

Pretoria Old Motor Club – British Classic and Vintage Car and Bike Day

On Sunday the 13th of March, the Pretoria Old Motor Club held its second get-together of 2016, and this time, British cars were on display.

The main attraction of this display was three versions of a car that is virtually unknown in South Africa, but celebrates its 50th birthday this year. The Jensen Interceptor was first introduced at the



1966 London Motor Show and made cars like the Hillman Hunter, the Ford Cortina Mark 2 and the Vauxhall Viva HB, which were also first seen at the same event, pale into insignificance. The Interceptor was manufactured until 1976. It initially came with the well-known 6,3 litre (383 cubic inch) engine that powered several Dodge and Plymouth muscle cars, but all three cars on display were Interceptor III's; they were all fitted with a 7,2 litre V8 engine. Only 6408 Interceptors

were manufactured; to put this into perspective, 70 000 Jaguar E-types were manufactured during its 14-year production run. The most important reasons for the Interceptor's demise were the 1973 fuel crisis and the strikes that occurred in the British motor industry at the time. The Jensen-Healey and Jensen GT, fitted with the same two-litre four-cylinder engine as the Lotus Esprit and Elite could not save the company. However, there are plans to revive the marque, and two models, the Interceptor 2 and the GT are said to be in the pipeline.

The Ford Capri Perana is a true South African classic. Although the Capri was available with a variety of engines that ranged from a 1,3 litre to a three-litre V6, the Perana was the only V8 version produced anywhere in the world. The original idea came from Basil Green, who was a Ford dealer in Edenvale. He fitted the five-litre V8

(302 cubic inch) engine from the contemporary Fairlane to the Capri and the result was a car that became a legend on the road and in motor racing. Lenard Labuschagne's yellow 1971 model has only done about 60 000km, and is one of approximately 300 Capri Peranas produced. Several of them have been exported, and a few are still taking part in historic motor racing events.



Although the Triumph Spitfire was a popular affordable sports car in this country, the GT 6 is not such



a common sight. The GT 6 was based on the Spitfire, but with two important differences. It had a fastback body and was fitted with the same two-litre six-cylinder engine as the Vitesse and the 2000. The Spitfire was built on the chassis of the Heralds and Vitesse, and although the entire nose is opened to access the engine, fitting the two-litre engine was not as easy as

one might think. The GT6 was introduced in 1966 as a rival to the very popular MGB GT, which sold in greater numbers. Taco Kamstra owns a 1966 Mark 1, one of only seven GT 6's in this country. This car is in an original but restored condition and came with the optional wire wheels instead of the steel rims and hucaps that were standard equipment. According to Taco, the car might have been imported from the United Kingdom when it was new.

Towards the end of 1967, Jaguar introduced the 420 and 420 G as flagship models; at that stage only the 3,8 S was available in this country. Harry and Gerda Venter bought an immaculate 420 in December last year for the incredible price of R 35 000. The previous owner only used it for weddings, and as far as could be established, the car is still in an original condition. Harry and Gerda are keen collectors of classic cars, and their collection includes cars like a Fiat 850 Sport, a Chevrolet Firenza Can Am, a Ford Customline and an original Morris Minor.



One of only a handful of cars that could be successfully associated with James Bond was the Lotus Esprit. The original version was featured in "The spy who loved me", and a Turbo could be seen in "For your eyes only". In 1976 there was a strong possibility that the Esprit, along with the Elite and the Eclat, would be manufactured in this country, and Car Magazine even tested an Esprit for the December 1977 issue. However, these plans came to nothing. As a result, the Esprit is a very rare car in South Africa despite its very long production run. Giles Millard owns one of about 20 Esprit Turbo's in South Africa. He restored the car from the ground up and admits that everything possible went wrong with this project. He recently delivered a speech to club members in which he told them everything about this restoration project. Although, by his own admission, the car is not in pristine condition, it is in regular use, especially over weekends.



The MGA replaced the TF in 1955, and a number of them were assembled in South Africa after being imported in completely knocked down form. However, the Twin Cam version was not as popular as the standard version. Frank Nettenberg owns the only Twin Cam in South Africa; one of only 2111 that were produced. This particular car was shipped from the United Kingdom in 1959, but was only registered in 1961, the year before the MGA was due to be replaced by the MGB. Frank bought his Twin Cam in 1964. The Twin Cam engine was due to be used in the MGB, but instead, the MGB came with a 1,8 litre engine



with twin carburettors. The reason was that the Twin Cam had a reputation of burning holes in its pistons and as the motor racing commentator Roger Mc Cleery said when he commentated on a race during a Passion for Speed event at Zwartkops, it was extremely difficult to work on. No less than two engines were built per car, which led to BMC chairman Leonard Lord's instruction that production of the twin cam engine be stopped with immediate effect. As a result, the MGA Twin Cam has become a collector's item.

The next event to be held at the Pretoria Old Motor Club will be the club's 50th anniversary celebrations, which will take place on the 10th of April at POMC Club house.



Clubs are invited to visit POMC for the day. Sonitus School and Hoot and TOOT grill will sell food or bring your own for "Bring en Braai", picnic area and braai facilities available.

Info: www.pomc.co.za or <https://www.facebook.com/POMCclub/>

Daantjie Badenhorst