

Gran Turismo

The Official Publication of the
Apollo Owners Registry

Restoration Extravaganza

We highlight two Apollos nearing completion, two done

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Thorndyke Special Uncovered?

At long last, we may have found one of two



'Thorndyke Special' cars purchased by Walt Disney Productions and featured in the hit *The Love Bug* (by the way, the highest grossing film in 1969!). And, it belongs to one of our club members. According to John Barron of Toronto, Canada, it is clear that two cars were used in the filming as at different periods of the movie the 'Thorndyke' appears with either of two California license plates: RHR 312 and RVA 669. This has been confirmed through a letter from Walt Disney Studios to the editor for his book on the Apollo

Additionally, John points to body damage and frame damage on one of the movie cars that corresponds with damage he's been repairing on his car.

Of course, a liberal application of the pale yellow used on the 'Thorndyke' (and featured on all of Max Balchowsky's Ol' Yaller race cars; Max prepped the Apol-



los for the *Love Bug* movie) was something that John has stripped off in buckets!

(Note: The car registered RHR 312 has Hella tail lights!)

Now, John reports on the restoration of car number 1052:

"So far, we have replaced



the right door framework, which was beyond repair, and rebuilt the driver's side door frame. The door skins will be fabricated and installed after the front fenders are repaired and permanently reinstalled.

"We have also built a new firewall (copied from a series of photos that my son took during a visit to Drac Connelly's shop in L.A.), new hinge panels, new rocker panels, and a new bulkhead behind the seats. We are mocking up the front fenders and for the first time in a while, [and] it's starting to look like a car again. Long way to go yet but there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

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Gran Turismo

Editorial Board

Editor:	R. Northrup
Historical Editor:	J. Taylor
Technical Editor:	Milt Brown
Design Analyst:	R. Plescia
Graphic Design:	R. Northrup



From the Editor's Desk...



It's been a while since I've produced an issue of *Gran Turismo*. I hope you can appreciate why...

First, our business took us to several conventions in May and June, while our middle son's wedding (to a lovely Egyptian girl) led us to the African continent to participate in the traditional wedding feast in his bride's home town of Alexandria, Egypt.

But our biggest development has been a move to Meridian Idaho (leaving behind those mild Texas winters!). A portion of our work with the party plan industry (Tupperware, Mary Kay Cosmetics, etc.) has been consulting start-up companies on how to train and develop their volunteer sales forces. One of those companies

approached me in late May with a too-good-to-refuse

at the expense of family and outside interests, as



offer to organize a marketing and communications department and serve as it's vice president. Which I accepted.

As Scentsy, Inc. is located in Idaho, my acceptance of the offer necessitated a move to the Gem state. Of course, a new job always demands one's time, usually

such has been my case.

So, I hope you'll forgive me for not publishing a newsletter until now.

Bob Northrup
No. 1003

PS: I've already found a body craftsman in Idaho!

Reproduction 'No Name' Finned Valve Covers Now Available



A lot of effort has gone into sourcing an authentic finned aluminum valve cover for our Apollos, each attempt falling short.

Now, we're pleased to report that O'Brian Truckers of Massachusetts is casting reproductions of the "no-name" finned covers as originally offered as an option by International Motor Cars.

According to Milt Brown, most cars were sold with standard Buick steel valve covers. A few were ordered with the optional finned aluminum covers – without any name or script – topped off with a chromed breather cap on both covers. Because the no-name covers were "purchased through a mail order catalogue," says Milt, the manufacturer was never known.

But now, Dennis O'Brian is producing replicas, and for Apollo owners, he offers a special set of new polished no-name covers machined to accept breather caps. His price is only \$305.

You can order your covers by contacting Dennis at 508-248-1555 or via email at obt@charter.net.

Restoration Highlights...continued

'Thorndyke Special' cont'd

"As far as colour, it's a bit early, but I probably will go with a [pale] yellow exterior."

Philip Pacione's Apollo

Phil, via Mike Anderson's efforts, has just completed an extensive rebuild of his Texas-built car. Of course, Phil, like most of us, has gotten carried away with his project...

"Originally, I brought the car to Mike to make it a nice driver," says Phil. "Some-



where along the line, the [project] changed to a nut and bolt restoration on an original 12,000 mile car!

"The restoration [has made] my car better than new. We



upgraded wherever possible to make the [it] a pleasure to drive as well as to look at. Mike Anderson and his first mate, Robin, really did a first class restoration. It is black with a red and black leather interior. Original re-



stored Borraris make the car breathtaking! The engine is original but beefed up to perform like it should! The [car] is heavily insulated throughout making the car more sound proof with a solid feeling when closing the door or driving the car.



"I will probably only drive my car very sparingly. It is just too perfect a car to use all the time!

Andi Graf – Apollo Über Alles

At times, we complain about the lack of parts, lack of records, lack of a lot of things! But consider what Andi Graf endures while he restores his Apollo in Germany!

"At my car, the work is going on the body, the back is almost done, but we found



in the side panel a lot of rust; this is the next work we have to do."



As Andi's car came with the Buick two-speed Dynaflow automatic, he's had a tough time sourcing an authentic replacement. So he's gone the route of a Borg Warner model 35 auto 'box along



with a Rover-built 3.5 litre engine to replace his missing Buick 215.

And, like most of us, Andi has other interests that compete for his attention with the Apollo: "We also have busy time, my wife just got our second baby last Friday. So I don't have time enough to do the Apollo."

Our congratulations to Andi and his wife for their new arrival. And for his work on restoring his Apollo.

Terry Schulte's Car Done

South Dakota member Terry Schulte has completed the restoration of his Apollo.



Terry also did a complete



"ground-up" rebuild, going so far as to authentically recreate the egg-crate grille as well as source new, original headlight trim rings.



His original steering wheel was restored by Mike Lempert.

Congratulations, Terry!



2007 Concorso Italiano — The Lonely Apollo

Denny Paul reports: “The Concorso Italiano was another great show for 2007, but Apollo was definitely underrepresented. My Pasadena coupe no. 1067 was all alone on the field. The organizers finally moved Apollo forward onto the main field, but I liked our place on the green better. More room and a nice breeze and beautiful backdrop. This year we were positioned with some other limited issue Italian cars right next to the Siata's. This of course would have been nice for Harry Hart who has a Siata in addition to his Apollo Coupe.

“I took two cars to *Italiano*, my Apollo and my recently completed 1960 Ferrari Pininfarina Series II Cabriolet. That's my granddaughter Kari and me driving across the ramp to receive our Silver trophy in the Ferrari 212 - 250 category – some very



tough competition.

“Jack Castor, who owns convertible number 2005, came over to say hello. His Ferrari California shown in the picture was parked on the field right across from my PF Cab. So, for 2007, it was a Ferrari show – not an Apollo show. Next year, I sure want a lot more Apollo company.

“The other Apollo of the week was a yellow Texas-built car (no. 46) auctioned at RM Auctions. This was a

sad car and its sales pitch as the prototype Vetta was a lot of empty hype.

(There was no Vetta prototype, as all specifications were the same as the Apollo, excepting the steering wheel, badges, and air conditioner —Ed.)

All its Jaeger gauges were gone, replaced with Stewart-Warner hot rod gauges, and its wheel wells had been flared. The wire wheels were not Borrani's, but American

radial wires. This was a very weak car and a candidate for a total and probably expensive restoration. The hype didn't seem to fool anyone as the car crossed the block at \$26,000 (\$28,600 with buyer's premium).”



In addition to his Apollo, Denny enjoys his recently-restored Ferrari 250 Cabriolet.

The Want Ads

Offenhauser Valve Covers— Cheap!

As the editor has just purchased the first set of reproduction ‘no-name’ aluminum valve covers, he has a new set of Offenhauser covers to sell. He originally tried to create an “Apollo” valve cover, working with a machine shop in the Mid-

west. However, the resulting script didn't turn out, so he's offering these covers — with the “Offenhauser” script milled out — for only \$200. The covers retail for \$275, and he's already wasted another \$200 in machining the script.

His loss is your gain. Con-

tact Bob at:
apolloregistry@yahoo.com
 or call him at 940-367-8483.

Rebuilt Buick 300 Motor

Robert Wooley of *Customr and Classics*, the shop that assembled Don Mann's car, still has Don's original 300 Buick V8, and he needs to

get rid of it. Robert reports that it has been completely rebuilt and he has receipts totaling over \$3500.

He'll take \$1500. If you need another 300, call Robert at 901-877-0007

Claims to Fame: First production car, first 5000 GT revealed

After seeing many claims in the press for exclusive, one-



of-a-kind, and otherwise rare cars (the “prototype” Vetta Ventura sold at Monterey takes the cake!), it’s refreshing to find a couple of “claims” that turn out to be the real thing.

First, there’s Bill Evans’ coupe number 1012 which qualifies as the first 5000 GT Apollo. Astute observers will note this is the car



featured in a road test con-

ducted by Pete Biro for the July 1964 issue of *Hot Rod* magazine (that’s a young Bill himself in the driver’s seat).

Recently, the editor visited with Bill at his home in Orinda, California as part of the research for Northrup’s book on the Apollo. As the



photos confirm, this is car number 1012 and it has a Buick 300 cubic inch V8. (All cars up through no. 1011, now owned by James Taylor, have the aluminum 215).

Built by Jim Berens at IMC, this car sports features not found on other Apollos, including a Nardi-type steering wheel (and larger badge hub) a nifty little console covering the handbrake, and Halibrand magnesium wheels (the only Apollo de-

livered with them). This car also has what the Intermeccanica called ‘biscuit’ upholstery (all original), which has a little more red than the tans normally seen in restored Apollos.

Now retired, Bill is planning the car’s restoration...

Finally, the **title of ‘first production car’** must go to the editor’s no. 1003. While Milt Brown pointed out a number of features unique to this car during its purchase, it was the frame that later confirmed its provenance as production car number one.

During a Fall trip to Milt’s place, the editor observed the bare shell of Terry Smith’s car undergoing restoration. It was surprising to find a weld bead on both sides of each frame rail, about half way up from the bottom. The explanation: “All the Italian-built frames were made of from sheet stock,” says Milt Brown,

“formed in a u-shape, and then welded together to create the four-inch-square tubing for the frame. That’s because no equivalent Italian square tubing existed. I built only three frames, and these all used American-made seamless four-inch-square tubing: the prototype, the first production car, and the 2+2. All other Apollos had frames made in Italy.” This has been confirmed by Paula Reisner, Frank’s wife.

During his recent move to Idaho, the editor discovered – while lashing down the car to the trailer – that his car frame has seamless tubing throughout.

Certainly, a welcomed surprise...especially for a “bucket-of-bolts” car.



Get Tanked! Repro Fuel Tank Project

The editor and Jack Woods are working together with Customs and Classics in Tennessee to create replica fuel tanks in aluminum. These are to be excellent “look a-likes” as opposed to

exact reproductions in order to provide a longer-lasting alternative. They will look the same from underneath the car.

Our price target right now is around \$700, although it’s

subject to change.

If you’re interested contact the editor at:

apolloreistry@yahoo.com.



A rusty original steel tank, full of holes; new tanks patterned after this.

Robert R. Northrup, Editor
1971 East Terza
Meridian ID 83642
USA

Gran Turismo

Phone: 940-367-8483
Email: apolloreistry@yahoo.com

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Parts Update

Chassis ID Plates, Apollo Key Fobs

Following-up our Apollo chassis identification plate project (VIN plate in today's parlance), we're please to report progress!

Because of the age of our cars, and the absence of original artwork, the editor has commissioned new art to exactly reproduce two versions:

- 3500 GT
- 5000 GT

These are International Motor Car ID plates only.

They will all be reversed etched and painted per original.

Here are current orders:

- Harry Hart 1 5000 GT
- Terry Schulte 1 5000 GT
- Peter Stöhr 1 5000 GT
- Joop Stolze 1 5000 GT
- Geo. Finley 2 5000 GT
2 3500 GT

Currently, the cost is \$15 each. Contact the editor at apolloreistry@yahoo.com to place your order. It'll be about 2-3 months for delivery.

Key Fobs

The editor has scheduled production time in April with Derron Taylor, crafter of our Apollo badges, to create enameled key fob badges. The cost will be

about \$85 each with gold plating and shipping.

The fobs will available separately, and the editor is currently looking for a supplier for these.

Yes, the fobs will be expensive! But they'll also be of the highest quality. And will certainly look "right."

Contact the editor with your order.

Parting Shot...

Stupid vanity plates are one thing, but when a state gets into the act, well, you've got to wonder!

The editor saw this plate featured in the DMV when registering his cars in Idaho.

Wife Christie is waiting for the 'spud with bacon and chives' plate...

