them back in May, and I was glad to see they decided to make the trip out. They picked a great year to come.

I seemed as soon as the fun began, the show began to break up around 1 PM. First Dene and Pat left as they were



The group at breakfast



Marvin, Jacques & Sharon man the booth



Jim's R10, Kurt's Caravelle, & Chris' GTA

heading to see Pat's sister. I started to slowly break down the display and I talked to as many members as I could over the next hour. As we began to pack up around 2 PM, we said our good-byes and Jacques, Sharon, Jonathan, and myself were on the road by 2:30 PM.

One the way to the Show, Sharon had an accident so we had to pick up her car and tow it back to San Diego Sharon had her car towed to a friend's house south of L.A. So after fighting the freeway traffic and a pleasant conversation with the California Highway Patrol about the proper etiquette for driving a trailer on the 405 we arrived at Sharon's friend's house. By 5:00 PM we had the car loaded on the trailer and we headed back to the Freeway. Deciding to avoid the heavy traffic of the San Diego Freeway we took and alternate route.

By now it was dark and we and hadn't eaten in hours so we decided to stop for some dinner. After eating, we head to Jacques house to unload Sharon's car and the trailer. After a comedy of errors including having the trailer come loose from the car and roll down the hill narrowly missing Sharon and two cars and coming to rest next to Jacques trailer. Following one more quick repair to Jonathan's car we were back on the road again. Shortly after 9 PM, we made it back to Sharon's house.

It had been another great Best of France & Italy. If you can ever make it out to California in November, come and join us. ☺



Mike Deak's GT V6 Turbo





*Nice Alpine racer*



*1950s Chrysler Ghia Special*



*Mike Heather, Marvin & Jonathon Burnette play "guess the part"*



*3 visible Citroen Maseratis (one in front) and a couple DS'*



*Mike checks the door on a Dauphine for sale*



*A row of Facel Vegas*



*Fiat Jolly*



*Nice project car ;- ) Autobianchi on trailer*





*Osca racer, built by the Maserati bros.*



*1931 Bugatti*



*A 1941 (I think) Tatra*



*Gorgeous vintage Alfa Romeo*



*Every 14 year-old boy's dream - Lambo Diablo*



*Alfa 8C- \$250,000 for a used car*



*A couple Maserati Miuras*

# Caravelle in Madagascar

By Robert Strauss

Shortly after moving to Madagascar in September 2007, I saw a very odd looking car waiting to turn at a corner not far from my house. I hadn't bought a car and was getting around by taxi and local bus, waiting to find something interesting to buy. Madagascar is a bit like Cuba in that the country is replete with old cars, except here instead of old Chevys and Plymouths they are 4CVs, 2CVs, and 4Ls. About the time I first saw this strange car, I was thinking of buying a couple of 2CVs and combining them into a stretch.

Several months later, I saw the same car parked in front of the newly completed Mormon temple, also not far from my house. I waited until services were over and introduced myself to the owner, a retired railroad engineer named Etienne. He explained to me that he had bought the car, a 1964 Renault Caravelle, from a French military man around 1973 but shortly thereafter, as Madagascar went into a prolonged economic slump, he had garaged the car for 25 years. It was only in the last several years that he took it out and started using it. He wasn't sure if the 19,500 km on the odometer were accurate or not. Despite a slapdash paint job and four tires of different makes and different sizes, the car appeared in quite good condition. It was not, however, for sale. I gave Etienne a card and said if he ever changed his mind, he should call me.

It was several more months before I saw the car again, again at the Mormon temple. Again I waited for Etienne and told him that if he ever changed his mind, he should call me.

Several weeks later, I got a call from his daughter. Etienne had decided to sell the car because it just wasn't practical for his family of seven. Was I still interested?

Etienne's initial price was more than a Caravelle in show condition in Europe or the US would bring. I printed out pricing information from the internet and after a very calm negotiation, we settled on a price that was reasonable for me and enough money for him to go out immediately and buy a used Peugeot 304 wagon and pocket probably half of what I paid.

Because the car had been garaged for so long, it was in reasonable condition. New shocks, new brake pads, changes to pretty much all the rubber bushings, and she was running quite well, except for an occasional hesitation to start, which got worse rather quickly. Long story short, two pistons were badly burned out. The mechanic I inherited with the car found a used motor in decent condition, cannibalized the pistons, rods and sleeves and my Caravelle was back to being my every day around town car.

The car is now in the shop down the street where after the small amount of body work is done, it will be painted and upholstery redone. That's going to take a month and will run, all told, about \$1,000. 🍷

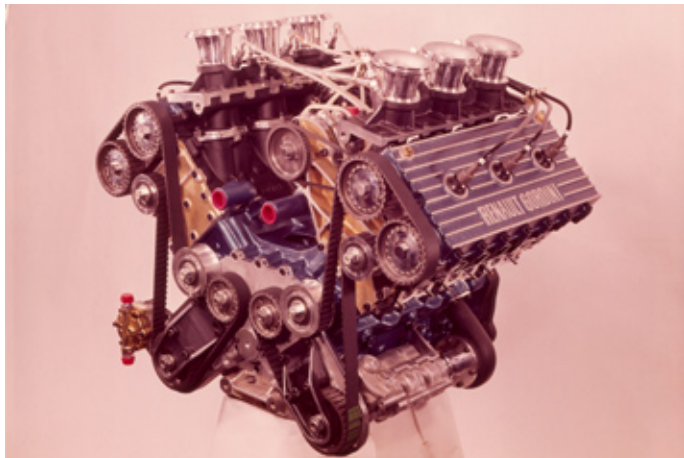


# Le Mans to Bonneville via Indianapolis

By Roy Smith

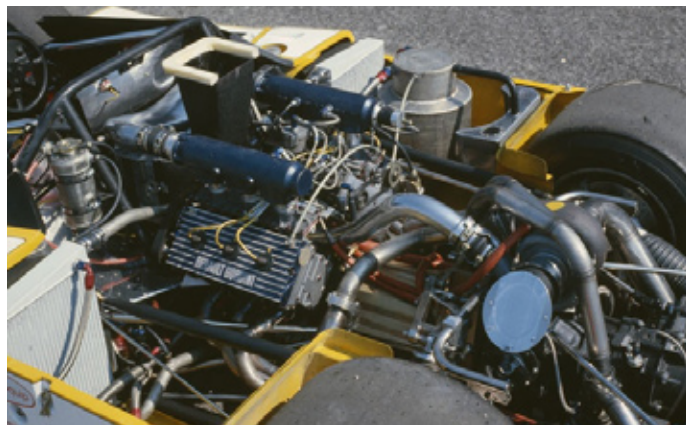


“Once upon a time” - the start of most children’s fairy stories. But this is no fairy story, though it is not unlike Jean Rédélé’s dream of winning the Le Mans 24 Hours outright. Just as with the Le Mans story, the dream may yet become reality. The fastest Renault-Gordini on earth?



Our story starts back in 1972 with discussions within Renault management on a new engine. The project took shape and became the V6 2 litre that would go into the new Alpine A440 sports proto which eventually won the European 2 litre Sports Car Championship Manufacturers’ title and gave Alain Serpaggi the driver’s title. What came next was the development of the turbocharged engine when Bernard Dudot started his work in 1974 after a trip to the USA in October 1973 to study the use and benefits of the power boosting offered by the turbocharger. The full story will appear next year in my forthcoming book, *Alpine and Renault - The Sport Prototypes*. The trials and tribulations that took place during the development of the 2 litre turbocharged engine are well documented and we will not go into detail here, but these engines, designed and built in Viry-Châtillon, would eventually power the Dieppe-built Alpine-chassis A442B to victory at Le Mans.

In 1978 Renault decided to cease racing with sports prototypes and to turn their sights towards Formula I. But what happened to all the engines? Quite a few were built and many parts were left after the 1978 Le Mans race. Some, of course, stayed with the cars and *Histoire et Col-*



lection, created in 2002, have been able to get sufficient parts to restore and successfully demonstrate and even race these fabulous cars at the Le Mans Classic. So where did the bulk of the engines go? Here is the answer.

For Renault and for Alpine, sports prototype racing and competition in the World Championship and in the Le Mans 24 Hours were over; it was mission accomplished. Renault Sport under Gérard Larrousse were moving in a new direction, Formula 1, and it was with the full backing of the Régie that they were to make a serious challenge on the Formula 1 World Championship in the years that followed. It was while I was researching for my F1 turbo book and forthcoming sports prototype books that I discovered with some joy an incredible story. Having heard a few words “on the grapevine” and asked a few questions, I found an unusual twist to what happened to Mr Dudot’s turbocharged engines from the 1970s. Enter a racing man from the 60s and 70s, American Harley Cluxton, and his company Grand Touring Cars (GTC). With the help of John Horsman and François Castaing I made contact via email with the larger-than-life Harley and he came back with some gems of information.

Here is a transcript of parts of a number of written communications I have received; they are self-explanatory and very enlightening:

A letter dated 10 August 1982:

From Harley E Cluxton III, President, Grand Touring Cars Inc.

To Gérard Larrousse, Régie Nationale des Usines Renault, Boulogne-Billancourt.

Dear Gérard,

Our proposal is to prepare and race in CART racing in 1983-84. The team will be Mario Andretti, Rick Mears, Tom Sneva or Geoff Brabham. A complete test programme will be conducted with emphasis on Indianapolis (author’s note: the Indy 500). As we have discussed previously, engines will be the important factor in this effort. We have to establish that the engine can

produce 800bhp out of 2.65 litres...”

GTC under Harley Cluxton and Renault were already talking and had started considering going Indy car racing in 1981. At that time Renault were totally committed to Formula 1 and were not keen to utilise their expertise from the then current engines, but the question was: where were the engines that had been produced for the Le Mans sports prototypes programme? This was the engine they wanted. The engines were in store at Renault - some 15 or more of them, in various states of repair; some new, unused, some used and some rebuilt units and lots of parts. They were 2 litre turbocharged engines and just what GTC needed to develop a 2.6 litre to go to Indianapolis.

It is worth reminding readers here that Mirage, the team formed by the great John Wyer and managed by John Horsman out of Slough in England in the early 1970s, had been bought by Harley Cluxton and his historic racing car restoration business in Phoenix, Arizona, in early 1976. Then later in 1976 came the first meeting between Renault and the GTC Mirage team after the Mosport Sports Prototype Championship race where Gérard Larrousse and Bernard Dudot first discussed Mirage using the Renault engines at Le Mans. The rest, as they say, is history: the Mirage Renault nearly won the 24 Hours in 1977, finishing second to an ailing Porsche, though in 1978 they would only finish in 10th place. A good, friendly association had been formed, but with Renault's pull-out after the 1978 Le Mans and refusal to let Mirage continue with their engines, Mirage had to return to Cosworths for the years that followed. The friendship continued, though, so when the letter arrived on Gérard Larrousse's desk confirming a request, Renault decided to help.

Through their American subsidiary of the time, AMC, Renault was to supply a few engines for research purposes. They went to GTC for development. Harley Cluxton: "Our goal was to re-engineer the Renault 2 litre turbo into a 2.65 litre Renault Mirage Indy motor that would produce the same bhp as the V8 Cosworth DFX but would have the advantage of being lighter and smaller, perhaps with better reliability."

The next name to appear on the scene is Chaparral. Jim Hall, the legendary team owner, was a friend of Harley's (still is, as far as I know) and one of Jim Hall's engineers, Mike Fanning, who had been involved in a lot of development with the Cosworth DFX, started work to create a Mirage Renault turbo 2.6 litre engine. In 1984 Gérard Larrousse decided to leave Renault Sport, the organisation he had created at Renault's request in 1976. A new man had been brought in above him and sadly Gérard's position became untenable. The new man was a certain Gérard Toth. On 17 December 1984, Gérard Toth wrote a letter to GTC saying, "I have reviewed the possibility for Renault to go ahead with the Indy engine program you have started. Although this means more work for us, I have decided to carry on and am

pleased to let you know it." This was followed on 24 April 1985 by a more formal agreement signed by Toth on behalf of Renault. Within this agreement it states:

"After two years of investments estimated at approximately US\$500,000, the engines developed by Grand Touring Cars appear to be competitive with the Cosworth engine at present powering 90% of Indy starting grids. Renault Sport is extremely interested by the fact that a Renault-based engine could eventually be an Indianapolis winner."

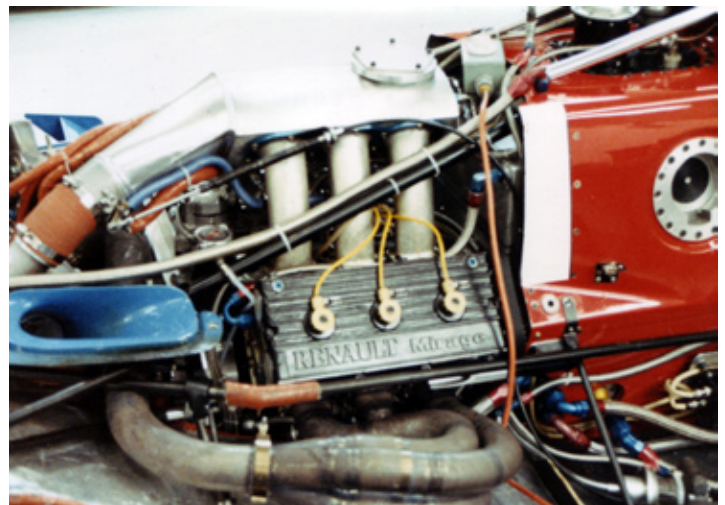
The agreement goes on to state:

"After the initial assistance which is the subject of the present agreement, it is understood that Renault Sport will supply parts at Grand Touring Cars' demand on a commercial basis." "Article 1 - Renault Sport will supply free of charge six sets of parts to enable Grand Touring Cars to build six complete engines that will be used for final development purposes."

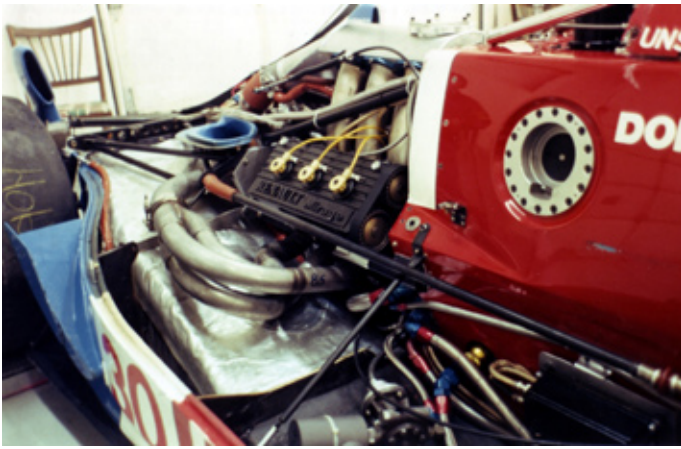
There are several more articles to the agreement, including a regular supply of components to be invoiced as and when required.

So did it happen? Well, yes and no. The car was to be a Doug Shierson Lola T900 chassis; at the time, Shierson's team was sponsored by Domino's Pizza. An ex-Renault Sport team member says, "Yes, there were quite a few maybe 10 engines in various states of repair with parts that went over to the USA and added to the Mirage-labelled units already there."

*And here it is: (© GTC)*



At the time, both John Wyer and John Horsman were also involved, both of course then well known in the world of sports prototypes. Wayne Beckwith, ex-chief engineer of Mirage, says: "At the time the rules were favourable as regards boost turbo power and so suited the Renault engine and made the project feasible, but it was a bumpy road; the



*Could Renault win the Indianapolis 500? (© GTC)*

*Top: Installed in the Lola T900 chassis: (©GTC)  
Bottom- Al Unser Jr aboard; Bernard Dudot looks on. (©GTC)*

the 500-mile distance. Harley Cluxton: "The GTC car still exists; it's not sponsored by Domino's, though, as in the pictures. The car is a Lola T900 chassis carrying the number HU19 and it's in Phoenix, owned by our GTC paint man, Glen Roberts. Al Unser did all of the testing and drove for the Domino's Pizza team in 1985, 1986 and 1987 for Doug Shierson. Just as the project seemed to have turned the corner, the boost regulations were changed and made the project obsolete and so it was abandoned."

regulations changed and communications with Mike Fanning deteriorated. But the car was developed to the point that it had a fully functional engine and it was tested at Jim Hall's Rattlesnake Raceway with Al Unser Jr driving."

We have seen that many of the sports prototype Le Mans programme engines were shipped out to the USA for an attempt at the Indy 500. Imagine the headlines: "Renault wins the Indy 500!" It never happened, but the car was built, it did run and it was a serious attempt backed by Renault. However, at the end of 1985 the sale of the Renault USA arm AMC to Chrysler indicated that Renault were no longer interested by the time John Wyer wrote his letter to Renault. But it was not the end of the sports prototype engine story.

On 25 September 1986, John Wyer wrote to José Dedeurwaeder at Renault in Paris "to give my impressions of the present stage of technical advancement of the Indianapolis version of your V6 race engine. As you may know, I have been associated as a technical consultant with this project since its inception at the end of 1982. I am most favourably impressed with the progress that has been made. I now have confidence that with a minimum of further development and detail refinement the engine will be ready for limited scale production and will be competitive against the Cosworth DFX which has dominated Indianapolis for so long." John Wyer's letter continues with these words: "To sum up, we have an engine which approximates in maximum power very closely to the Cosworth DFX and which has run 500 miles, the Indianapolis race distance, at 90% full load..."

Bud Free, the man who worked in the team at Le Mans in 1978, is a talented engineer and passionate speed record man. Over recent years, with long-time friend Wayne Beckwith from Mirage, he has built several interesting Salt Lake speed record cars powered by... yes, a sports prototype 1978 2 litre turbocharged ex-Le Mans project engine, labelled Renault-Gordini. Exactly - one of those units from 1978.

So GTC and Harley's men were ready. Bernard Dudot had been involved from the beginning and assisted the engineers to reach the point where they were able to test over

Bud Free's car at first ran to a formula called "roadster" that required an upright radiator. Using the ex-sports prototype engine, it ran at the Bonneville Speed Week, a regular annual event held on the Utah Salt Flats, a dry lake bed and the place where world land-speed records are set. Bud managed a run of 177mph in 2004.

The author spoke with Bud Free in May 2009. Bud Free: "I first came in contact with Harley in 1977 when he was preparing the Mirage cars for Le Mans. Wayne Beckwith worked for him and is a good friend of mine. He put me in contact with John Horsman, for whom I did some machine



*The early car. (©Bud Free)*

work. His crew would drop the part off at night on their way home and pick it up in the morning. I went to Le Mans with Harley and the GTC team in 1978, 1979 and 1982. I was a fabricator for them at Le Mans. I haven't done any work for Harley in quite a few years as he doesn't race any more. I still do work for other people, mainly machining parts for Ferraris and Lamborghinis for GT Car Parts (Bill Young). I retired in 2002 and went to Bonneville for their 50th anniversary and got the 'salt bug'. I started building a roadster in 2002. This was the first competitive type of racing I had been involved in since drag racing." (Bud was a top dragster driver in the 1960s and is in the Dragster Hall of Fame.)

Bud continues: "I talked to Harley about a Renault engine for the roadster. Harley provided the engine parts and Wayne Beckwith and I built an engine. I had seen a fancy H-patterned connecting rod in Harley's office, being used as a paperweight on his desk, a rod for the 2 litre 78 Le Mans Alpine Renault engine. Well, I worked in an aircraft machine shop for 40 years so I borrowed the rod and took it to work and created two sets. We found that Harley had ended up with loads of spare parts from the Alpine Renault project. He still had lots in 2003 - enough to build an engine, except the rods, but as you see that was not a problem. Wayne Beckwith, Harley and I went through all the parts and he helped me put a motor together. I ran the Renault-Gordini-engined roadster at Bonneville in August 2003 with a best speed of 165 mph. I ran this for 3 years, but had problems with the BMW management system we used at the time.

*Below left: Bud (left) with his son Mike. The name on the engine: Renault-Gordini. (©Bud Free)*



"In 2006 I stretched it to be a modified roadster and ran at Bonneville in August 2008, setting a new record of 189.90mph (305kmh). The existing record was 181mph.

"I started building the rear-engined lakester in August 2008 after Bonneville and ran it to shake it down and do systems checks just a few weeks ago on 15-18 May 2009 at El Mirage dry lake in California. We went through technical control (scrutineering) on Friday 15 May with no problems.

There were lots of comments on how nice the car was and on Saturday 16 May we ran it for the first time. There were a few 'new car' issues but on the Sunday 17 May we ran a low-power test at 148mph (238.2kmh) and everything seemed OK. All in all, we felt the weekend was a success. The car went straight and it looks like it is going to run the 300mph (482.8kmh) we are looking for on 8-14 August at Bonneville Salt Flats..." 480+kmh from a Renault-Gordini engine that was developed for the 1978 Le Mans programme!

Bud Free again: "So far since 2003 I haven't had any blow-ups. The engine is bullet proof. I run approx. 35-40 pounds boost. I change gear at 9800rpm. The rev limiter is set at 11,000rpm. I have a 5-speed transmission. You have to keep the engine above 6800 or it will loose boost between gear changes. At Bonneville the course is 5 miles (8.04km) long. Most of that is flat out. Of course all of the cars have a parachute to help stopping. The current management system is a Haltec computer, installed and managed by B&R Automotive (Bob Reams). He tunes it on his dyno.



*The Free family with the 300mph Renault-Gordini-powered record car, May 2009. (©Bud Free)*

Amazing! Back in January 1972 when François Castaing was first asked to create a V6 engine he would not have dreamed that the same design of engine carrying the same Renault-Gordini name would be running and chasing a land-speed record. It is also a tribute to Jean Terramorsi's turbo idea, developed by Bernard Dudot, that such a power unit is in regular use today, 35 years after its inception and still breaking records.

The sports prototype programme may have finished in 1978, but the Renault-Gordini legacy lives on. 🍷

# Mystery Marquis

By Roy Smith

**T**he car belonged to my father, Raymond Buckwalter; he drove it for a while, and then parked it up. I soon found out why he parked it up when I wanted to drive the car for a few months in 1958. Every time I turned the motor off and left it for a while, the car wouldn't start again without a push. This kind of thing you remember, believe me! I always parked in the same parking lot and the attendant always saved a spot for me. Five days a week they would push me to get it started. I guess my father figured I couldn't go shopping unless I could find some kind person to push it a few feet, but as I was a young lady at the time, I always found some kind gentleman to give me a push. It was the battery; something was draining it. Rather than fix it my father liked to challenge me and he would often laugh at how I managed these small challenges. Now the memory of it makes me laugh - I can just imagine me in a parking lot at my age trying to get someone to give my car a push! When I went to get it painted in the late 90s we found traces of blue, so I assumed that was the original colour." Those words from June 2009 talk of a time decades ago.



The aluminium-bodied ex-New York Motor show car in the late 1990s

I owe several people thanks for the information and photographs that appear here, so I will do it now. From the USA, Dan Woods and his mother Mary Ann - those are her words above - and Marvin McFalls, President, Renault Owners' Club of North America. A thank you, too, to literary friends in France: Jean-Luc Fournier and Christian Descombes. I also commend to the reader various bibliographic sources: Chappe et Gessalin by Michel Delannoy; Jean Rédélé - Monsieur Alpine by Jean-Luc Fournier; Alpine by Dominique Pascal; and Alpine Label Bleu by Christian Descombes.

Those words of introduction and the photograph above, personally from the owner, tell of a time in the 1950s and a very interesting car. The evidence uncovered suggests that this is almost certainly the original Rédélé 1953 "Renault Special" that was in the early weeks of January 1954 modified, tidied up, prepared and shipped to the USA for the New York Motor Show of 1954. This was the car that was used to

raise interest and promote sales of a car planned to be built in the USA during 1954 to be called The Marquis.

I had read a few words about the Marquis in several places, but much it seems may have been speculation, so I decided to research the subject. Coincidentally, an Alpine Renault contact in the USA, Marvin McFalls, had been tracking down a likely car and it was he who put me on to Dan Woods, son of the owner of a car that looked remarkably like the so called Marquis.



First sighting for a long time - tucked away in a barn, 2007

Marvin had heard about this car tucked away in a barn in Pennsylvania, USA, having been on the trail of the Marquis since 2001, when he received an original brochure featuring two cars, one called the Rogue, a sports roadster based on the Rosier Renault. The other car in the brochure was named as The Marquis and the text indicates that it was to be a replica of the Rédélé "Renault Special" from Allan Meyer. The company that had produced the brochure in question was PlastiCar Inc.



Brochure from 1954

Marvin was sure the "barn find" was connected to the Marquis. He had already tracked down Todd Daniel in 2002

who was nearing the end of a 5-year restoration of the only known Rogue built in 1954. He hoped one day he might find a glass-fibre-bodied Marquis. We agreed to help each other with the research; this is the result.

Jean Rédélé, the son of a garage owner in Dieppe, had taken up rallying and had been using the ubiquitous Renault 4CV 1063cc. By the end of 1952, he had already proved a formidable competitor in many events, including the Coupe des Alpes, the Monte Carlo Rally and the Mille Miglia, in which he won his class. He entered the 1952 Le Mans 24 Hours and finished in 17th place overall; with co-driver Guy Lapchin, they covered some 2388km (1483.834 miles). In 1953 Rédélé, along with his rally co-driver Louis Pons, again went rallying and also entered the Mille Miglia, finishing 8th in the Sports 750cc class. 13-14 June saw them in Le Mans for the 24 Hours of that year, but Rédélé and Pons failed to finish. By now, though, Jean Rédélé definitely had other things on his mind: he was dreaming of becoming a car manufacturer. The future father of the marque Alpine had in his hands a recently ordered lightweight car built on the floor pan chassis of a Renault 4CV. Evolved in 1952 after



*The first Rédélé "Renault Special", Rally Dieppe 1953*

Rédélé had met Giovanni Michelotti, a young Italian designer trained by Giovanni Farina who had worked with Serafino Allemano before setting up his own studio in 1949. Michelotti became a design sub-contractor of Allemano, Ghia and Bertone. Jean Rédélé liked the quiet Italian and asked him to design a sports coupé on the base of the 4CV. Happy with the result, he asked him to make the car, entrusting the bodywork specialist Allemano to do the work. Rédélé was to collect the finished vehicle in Italy and drove it back to France in December 1952 at the end of a holiday he was to call a honeymoon following his marriage to Michelle Escoffier, daughter of Paris Renault dealer Charles Escoffier. The aluminium-bodied creation on the 4CV chassis weighed just 550 kilos. It wasn't perfect, but it had his signature: it was "his" first car. Under the rear engine cover, the original engine was greatly improved by the modification of mechanical parts acquired from Satecmo and a "Rédélé-Pons-Claude" 5-speed gearbox. He had entered it as a "Renault Special" in the Dieppe Rally. Carrying No. 229, he won the event in front of a 3.4 litre Jaguar XK120 and in doing so won all the categories, as it was the car with the smallest power unit!

For his second event it underwent some modifications. Visually, the front chrome work was changed, much of it being removed. He cut out a vent below the rear wing to improve cooling to the engine and on 15 July 1953 at Rouen Essarts, in front of 20,000 spectators, he won again in the 750cc class. He repeated the feat once more at the Coupe de Lisbon on the Monsanto circuit in Portugal on 26 July, winning his class and finishing fourth overall behind three Porsche 1500s and in front of several more powerful cars.

30 June 1953 had seen the first Chevrolet Corvette roll off the assembly line in Flint, Michigan. The concept of an all-glass-fibre production sports car had just become a reality. Glass fibre had arrived on the scene many years before: in the 1880s a glass maker from Massachusetts by the name of Edward Drummond Libbey had first discovered that glass in fibre "staple" silk-like format could be woven as a fabric - he even had a dress made that was exhibited at the Chicago World Fair in 1893. Taking a giant leap to 1938, we see a gentleman by the name of Russell Slayter eventually create the product generically to be known as glass fibre and the trade mark Fibreglass was born. Our Mr Slayter had produced a continuous as opposed to a staple textile filament. The continuous filament was easily woven into a fabric which when treated with a new type of chemical resin would go off very hard. The world at that time was on the brink of war and although this was a global disaster for populations, for science it was to drive forward many emerging creative technologies, amongst these polyester resins and the use of moulded glass fibre, where it was found to have great strength when used in layered laminated format.

With the end of World War II, in France we see the pre-war-designed Renault 4CV finally see the light of day. It would become a massive success story for Renault and from early on spawned the design of several lightweight sports cars using the simple 4CV chassis as a starting point. Men like Vernet and Pairard, Labourdette, Chappe and Gessalin would all take a look at the use of laminated "polyesters". Included among these was of course the clever, opportunistic mind of the man Jean Rédélé.

In the early 1950s the company Chaumarat in France had been working with the Chappe brothers to perfect a textile fabric-like glass fibre that could be impregnated with chemical resins and moulded into shapes without creating too thick a finished rigid sheet. The "Chappe fabric", as it was called in France, had arrived. Rédélé was to see this product at Chappe et Gessalin at St-Maur and at Gaillard in Paris. Raymond Gaillard had asked Maxime Berlemont, a car body stylist, to design a two-seater coupé which was made with resin and glass fibre in a format known in France as "stratyl" (laminated). The bodywork was moulded at Chappe et Gessalin.

During 1953 certain events had been taking place that would influence Rédélé's next move. He heard about and eventually met a rich American industrialist who was passionate about European sports cars: Zark W Reed. Rédélé at that



time had only just got his new aluminium-bodied first car fully sorted. We will never know, but perhaps a new project was on his mind – production, even.

Renault had been approached by Zark Reed and on 9 December 1953 Pierre Lefauchaux, then PDG of Renault, was to take lunch with Reed in Paris. (His was one of several approaches Lefauchaux had recently received.) Reed represented PlastiCar, a company based in Doylestown in Pennsylvania, whose parent company specialised in the moulding of boat hulls in glass fibre. The company wanted to diversify its range of products by adding cars, hence the name PlastiCar. Its aims were ambitious, as they estimated that they could fit a bodywork assembly made of just seven elements and attached directly by washers and bolts to the floor pan of the Renault 4CV in fifteen minutes and produce 3000 cars a year. The idea was that they wanted to compete with the US imports of the then popular English roadsters familiar to US soldiers who had been based in Europe and were returning home smitten by the Triumph TR2, MG and Singer.

Zark W Reed was a tactician, though also perhaps a bit of a dreamer (Pierre Lefauchaux called him “woolly-minded”), but nothing would stop him. Reed obtained an agreement in principle with Renault concerning the Rosier, using that design to create a car with a glass fibre body; they would call it the Rogue.



*Original aluminium-bodied Rosier Renault, 1953*

But Zark was not content with this: he wanted to go further and up the ante by directly approaching another partner – enter Jean Rédélé.

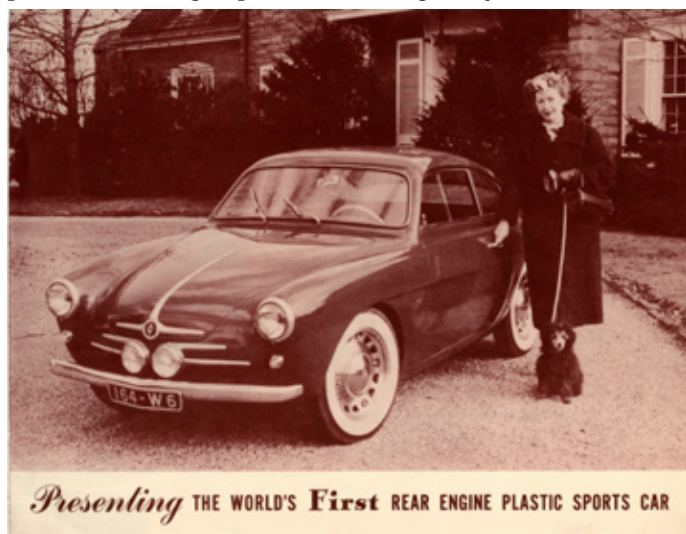
Rédélé jumped at the chance of finding himself potentially in the saddle for a production deal and a shot at the American market. Shortly after his meeting with Renault, Reed visited Rédélé, who had an office in the rue Forest in Paris. Rédélé took the American out on the road in his race-winning “Special” and Zark Reed was immediately won over by the car and its owner. Reed decided he wanted the rights to produce the car industrially in the USA, but with a glass fibre body. Rédélé saw the possibilities: was his dream about to become reality? Here was a company which was experienced in glass fibre and it looked like a superb opportunity

to become a constructor. Rédélé didn’t have the financial wherewithal himself to produce his own cars at that point, so he decided to sell Zark Reed a manufacturing licence for the sum of \$2500. But Reed stipulated in the contract that the licensor must supply him with a master to work from; that master mould would come from the “Renault Special”...



*The Rédélé Special, in blue maybe – early 1954 promo for the Marquis*

For Rédélé this was perfect. He had found the means to finance manufacture of a car linked to him - a neat financial strategy and industrial engineering solution, he thought. Jean Rédélé had the original aluminium-bodied car further modified at the front and generally tidied up; it’s likely, too, that it was repainted. The front was revised with two lights that recessed into two housings in the nose, a plain bumper was fitted and the car was sent to the New York Motor Show early in 1954. Reed moved fast; he had PlastiCar brochures made up and published photos of the car in preparation for production, being hopeful of receiving many orders at



*Promotional photo using the first aluminium-bodied car*  
the show. It received flattering comments from those who saw it. Zark Reed was delighted, but the dream was about to turn to a nightmare for PlastiCar Inc, Rédélé and Renault. Unknown to all parties, Reed was being badly advised by the men he had recruited to put “The Marquis”, the name they had given to the proposed fibre glass car, into production. A

former Chief Design Engineer at Ford who had joined PlastiCar was not up to the mark and he and his colleagues got off to a bad start. The first mould taken from a Rosier for a sports car named the Rogue had a body that was too thick and therefore too heavy. It is suggested that they were also found to be unable to fully take on board the concept of the rear-engine design which they would have on the Marquis, planned to be a direct copy of the R d l  "Renault Special" which would be made after the Rogue: the 4CV engine layout was one they were not familiar with. The enthusiastic Zark had already ordered 150 initial mechanical assembly floor pans from Renault. On top this PlastiCar Inc, as mentioned, was finding it impossible to master the adaptation of the glass fibre process to car bodies. They were used to thickly laminated boat hulls accumulating many layers of the impregnated glass wool over long flat areas; the first Rogue body was too thick - completely useless for a lightweight sports car.

Reed suddenly found himself with a heavy, unsaleable product and he was now facing the same problem with the planned Marquis coup , plus he had a bill for 50 million francs from Renault for the mechanical assemblies. Disaster was at hand.

Jean R d l  quickly got to hear about the problems and soon after his 750cc class victory with Louis Pons in the '54 Mille Miglia in May with a 4CV, he went to the USA but was horrified to find that what he had heard was true and he could only confirm the fiasco to Renault during his visit. Furious that his licensee had failed, he cancelled the agreement. It was all over. He returned to France with no money from the deal and without his first car (too expensive to ship back), anxious to recover from what one might see as a humiliation. Uncertain of the new material, R d l  would go ahead and order a second "special" from Allemano but incorporating the aesthetic and mechanical modifications done on the original car for the New York show.

At this time the Escoffiers (father and son) were also working on the creation of a new car. They had thought about the new "plastic", finding that at Chappe et Gessalin they were already on the case. Escoffier knew that laying down glass fibre and resin did not need the same skills as aluminium and Chappe et Gessalin had begun to acquire a good knowledge of the use of laminated fibre materials. They proposed to Charles Escoffier the production of a series of bodies. Escoffier was cautious and asked to see a first car. He was delighted and ordered 25.

R d l  - part of the family, of course, being married to the daughter of Charles Escoffier - found that G rard Escoffier, his new brother-in-law, was more interested in boats. R d l  started to wonder; the new "coach" design of Escoffier was in fact perfect for his needs. The proposed deal to have bodies shipped from PlastiCar was not going to happen; the glass-fibre-bodied Marquis project was dead and Jean R d l  wanted to move quickly forward.



*The second Michelotti/Allemano car delivered in 1955*

It seems he had originally planned to take delivery of that "improved" second car from Allemano, based on the first one he had sent to the USA, in early 1955 with the idea perhaps being to use that as the basis of his future "production" model. Then a dispute arose between Escoffier and R d l  over Jean's idea to promote this new car by entering the Mille Miglia again in 1955, thereby creating a perceived competitor in the market to Escoffier, his own father-in-law! In the end it was family interest and common sense that prevailed. As 1954 drew to a close, R d l  and Escoffier joined forces in the construction of the first "coach" Alpine utilising those early body shells. The cars were put together at the Escoffier Garage in Paris. With great strategic marketing and business creativity, Jean R d l  would now launch the Alpine company. Officially registered on 22 June 1955, the name would become world famous in the years that followed as R d l  developed his own glass-fibre-bodied creations. The second Allemano car was supplied to Galtier and Michy who were to take a class win in the 1955 Mille Miglia with it.

As for the Marquis and PlastiCar Inc of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, USA, the only glass-fibre-bodied car they did create was the one based on the Rosier design that they called the Rogue. There appears to be no evidence that a Marquis was ever actually built and what had happened to the New York Show car remained a mystery until the previously mentioned Marvin McFalls started to investigate. He found that the R d l  aluminium car that was to be used as the master mould and held by Zark Reed's PlastiCar Company had been put up for sale on a used car lot in Doylestown and purchased in 1955 by a local racer by the name of Bob Holbert. The car was seen at the Cumberland Maryland Airport race in 1956 and Marvin says the car carried the letters HM, which in that particular case apparently meant that it was entered in the 750cc class, but it was not witnessed racing. It then disappeared.



*The Rédélé Renault Special, 1956*

Several decades later, Jonathan Burnette, an American Renault Club member was asked about a car that a gentleman wanted to restore. He and Marvin identified it as looking like the long-lost Marquis. Eureka! Maybe?

*This is that car:*



As the present owner says: "My father was a keen collector of cars. He had a Lincoln dealership and had access to lots of cars. Some time around 1957 he was told about an interesting little coupé for sale. He bought it and used it - it was running ok until it failed to start, then I got to use it. I was told that my father bought the car somewhere in Hummelstown Penn-

sylvania. It has an all-aluminium body and has been in our barn for as long as I can remember, though we can't remember who had it painted white. In the latter part of the 1990s I had it pulled from the barn and had it repainted blue, as that was the colour we found under the white and we assumed that was the original colour. A local garage man tried to get it running but there was a problem with the carburettor that was not resolvable."

This is surely the missing Allemano-made, Michelotti-designed original Rédélé "Renault Special", the New York Show car of 1954. The only difference is that the two central front lights are now behind the recess, not in front of it. There is also now a cover of sorts over the rear engine cover vents. Otherwise it appears to be identical.

Without further evidence, it seems that the only PlastiCar vehicle ever made was the still existing and now restored Rosier copy, the Rogue. The perceived Marquis was never finally built.

Marquis or not, the exciting thing is the discovery of what must be the first Jean Rédélé-created car - the very one that won the Dieppe Rally in 1953. The late Raymond Buckwalter couldn't have known how important a car his purchase was to become. The good news is that his grandson has said the plan is that the all aluminium bodied vehicle will live and run again. Let us all hope so. 🙏



# Renault 4CV Register of Australia – 2009 Muster at Young, New South Wales

By John Waterhouse

**A**t Easter, 2009 some 20 Renault 4CV cars arrived at Young, in New South Wales in eastern Australia, for the 11th Muster of the Renault 4CV Register of Australia. The Register was set up some 20 years ago to provide a national group for the charming 4CV cars that were sold in Australia as the Renault 750. The Register now accepts the later, rear-engined derivatives of the 4CV, and three Dauphines (two of them Gordini models), three Floride/Caravelle models, two R10s and a single R4 also arrived.



*Arriving at Motel in Young*

The 4CV Muster is held every two years and caters for owners all around Australia. Several owners drove south from Queensland (up to three days on the road), others north from Victoria and a few drove east from South Australia. Two owners from Perth in Western Australia attended without their cars, it being some 3,500 km from Perth to Young.

We drove a rare Renault 10S belonging to Register founder George Cook and his wife Pauline, taking the car a few hundred kilometres from their farm to the Muster after flying from Perth to the Australian capital, Canberra. The Renault 10S was a short-lived model only sold in Australia, using Renault 10 components with a slight power increase (twin-choke Weber and an 8-port cylinder head for its 1098 cc engine). The cars had a locally sourced round speedometer-tachometer cluster. Only a few hundred were made near the end of the R10 production run, and few are left now.

The Australian Musters are great social events, with several families regularly attending. This year, for the first time, three generations of one family all drove cars to a Muster! Ian Cavanagh with his dog Ned was the very welcome senior member of the family, whilst Ned has been attending Musters since he was a pup! Note the water bag on Ian's 4CV to keep Ned's drink cool.



*Ian and Ned, with water bag*

Whilst there are always many cars that are outstanding in different ways, a newly-restored Dauphine Gordini was my personal favourite from this particular Muster. Restored from tired but sound condition, this car is now like new but without the impression of the restoration being "overdone".



*Perfect engine compartment of newly-restored Dauphine Gordini*

As with all Musters, the locally-based organisers, \_\_\_\_\_, went to a great deal of trouble to organise interesting local places to visit, on this occasion including a huge old mansion from the 19th century early days of farming in the area.



*Full line up of Muster attendees in grounds of rural mansion*

We had a formal line-up outside the Young railway station, to the interest of locals, and to our great surprise, another 4CV turned up. It belongs to a local man who was not a member of the Register, not know to us, but he had heard of the event and came anyway. So a new member and one more car is added to our Australian list!



*Line up of Renault 4CV cars at Young Railway Station*



*Dauphines and Floride/Caravelle models at Young Railway Station*



*The rare site of some 20 4CV rear views*

We went on one excursion out of Young and ended up for lunch at a typical Australian “country pub”. A pub means “public house”, that is a hotel that is now mainly used to supply beer and meals to local and passing travellers. Most still have a few rooms for guests, but motels took over decades ago as the usual over-nighting stops in these small towns.



*Renaults watching as their owners lunched at the pub across the road*

As the owner of a 1951 Renault 4CV that has neither been restored nor modified, I am always humbled by the standard of preparation of some of the restored cars, reflecting vast amounts of love and attention to detail. We have several cars that are hard to fault in any detail and would be well-received anywhere in the world.



*Newly restored 4CV*



Some of our cars are modified, the use of R8 1100 engines and 4-speed gearboxes being used by some to make the cars more usable in modern traffic. Cooling these cars is possible in more way than one, with a front-mounted radiator one solution.

*Front radiator and battery in an R8-powered 4CV*

R8 disc brakes are also a relatively easy bolt-on modification for three-stud wheel models.



*Len Cavanagh's 4CV with "real" brakes*

The ultimate, but still relatively straightforward "bolt in" modification is perhaps the use of a 16TS engine, and we have at least two such cars in Australia, one being a regular Muster attendee with its owner, Alan Moore from Queensland. These cars lead to "endless chats", and wives marvel that after 4 days of near continuous talk, finer points are still being discussed right up to the moment of departure to drive home.



*More discussions.....*



*Yet more discussions (Alan Moore's lovely 16TS-powered 4CV)*



*16TS power*

The Register is a group of friendly and tolerant folk! We even welcome long term attendees from Queensland with their Renault R4. Not strictly rear-engined, but using the old 4CV transaxle, the R4 is surely one of the great post-war cars by any standards. They built at least 8 million of them, which takes the R4 into the top 10 of all car makers' single model runs. Many differently engineered models from a different manufacturer, all called "Corolla", do not count in the same way!



*Renault R4 with enthusiastic owners!*

If you are interested in finding out more about our Australian Register, we have a sometimes-updated website ([www.4CVregisterofAustralia.com](http://www.4CVregisterofAustralia.com)). New members are always welcome, from anywhere..... ☺



*Your scribe and wife (John and Alex Waterhouse) with the Renault 10S*

# Renault 8 Gordini - According to Sports Car Graphics

By Marvin McFalls

**B**ack in the 1960's, Sports Car Graphics magazine was the bible for racing fans of Formula , Grand Touring, Prototype, Sports Car, Land Speed, Hill Climbs, and even Touring Sedans. Basically, everything that wasn't mainstream in America like the Indy500, Grand National (Nascar), or Drag Racing. They were well known for their coverage of major events from Europe as well as the fledgling events throughout the United States. On top of their race coverage, they also devoted significant coverage to the latest production cars, especially European models. Besides just testing them and reporting the tale of the tape on a new model, they would tear them apart and make improvements. Then they would take them out to the track and put the car thru its paces, and then recommend what changes you should make to your car at home.

After travelling to France for the 1964 Paris Motor Show, writer Bernard Cahier said, "I was favorably impressed by the new R8 Gordini, a truly outstanding performing car in its class with a great deal of comfort and safety. It is an exciting car to drive and is going to be a terrific competitor for the Mini Cooper." Cahier Added "Priced at around \$1800 for export in France(\$2400 in the U.S.) the Gordini is worth every penny, and should be extremely well received by the young sports enthusiast looking for a machine he can take to work and still race on the weekends." Finally he said "It is a car which makes a lot of sense, and I am certainly happy that Renault Finally decided to put it on the market where its success is already assured."

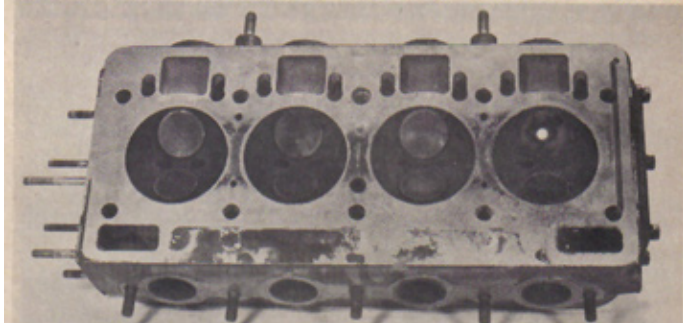
Early in 1965 the staff from Sports Car Graphics finally were able to get a R8 Gordini on the track. They were impressed with the top speed of 105mph as well as the 18.2 second time in the quarter mile. These times were comparable to the latest Alfa Romeo and Lancia sports cars. One writer referred to this level of performance by stating, "the R8 Gordini is really a bomb, and it is actually quicker in both speed and acceleration than the standard Mini Cooper 1300." You just have to love the 1960s lingo.

After briefly driving the R8 Gordini on the roads in France followed by a short track test, it seemed the next step for the Sports Car Graphic team was to tear apart and tinker with an the R8 Gordini. To make it a challenge for the SCG guys Renault sent them a car that had been road tested by two other magazines, driven hard as a general press car, and used as a demonstrator before being sent to them. So being the only way to see what a racer will do is take it racing, and only having a few days before the Memorial Day Santa Barbara race they pulled out the rear seat, took off the bumpers, and installed a roll cage.

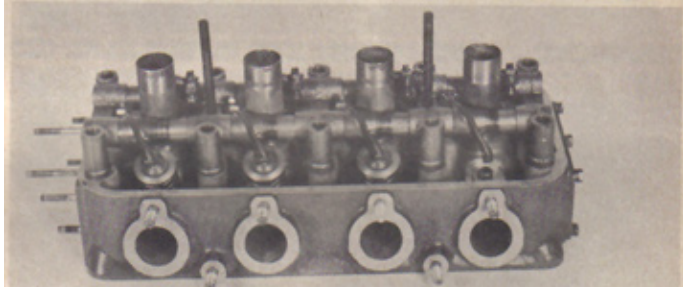
In Santa Barbara they tried a new set of Goodyear Red Dot tires as well as the original Dunlop SP's. In it virtually stock form the car was competitive, on the Mini Cooper was faster



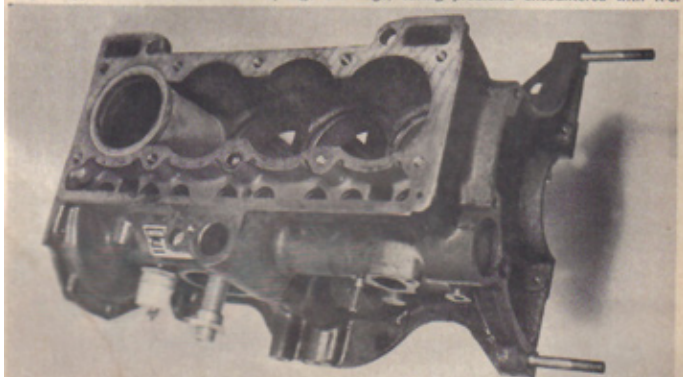
Detail of combustion chamber in the Gordini head shows the relatively large valve seats and the cartridge-fire flame passages. Ports are direct, large and well-shaped for good flow.



Mating surface of the head shows the large area between the chambers to provide a good seal for the gasket. Water passages are large and provide excellent cooling at high revs.



The intake side of the standard Gordini head shows the large inlet passages and the sturdy Chrysler-type cantilevered rockers. Valve springs are huge, curing problems encountered with R-6.



Basic block is the standard R-8 Major unit, a wet-sleeve, five-main-bearing set-up that is much stronger than it needs to be for the bhp put out by standard version, or even Gordini.

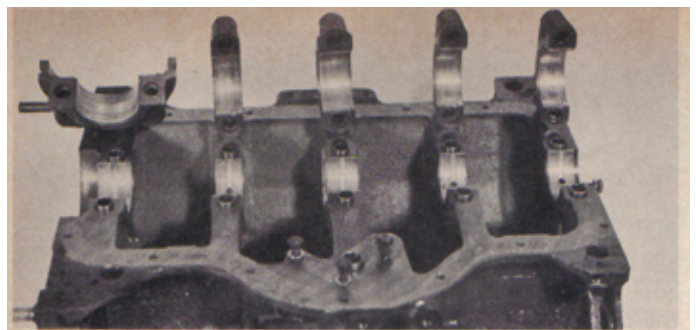
in class. Following the Memorial Day race, the SCG guys took the Gordini back to the shop cut one coil of each of the rear springs, and added 30 pounds in the luggage compartment. They then took the car as well as one of the Mini Coopers that had beat them in Santa Barbara to Willow Springs. It was apparent that this course was better for the Gordini along with the few minor improvements it beat the mini by thirteen seconds.

The next race was in Pomona. With no changes since Willow Springs, the car finished third in class, however it became apparent that new shocks would be needed before the next event. While the car handled much better in the dirt at Ascot Park, we could tell the engine was in need of an overhaul, but with the San Luis Obispo races on the horizon there was no time for a teardown, so instead they took it Azusa Auto Sport for some tuning. A quick dyno test showed the motor was down to 80hp from its original 95, but off they went. At San Luis the Gordini performed well, as only the 1.3 Mini Cooper S was faster.

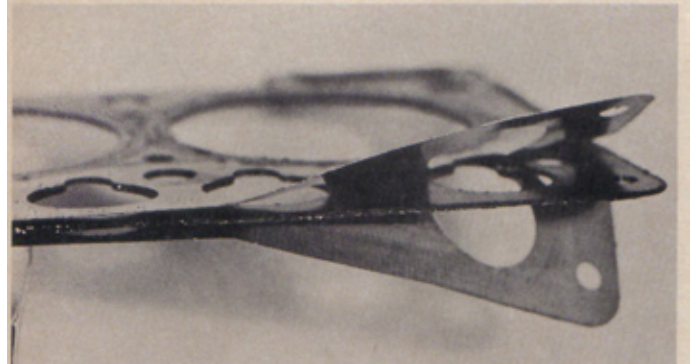
After the race, the Gordini was sent back to Azusa and torn down. New pistons and rings were installed, and the crank was balanced, other than that only a baffle was added to the oil pan to keep the oil from surging. It was then back to Ascot Park where they found the only weakness in the car. All of sudden a gallon of oil spewed out of the car. It turned out the end of the oil cooler had come off. After inspecting the cooler they found the ends were merely lead soldered. They said they used to see this same problem with Porsches so they brazed the cooler back together.

With the total loss of oil due to the oil cooler coming apart they were able to see just how tough the Renault engine was. After tearing it down author John Christy reported "the only damage done was one wiped out rod bearing, scorched pistons and annealed rings." New liners, pistons, rings and bearing were installed just to be safe. After the repairs were made Christy said "As this mishap showed, and the previous beating proved, this engine has got to be the strongest, most reliable small production engine in the world." How about that for a testimonial!

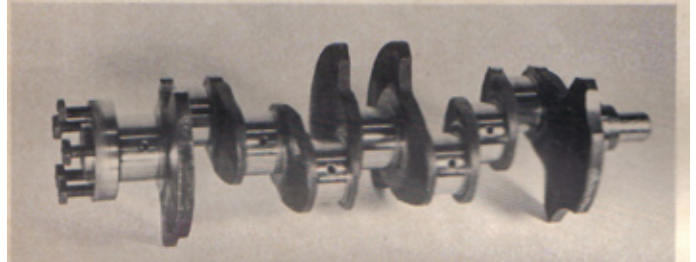
This was the end of this report on the R8 Gordini, however they discuss a second installment where they would discuss improvements made in the gearing and further chassis refinements. Christy closed the article with the statement "the Gordini is a highly competitive car and one of the biggest \$2,400 worth of combination street-competition sedans on today's market! High praise for one of the finest automobiles Renault ever built. If you can ever find an old copy of Sports Car Graphics give it a read, I wish we had more magazines of this caliber today. While SCG has changed much over the years, losing much of their racing roots in the decades that followed as well as their name, Today Car and Driver is still one of the best magazines for sports car enthusiasts. ●



Lower end of the R-8 block shows the extremely strong construction with extra large center and rear main bearings. Wear shown here is the result of seven races and a practice session!



Gasket for the Gordini is a phenolic cloth sandwich between two layers of thin steel, which cures an ancient Renault disease known as "blown gaskets." It didn't blow when oil line broke.

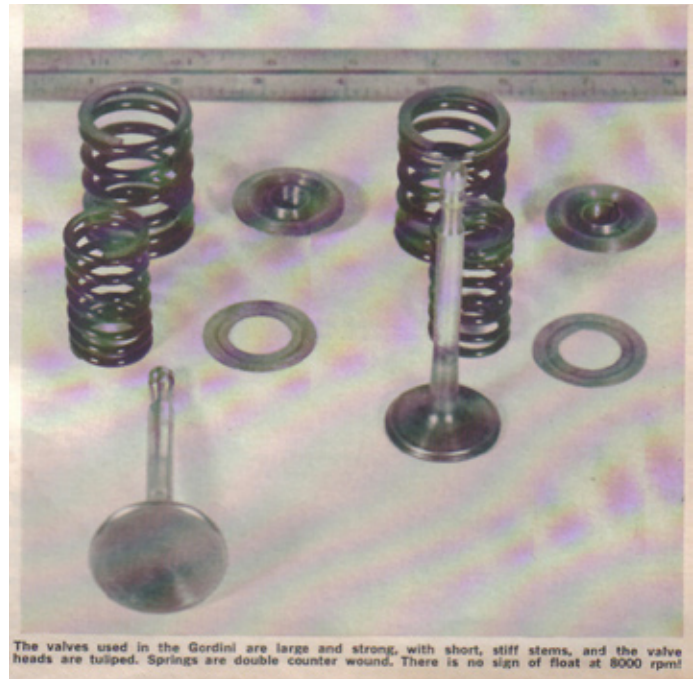
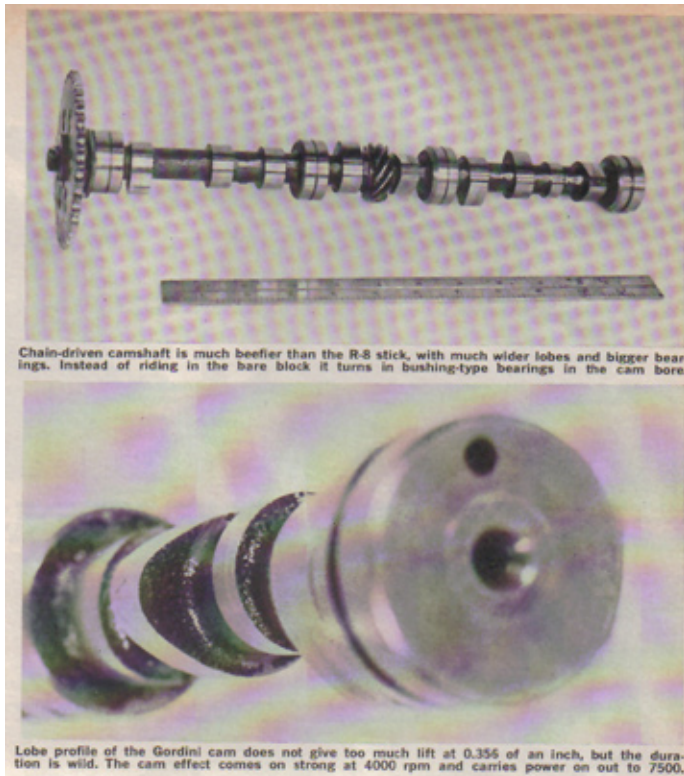


The crankshaft looks like something from a big Detroit superstock that was washed and put away wet to shrink. Crankpin and main journal overlap is one reason the undersquare engine can rev.



Connecting rods are bigger and beefier in all respects than the standard R-8 units. Pistons have a dome that could be increased and deep reliefs for the big valves. Pin is floating.





## Vehicle Lubrication for Older Cars - The Demise of ZDDP

By Dene Barrett

**R**ecently, I was reading an important article in another club magazine on the subject of lubrication, important because oil is the lifeblood of any engine. I had been under the impression that the newer lubricating oils were better for our vintage engines because of all the additives such as detergents, anti foaming agents, viscosity indexers and the like. It turns out that things are not quite that simple.

What has been taken out is ZDDP, Zinc Dialkyl Dithiophosphate, that was added to engine oils years ago specifically to counter excess valvetrain wear due to the extremely high contact pressures encountered there. Apparently, zinc and phosphorus released from such oils will poison catalytic converters. One must suppose that more modern engines have had their valvetrains reengineered to keep critical pressures below the film breakdown capabilities of modern lubricants.

The upshot of all this is that if one continues to run vintage engines without adequate protection, one runs the risk of premature valvetrain failure, especially cam lobes and lifters.

The article in question does not go in to potential risks for other lubricated parts of the engine such as gudgeon pins, big end bearings, etc., nor does it say what impact, if any, there is on seals, gaskets, and the like from this change in formulation.

For those concerned, there are two approaches available. One is to use an additive such as Cam-shield (TM), the other is to use an off the shelf oil specifically tailored for older engines, such as Castrol Syntec 20W-50.

I am slowly converting over to Shell Rotella T 15W-40 which is a mineral based oil specifically formulated for heavy duty engines, as I have reservations about using synthetic oils in older engines.

It might be a good idea to alert Renault members with pre-catalytic converter engines (around 1976 if memory serves) about potential premature engine wear from using modern oil formulations. 🍷

Editor: From Macy's Garage (good article)  
<<http://tinyurl.com/ybkumox>>:

*"Motor oil is one of those HOT buttons that is always capable of starting a debate among car guys. Most gear heads have a particular brand of oil that they feel is the best, and will debate the merits at length with anyone who doesn't concur with their opinion. But this latest debate among vintage car folks over ZDDP is widespread and touches everyone addicted to motors designed more than 20 years ago. You see, for most of the last century, the almost universal method to open and close engine valves was via flat tappets (solid or hydraulic lifters if you will), and the ZDDP additive was there to prevent or reduce wear between the lifters and the camshaft. But ZDDP in the minute amounts of oil that will get burned and exit through the exhaust system will shorten the life of catalytic converters. Thus the EPA mandate to eliminate ZDDP from engine oil, and the auto makers have responded by designing engines that utilize roller lifters or overhead camshafts, and have no need for the protection offered by ZDDP."*

# My Floride Story

By Terry Martin

**I** trained as an aircraft engineer in the Royal Australian Air Force ( RAAF ), and in 1960, was posted to No 2 Bomber Squadron at Butterworth in Malaya, now called Malaysia. Soon after my arrival, I joined the Royal Perak Motor Club, ( Perak, pronounced with a silent "k" is a state of Malaysia ), and bought a Renault Floride. In 1961, I competed in the North Malayan Rally in the car, stock standard. This event showed that to do well, I would have to extract a bit more power from its small engine.

While still in standard trim, I competed in, and won the 1961 Mobilgas Economy Run, with a return of 75 MPG. There was a bit of fiddling done to achieve this result. The main jet was replaced by an adjustable tapered need jet, the air filter element removed and the tyres pumped up to 40 psi. My navigator and I were sixth away from the start, we got lost, had a flat tyre, were first to the finish line and won !

I then set about improving outright performance, and to this end, imported from England, a Ruddspeed conversion kit which was advertised in the English motoring magazines. It comprised of a set of stronger valve springs, modified camshaft, twin 1 1/8" SU carbs and four branch extractor type exhaust manifold. While the head was off fitting all of this, the ports were also given the once over, with a lot of polishing.

The result of all of this was a class win - - up to 1000cc - - and third overall in the 1962 Rally. The overall result included beating an Aston Martin DB2 ! The car was run monthly in club and open events including circuit and grass track racing, and I still have a few of those trophies. One thing that proved to be necessary, driving hard in the tropics was the need to get the oil temperature down. This was achieved by welding on an extension box shaped "wing" each side of the sump. An airflow tube of one inch diameter passed right through each extension front to back. This mod increased sump capacity by 1 1/2 litres and dropped the oil temp back to normal.

Circuit racing also showed up the need for more control at the rear end, and radius arms of my own design were fitted to the swing axles.

In mid 1963, I returned to Australia, and continued competing in club events with the MG Car Club ( I had been a member for some years ). In 1965, it was traded on a Renault R8 1100, and in 1973, this made way for a Renault R16TS which I had for thirteen years. ●



1961 North Malayan Rally



1962 Malayan Rally car with navigator

Over the years, my sporting interests have changed, and have competed at state and national level in three other sports, cycling - both road and track, ice speed skating (No 2 in Australia in the 1991 Masters Championships), and also rifle shooting.

This pic was taken recently on my seventieth birthday.



# Around the world with the 'Little One' (a 1959 Renault 4CV)

By Steven Weinberg

## My credo

"I have always been travelling. As a child, my finger followed invisible tracks in my father's atlas that led to faraway islands, snowy mountains, burning deserts and rivers too wild to be crossed...

When I was 15, I climbed onto my little Peugeot "Grifon" moped with its 49cc engine, and drove on my own from where I lived in southern France to Holland, where my brother was studying.

When I was 17, together with my friend Jaap van Poelgeest, each of us on a scooter, we accomplished a trip from Monaco to Athens and back, across the gravel roads of Yugoslavia.

Since those days I have travelled to many remote corners of the Earth. But at sixty-two, I still need to fulfil a boy's dream...

So we have to go, my car and I, both of us the same age. We have to leave together for unknown horizons. I have nothing to prove, except that I am alive!"

## Some history

2007 marked the centennial year of the first great automobile raid from Beijing to Paris (the challenge advertised in 1907 by the Paris newspaper « Le Matin » originally planned it from Paris to Beijing). Italian Prince Borghese brilliantly won the raid.

Exactly one century later, I started from Paris in a tiny vintage Renault 4CV. My aim was not to make it as fast as possible to China. I just wanted to meet people along the road and to return home with a rich collection of photographs. I also wanted to see for myself how the different people along my route lived: the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Russians, the Mongolians and the Chinese. Because I wanted to record their everyday life in pictures and in words.

The 16,000 km trip, which was a tremendous success (over 20,000 visits to my blog, many press articles, several TV interviews), took me from Paris to Lake Baikal in the summer of 2007, over the frozen expanses of Lake Baikal during early spring of 2008, and through the gruelling steppes and Gobi desert of Mongolia in the summer of 2008. The Chinese authorities having closed their borders to travel during the Olympic Games, the trip ended a mere 700 km from Beijing.

## A new plan

In 1908, « Le Matin », together with the « New York Times », launched an even more daring challenge: a raid by automobile from New York to Paris in winter, crossing the Bering Straits to Siberia (this latter 'detail' was later to be abandoned). On February 12, 1908, the following cars lined up at the start from Times Square, New York: a French De Dion-Bouton, a French Motobloc driven by Charles Godard (the same who had showed incredible stamina on the Spyker during the Peking to Paris raid a year before), a French Sizaire-Naudin driven by Auguste Pons (the one

who had been stranded in the Gobi desert one year earlier), an Italian Züst, a German Protos and an American Thomas Flyer. The German team arrived first in the City of Light on July 26, 1908, but were penalized for having covered Ogden, Utah to Seattle by train and for not having made it to Alaska. Therefore driver George Schuster on the Thomas Flyer was declared overall winner of what became known as "The Great Race", earning him many honours, including a reception by President Theodore Roosevelt.

The "Little One" has suffered tremendously on the Mongolian dirt tracks. But she has shown what she is capable of. She has been shipped back from Ulaanbaatar to Europe and is being prepared for her next adventure: Luxembourg-Paris-Luxembourg! The trip is scheduled to start in 2010. By then, the minute Renault will be more than 50 years old.

## The itinerary

As much as possible, we'll follow the same route as the one taken by George Schuster in 1908. The six-month trip will take place in three stages:

### 1st leg, North America (August-October 2010)

Tentative dates : New York 15/07, Chicago 21/07 - 23/07, Cheyenne WY 29/07

Salt Lake City 06/08 - 07/08, San Francisco 20/08 - 25/08, Seattle 01/09 - 02/09

Vancouver 03/09 - 06/09, Whitehorse 17/09, Fairbanks 21/09 - 22/09

Arctic Circle, 24/09, Fairbanks, 26/09, Anchorage 29/09

### 2nd leg, Asia (November-December 2010)

Yokohama - Tokyo - Toyama - Vladivostok - East Siberia - Dalnerechensk - Khabarovsk - Birobidzhan - Obluche - Svobodnyi - Mogocho - Chita - Khilok - Ulan-Ude - Irkutsk - Tulun - Kansk - Krasnoyarsk - Tomsk - Novosibirsk - Barabinsk - Omsk - Ishim - Tyumen - Yekaterinburg.

### 3rd leg, Europe (January 2011)

Moscow via Perm, Kazan and Nizhniy Novgorod - St. Petersburg - Tartu (Estonia) - Riga (Latvia) - Kaunas (Lithuania) - Warsaw and Poznan (Poland) - Berlin and Herford (Germany) - Maastricht (Netherlands) - Liège (Belgium) - Luxembourg.

During this voyage, the "Little One" will cover a total estimated distance of 43,500 km (more than the Earth's circumference!), 27,000 km by road and 16,500 km across the oceans, 24 time zones.

## The traveller

Steven Weinberg was born in Laren in the Netherlands on October 22nd, 1946 and obtained his PhD in marine biology from the University of Amsterdam in 1979.

*Continued on back page*

As a writer and photographer, specializing in the underwater world and travel, he has written 11 books and over 350 magazine articles to date.

**See:**

<http://www.weinberg.lu/livres.php?langue=en>

<http://www.weinberg.lu/magazines.php>

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*Editor's Note: Steven hopes to meet other Renault members during his trip. If you would like to travel along with him for a few hours or just have a meal he would enjoy it. 🍷*



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