



Gran Turismo

The Official Publication of the
Apollo Owners Registry

From the Editor's Desk...

Inside this issue:

Welcome to Gran Turismo	1
Jack Triplett's Convertible Debuts...	1
Technical Notes—More Bor-rani News	2
Apollo Updates—Need a Grille?	2
Concoroso Italiano	2
Market Place	3
Supplier Showcase	4

I have had a great time with the Apollo over the years. All of the planning, the tedious restoration work, and the thrill of participating in a few *concoors* have made my stewardship of No. 1011 extremely rewarding. I will miss the car dearly, yet I and know 1011 is in very caring hands of James Taylor, the new owner.

Working with this car over the years, and delving into its history (along with the histories of several other cars), I have developed a tremendous admiration for what the folks at International Motors did accom-

plish with such a limited amount of capital.

It is very encouraging to see the rapid increase not only in the interest in these beautiful cars, but also in their *value*. As Keith Martin, publisher of *Sports Car Market* wrote: "The Apollo is Americas' most overlooked collector car." It's about time the market woke up to this fact and recognized the Apollo for what it is: An excellent exotic *gran turismo*, and a authentic Milestone in American automobile design and manufacture.

Unfortunately for me, my medical problems have

made it such that I can no longer continue enjoying my early 3500 coupe. As of this date, I cannot not reliably press in the clutch pedal. While my wife and I hope for the best, we are not expecting this condition to improve; hopefully it won't get worse.

So with this, my final message, I bid adieu to all my friends in the Apollo Owners Registry. Good luck to you all.

Bob Lee

Former registrar and owner of Apollo #1011.

Gran Turismo

Editorial Board

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Jack Triplett's Convertible Debuts...

It's been a long time coming, but Jack Triplett's spyder is now back on the road, thanks to a nine-year restoration:

"I drove the car quite a long time, (6 years or so) as occasional use. One day I no-

ticed the gas tank was leaking, and took it out and had it repaired. But one thing or another, I didn't get to putting it back together.

"Some time around 1995, I proposed to Milt Brown he restore mine. My reasoning



Continued on page 2

was: By then, I knew that



Restored Convertible Debuts...

lots of things were probably not right on the convertible,



that was partly because I'd ridden in one of Milt's cars and observed how much smoother it was than mine. I had no idea the amount of rust in the body, it looked sound from the outside, but the rust was from the inside.

"The grille had been damaged at some point and someone cut off the entire lip around the flange, hence we had to make a new one. I suppose I can put together list of new parts, but many of them were things we got from Re-Originals, eg, cor-

rect Carello wiper arms, correct Carello headlight rims, and so forth..

"When everything was done but the interior, Rob Phillips turned up at Milt's one day when I was there, he having bought convertible #10. At lunch, a plan developed for shipping my car to Rob in Portland, where there was a good interior shop (we couldn't find someone both trustworthy *and* not inordinately expensive in Berkeley-SF area). Rob's converti-

Continued on page 4

Technical Notes



More on Borrani Wheels:

Ted Waibel, the Borrani importer, informs us that Borrani can supply new wheels for our Apollos...but not in the original 5 1/2 in. x 400 mm size. The company offers either 15 in. rims or a 16-in. option. These are the original Rudge Record wheel with alumi-

num rim and chrome center. While the lack of original size is disappointing, remember that several cars have been re-laced to 15 in. rims, and this has been considered by many to be an acceptable option. Better yet, early IMC literature listed 16-in. wheels as an option. The price is \$1,390

per wheel. Contact Ted at 303-456-5544.

Dayton Wire Wheels Products of Dayton, Ohio was not only a pioneer of the Rudge-style knock-on wheel in the United States, but it continues to supply true knock-on wheels of its own design as well as full restoration services for Borrani's.

On the Grille



Some of us need a new grille! Robb Northrup and Denny Paul are working on a deal to have the grille surround reproduced (by hand, as original). With tooling supplied by Jack Triplett, they've identified a couple of panel beaters who could do the job. The more done, the lower the cost. Contact Robb at 940-321-3010.

Apollos Star at Concorso

No less than three Apollos were on the green at this year's Concorso Italiano, held at the Black Horse Golf Course near Seaside, California.

Registrar Bob Lee was there with his restored early coupe, No. 1011 (seen nearest the camera). Jack Triplett's freshly-restored convertible was sandwiched between



Bob's car and the excellent red coupe of Denny Paul.

Continued on page 4

Tech Notes, cont'd

However, a visit to the company's booth at this year's *Concorso Italiano* revealed a surprising development: Absolutely accurate reproductions of the Rudge Record Borrani, complete with aluminum rim, chromed Rudge splined hub, and stainless steel spokes (not original, but vastly superior to chromed steel).

According to Mike Edgerton of Dayton, the introductory price is only US\$750.00 per wheel...a considerable saving over the Borrani.

As with Borrani, Dayton does not manufacture a 5 1/2 in. x 400 mm rim. But it *does* make a 16 x 6 rim, similar to the optional 16-in. wheel offered by IMC in the early days. Or 15 in. rims.

Call Mike at 937-438-0100.

Coker Tire features a Michelin X radial in both 165 x 400 (the original size) and a 185 x 400 variant, as well as a Michelin radial in a 16 in. diameter. Contact them at www.coker.com.

Apollo "Meets the Press"

The Apollo continues to garner editorial space in enthusiast publications. Most recently, two British magazines (both with extensive US as well as worldwide distribution) had full-blown color articles of our beloved marque.

Classic and Sports Car, the world's leading classic car publication, featured Registry member Larry Kay's coupe (No. 1024) along with his *Intermeccanica Italia* in the July issue..

Written by Editor-In-Chief Mick Walsh, the article has most of the facts straight, but his treatment of the marque's history is mostly a re-hash of previously published material (perpetuating the same errors while committing a few of his own!). His unflattering comments ("It's hard to take any sports car seriously with a three-speed auto..." "...the crude chassis doesn't inspire." "...it lacks that en-

gineered quality of a '60s Lancia or Alfa.") seem at odds with what most journalists found over the years, particularly those conducting the original road tests in 1963-64. Indeed, *Road & Track*, *Car and Driver*, *Science and Mechanics*, and *Hot Rod* all lauded the Apollo for its excellent build quality and very capable handling. (Denise McCluggage wrote in *Science and Mechanics* that "The Apollo handles as well or better than a two-plus-two Ferrari, an Aston Martin DB-4, or a Sting Ray Corvette.)

The second feature was found in the July edition of *Octane* magazine (a Brit pub that caters to a more modern audience) and portrayed the car in a far different light.

Writer Robert Coucher, describing the recently-imported-to-the-UK couple of Bill Wykeham, enthused about the car's ability to withstand London traffic (while garnering "thumbs

up" from the crowds). And he was flatly impressed when the loud pedal hit the floor! But it was the build qual-



ity that really impressed him. "The Apollo 5000 GT is an elegant, considered, intelligently engineered grand tourer. It has beautifully crafted Italian bodywork mated to simple, yet effective mechanical underpinnings. The car works in the real world and is immense fun to drive; it's Italian style combined with American pragmatism."

Now, doesn't that sum up perfectly the objective of Milt Brown and Ron Plescia when they set out to build the *American Gran Turismo*?

Market Place

The market for Apollos has received a real shot in the arm from none other than Keith Martin, editor/publisher of *Sports Car Market* magazine, the industry's leading authority on sports car values.

Writing in the July issue of *Octane* magazine, Martin confided that Apollos "...have

had rather dismal performance in the collector car market...It seems enthusiasts are less attracted to 'practical' exotics than they are to cars with complicated, multi-cam, multi-carbureted engines that require constant fiddling and \$5000 tune-ups every Spring.

"Apollo coupes change hands

in the \$30,000 range, with convertibles slightly double that. Frankly, given their attractive lines and rarity, I would have to rate them at one of the best buys in the market.

"For the money, it's hard to imagine finding a more interesting and competent car."

That was the original mission of IMC when it built the Apollo GT. And we still agree!



Apollos at *Concorso Italiano*....cont'd



A lovely Jack Triplett shot of the three Apollos at this year's *Concorso Italiano*.

Que bella machina!

With the attention the Apollo is beginning to receive, we hope more owners will be encouraged to dust off their cars and bring them out.

While the objective of most participants is to compete for a prize, our goal should be to exhibit our cars to the largest possible audience, thereby gaining greater exposure for the Apollo GT.

Continued on page 5

Triplett's Convertible Debuts at *The Concorso*....cont'd

"I had no idea the amount of rust in the body; it looked sound from the outside, but the rust was from the inside."

ble was a "new" body, so the interior shop was instructed to copy the interior, trunk and top exactly, even to the point of finding top fabric with the interior side design as close as possible (and he found it).

"For the trunk, I had the correct Italian diamond

shape stitched in the special vinyl material for the floor, and I don't think anyone has done that before."



The Want Ads

There are a number of Apollo enthusiasts looking for a car...

James Taylor, the new owner of Bob Lee's early coupe No. 1011 is trying to find a car to demonstrate the Apollo's prowess as a road racer (although never

intended to turn a wheel in anger, Milt [and others] have always contended the Apollo is an excellent-handling "racer" when set up properly). Contact him at james.taylor@renesas.com.

Jack Hedrich stopped by the

Apollo display at *The Concorso*, looking for a car to buy. He's looking for an Apollo in need of some TLC.

If anyone can give Jack a hand, call him at 415-461-1703 or e-mail to l.j.hedrich@yahoo.com

The Want Ads....cont'd

Mike Rashed, owner of Apollo # 1023 is...aahh..in the process of building his car into a custom and, thus, has lots of new and used parts to sell:

- Both front calipers bored and stainless steel sleeved
- Two new rotors, Avanti type. Complete with all bearings, races, and fresh pads
- Dash gages
- Front upper & lower

control arms

- Front springs, KYB shocks (new)
- Steering box manual need rebuilding
- Freshly rebuilt power steering box
- Steering link, pitman arm, etc.
- Four new wire wheels with org splines, and Borrani knockoffs (fresh chrome)

If you're interested, call Mike at 559-244-9539.

"One man's trash is another man's treasure!"

(Robb Northrup's car, No. 1003)



Jolly Good! Apollo Invades Britain...



Apollos are rare. And Apollos in the UK have been non-existent. Until now...

Veteran Morgan racer and dealer Bill Wykeham was at this year's Barrett-Jackson auction in Arizona and discovered this Apollo, chassis number 1053 (actually a Vetta Ventura No. DRF 96263). "It is really a beauti-

ful motor car and it appeals to my fondness for large and powerful American engines combined with Fine Italian styling," says Bill. "Although the Apollo is a road-going grand tourer, it has all the grunt you will ever need and its 5-litre V8 is relaxed and unstressed."

Quite!

Bill says it's for sale. You can reach him at sales@wykehams.co.uk



Concorso Italiano...cont'd



Denny Paul's outstanding 5000 GT is an excellent example of a tastefully tweaked Apollo. Denny has been a supporter of our presence at *The Concorso* for several years, and he continued this year with his car on the green

Bob Lee brought out old No. 1011 for it's fourth *Concorso* display. Bob had lovingly this car back from the brink, and recently sold the car to James Taylor of Los Gatos, CA



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News Flash

A recent visit to Re-Originals in Houston, Texas revealed an important new project: Reproduction Abarth mufflers!

According to founder Matt Jones, one eager Apollo owner has sacrificed an original (albeit worn-out) unit for Matt to produce a duplicate. I have a guy in Italy that uses the same technology that Abarth used to construct mufflers," says Matt.

Orders for at least 10 sets will be needed for the project to move forward.

Contact Robb Northrup (940-321-3010 or auto-copy53@yahoo.com) for more info.

And look for a feature on Re-Originals in the next issue of *Gran Turismo*.

Supplier Showcase — D & D Fabrications, Inc.

As a service to all Apollo owners, we intend to locate sources to help us keep our cars original and on the road. Last issue we mentioned Dan LaGrou of D & D Fabrications, Inc.

This installment includes a more detailed description of how Dan can keep our 215 and 300 motors alive and kicking (some serious Italian and German butt!).

Dan LaGrou's background is performance cars. He was a drag racer in the later 1950's and 60's, racing a C/Altered '53 Vette that ran 9.10 ETs at 143 miles per hour. Later, he participated in SCCA Pro Rally, preparing and maintaining two Jeeps that won the National Rally Championship.

In 1973, he built his first V8 Vega project, shoe-horning a 215 into a 1973 model...



his first application of the Buick aluminum V8. "The car was so much fun to drive, it was hard to believe," claims Dan. Fired by that enthusiasm, he quickly learned everything he could about this incredible aluminum motor, and soon formed D & D Fabrications, Inc. expressly to produce Vega 215 swap kits. He's sold over 2,200 so far.

Meanwhile, Dan spent 23 years in engine and chassis development at General Motors before leaving to form Vehicle Research & Development, a company

specializing in dyno work, hot and cold environmental chamber testing, and prototype vehicle development. He was responsible for that 1991 GMC pick-up that hauled 210 mph at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah.

Then, in 1994, he retired to devote full time to D & D, which now specializes and builds 215s and Buick 300s exclusively for racers and enthusiast. The company carries a large stock of both engine parts and complete used engines, and also has machining capabilities.

If your Apollo engine needs some attention, call Dan at 810-798-2491 or visit the company on the web at www.aluminumv8.com.

