



Gran Turismo

The Official Publication of the
Apollo Owners Registry

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From the Editor's Desk...

As I mentioned in our previous issue of *Gran Turismo*, my medical problems have made it such that I can no longer continue enjoying my early 3500 coupe. As of this date, I still cannot press in the clutch pedal. My wife and I still hope for the best, but we don't expect this condition to improve; hopefully it won't get worse.

With the sale of No. 1011 last Summer to James Taylor, I no longer have the impetus to continue as registrar. So at this point I am pleased to announce that both James Taylor and our newsletter's editor, journal-

ist Robb Northrup, are stepping in to continue this work.

James will focus on the historical records — our historian, if you will. James is looking to go vintage racing with one of his cars.

And Robb will continue as editor and will add publicist to his responsibilities. He owns No. 1003, one of the earliest cars made.

Of course, there is always more work than two people can do, and I ask that if any of you want to get involved, we'll find something for you to manage. A couple of

roles come to mind:

- How about a concours/ events coordinator?
- A full-blown registrar to handle membership

With more folks involved, we can elevate our organization to actual club status, with more benefits available to us all.

At any rate, I will stay involved from the sidelines.

Bob Lee



Gran Turismo

Editorial Board

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A Rare Find...Original "un-built" car finds home in Memphis

It's strange how an Apollo (or Vetta Ventura) finds its way into somebody's life. And one found its way into Don Mann's that must be one of THE Apollo finds — it appears to be the last un-built Apollo/Vetta Ventura left. And how this car sur-

posed is a story in and of itself. I bought the car from Tony Martorana in San Francisco following the Monterey Weekend last August," claims Don. "Although the body and paint had suffered from the storage conditions, the car is



in its original, uncompleted

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Un-built Apollo...discovered and sold



Yes, Don Mann's car really is a zero-mileage Apollo!

state.” Tony picks up the narrative: “My family owns a building with a detached garage, and it was this unit that we rented to a man in the mid 1960s. Over the years he paid his rent, but sometimes sporadically. Then not at all in 1995. We decided we could rent it for a lot more than he wasn't paying, and, as an attorney, I sent him abandonment papers (he was living in Tennessee at the time), which he signed, giving us the contents of the garage.

“As I was cleaning it out (it was piled high with boxes of junk!) I discovered there was a car inside. I didn't know what it was, but that week I saw an article in a magazine about the Apollo, and that led me to Milt Brown.”

But this was not just any Apollo: Under the debris was a brand new body/chassis unit – completely assembled and trimmed. When discovered by Tony, the car was practically new, only suffering

from time in storage. Certainly oxidation had taken a small toll on paint and chrome. However, the interior remained assembly line fresh, even retaining the “as new” leather aroma that every new Apollo had. [I saw the car in 1997 while in the mechanic's shop and can attest to it's pristine condition – editor.]

“We had a couple of hiccups during our company's existence,” states Milt Brown. “And car no.

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Technical Notes



More on Borrani Wheels:

When specifying new wheels, or when ordering replacement components, be sure to remember that the splined hubs on Borrani wire wheels are No. 52 (52 mm). This is important because most Ferraris, Maseratis, and Lamborghinis — once the largest users of

Borrani wire wheels — almost universally fitted, according to their literature, No. 42 (42 mm) splined hubs (the same as MGBs, Triumphs, Morgans, and even the famed AC Cobra 289. The No. 52 hub used by the Apollo is obviously larger and therefore used a larger three-eared knock-off nut.

By the way, the Jaguar E-Type (XKE) used Dunlop wire wheels with a No. 52 hub, and of course, utilized the same Rudge standard hub system as Borrani. Hence, you can use Jag wheels as a back up (or less expensive alternative to the Borrani Rudge Record-wheel).

Grille Update — *Some things move slowly...*

The new grille surround project is one of them. To date, we've contacted two shops – in different parts of the country – for bids. The first to come back was high. We're still waiting on the second, and a third company will be contacted shortly.

If you've got a favorite

panel beater, drop editor Robb Northrup a line and he'll follow up with it.

Actually, our intent is to create a source for more than just grilles – we're interested in establishing a resource for new body panels as well.



Tech Notes, cont'd

Got the Gearbox Blues? Go to Richmond!

The four-speed transmission (“gearbox” for you gear heads) was originally designed by Chevrolet engineering in the mid-1950s for the Corvette and manufactured by Borg Warner. (The design was based on Borg Warner’s existing T-85 three-speed transmission with external shifting rails to accommodate steering column shift linkages.)

Well, today, the T-10 is carefully crafted by Richmond Gear of Liberty South Carolina. In addition to supplying a complete replacement gearbox, Richmond offers replacement gear clusters, transmission cases, seals, bearings, and gaskets.

Richmond Super T-10s are NASCAR staples.

Contact Richmond at 864-843-9231.



Our beloved GT finds itself featured in yet another major article, although the venue is a little odd.

Writer Harold Pace visited the Apollo display at last year’s *Concorso Italiano* and worked a way with a short feature on the Apollo...that just appeared in the March issue of *Kit Car Magazine*

Apollo “Meets the Press”

(featuring Denny Paul luscious coupe). Certainly an unusual choice for a story on a production car. However, *Kit Car* has been featuring other cars of similar parentage, and overall it only continues to draw attention to the Apollo/Vetta Ventura.



Concorso Italiano Details

It’s not too soon to consider entering your car in the upcoming *Concorso* to be held August 19 in Seaside CA.

Registry members have supported this event for several years, now, and it would be nice to see four or five cars on display this August.

Get more information at www.concorso.com.



Market Place

As the Apollo was such a limited production car, it’s a rare occasion when one is offered for sale. Apollo No. 1013 (mistakenly listed as 1031) – one of the first 5000 GTs – has been offered for sale for nearly a year by that amenable purveyor of classic cars, “Le Patron” Ray-

mond Milo. The car had a number of non-standard features including Dayton knock-off wire wheels (not to be confused with Dayton’s new Borrani replica wheel). At the Barrett Jackson auction in January, No. 1013 was finally sold.

Ou une Belle Américaine?
 CLASSIS # 103104A '65 Apollo 5000GT
 03/15/2005
 powered by 5 liter Buick with alloy heads. Too good to be an occasional driver. Not quite in Concours condition but fully sorted and ready for new owner.
 One Exports
 Raymond Milo, le Patron 323.658
 8375 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA
 rbone@dsixtreme.com

Un-built Apollo... *discovered, sold* continued from page 2

“The car had never been completed and was missing a number of drive train elements, but was otherwise complete.”



It was a transition car that had a few features of the early cars with some of the later updates, and no one wanted it as such. So when the company needed the cash, 1043 was sold to an enterprising wannabe car builder.”

Initially, Tony set about to complete the car himself, but eventually ran out of time and money before finishing the project. And that’s when Don Mann appeared: “I attended *The Concorso Italiano* for the first time last August.”

Says Don. “One of the primary reasons I went was to see if there would be any Apollos there. I finally stumbled into the far corner of the *Concorso* field and discovered two red Apollo coupes (I was too late to view the convertible) and met Bob Lee. The good news was that he knew of a car and it was rather special. It turned out that Tony Martorana, owner of 1043,

had contacted Bob Lee (as President of the Apollo owners club) just a few days prior to *the Concorso* to ask for help in selling this unusual car that was taking up space in his garage. The car had never been completed and was missing a number of drive train elements, but was otherwise complete.

“We quickly did the deal and I arranged to have the car trucked back to Memphis, where it sits in my shop as I take an inventory of items need to make it drivable. The body will have to be stripped and Repainted, and the chrome will need attention. Other than that, what’s there is virtually new. The tires are probably unsafe at any speed, but would be great for showing the car (they still have the mold nubs sticking out of the tread, having never been driven).

Says Don: “There is nothing but dust on a car that has never been driven: Screws and bolts on the

suspension and various components are still shiny, paint on mechanical components is as new, gauges, switches, weather stripping, and rubber on moldings are likewise as new. The only sign of age in the interior is that the rubber pad on the carpet on the driver’s side is now cracked and dry. The challenge, as the car was never assembled, is that so many components are missing. I have yet to make a full inventory, but there’s no gas tank, no gearbox or drive shaft, no radiator, no sun visors (just the attaching screws sticking out of the headliner), no parking brake knob-lever-linkage etc. The clutch and brake pedals are waving loosely in the air (although there is a brake master cylinder, drum brakes mounted on the rear, disc brake calipers are loose in a box in the trunk and none of the brake lines connected to the brakes.”

Any one with parts leads can call Don at 901-726-6633 or e-mail him at donaldcmann@hotmail.com.

The Want Ads

A number of Apollo enthusiasts continue looking for a car...

This is an indication that interest in the Apollo/Vetta Ventura is growing. And two members of the Apollo Owners Registry are looking for convertibles no less. James Taylor of Los Altos

CA purchased Bob Lee’s no. 1011 coupe last year. You can contact James at 407-761-1926 or james.taylor@tgme.com.

Another interested party is Vetta Ventura builder Fred Ricketts. His one regret is

that he didn’t keep a Ventura when he left the car building business and he hopes to make up for it now. Fred’s phone number is 830-257-2688.



New Apollo Generates Interest in the Old

At this year's National Roadster Show, the nation's premiere hot rod event, Milt Brown introduced yet another variation on the original Apollo theme. And this one took first prize in the *Sports Car* class.

As he did with the Verona roadster in the early 1980s, Milt drew on the original car's theme by combining an American-derived chassis with svelte Italian-type body. Only this time the inspiration comes from the 1930s. He calls it the Apollo Monza Spyder.

"My inspiration was the Alfa Romeo 2900 of the late 1930s – those nice, rounded lines," says Milt. "The engine is a BMW six, but underneath it's pure Apollo."

So, why a mention of this new car? "The media has gone nuts over it," claims

Milt, "and I'm working with several magazines on stories right now. But here's the good part: As most of the editors are 40 or younger, they don't know the history of the original Apollo; many don't even know it existed. And all of a sudden we have media types asking ques-

tions and writing about the original car."

It's publicity like this that drives car values up, something the Apollo/Vetta Ventura sorely needs.

Stay tuned to Market Place...let's see if the values go up!



©Ron Kimball Studios

Own *All* of the Apollo History

And now for something completely different...

Ned Davis, International Motor Cars' CEO, CFO, and all-around businessman informs us that he is selling the entire collection of IMC production records, includ-

ing records gleaned from Apollo International of Pasadena, California (for whom Ned worked once that company took over from IMC).

The collection includes hundreds of photographs, build sheets, correspondence,

original copies of magazine containing road tests, typed minutes to board meetings, and much more. Everything a motor car company would have kept records of. Essentially a Ford Motor Company in miniature.

The price should be expensive. But it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Contact Ned at 303-933-1229 for details.



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Supplier Showcase — Re-Originals®

An ongoing service of this *Gran Turismo* publication is to highlight those companies that support the Apollo/Vetta Ventura. This issue features Re-Originals (“original parts...all over again!”), a Houston Texas-based enterprise that sup-



plies a number of new and NOS parts for Apollos. Most notable is the company’s selection of windshields and window gaskets/weather stripping. But owner Matt Jones supplies much more than this.

A recent visit by Robb Northrup revealed that, more than anything, Matt offers a tremendous amount of enthusiasm not only for old Italian exotics such as Ferrari, Maserati, Alfa Romeo, and Lamborghini, but he extends it to the likes of hybrids such as Apollo, Iso Rivolta, and Bizzarini. He is an incurable Italophile...

“Years ago I had a restoration shop in the Houston area,” say Matt. “I specialized in the rare Italian exotics and was working on a Giulietta Spyder, and OSCA 750, and a Ferrari 212 Europa. All old stuff. But I just couldn’t find the correct rubber and upholstery materials. Other shops were making do with stuff that was currently available, but it didn’t look or feel right. I just couldn’t restore these cars incorrectly.

“I told my wife Vicki: ‘Gee, why doesn’t someone bring this stuff back for us that restore these Italian cars.’ Her response was: ‘Maybe you’re the one that’s supposed to do it!’

“That year [1991] I was headed to the Mille Miglia retrospective, and thought I’d spend a couple of extra weeks in Italy looking to see if the stuff was till available. While I was there, I called a guy I had sold a ’56 Alfa Giulietta spyder to. I had lived for six years in Italy in the 1970s doing an import-export business and still could speak Italian. When we connected, I asked him where he was getting his rubber parts [weather strip-

ping, floor mats, etc.]. ‘I’ll take you there,’ he replied.

“When we arrived, we entered an old shop that had the only two machines left on the planet that made rubber floor mats the traditional way. All hand processed stuff. So I struck a deal...

“ Since then I’ve branched into other areas — electrical, upholstery stuff such as windshields, carpet, headliner material, even leather. And through this contact I’ve found either the original suppliers of the items, or companies with the tooling to produce OEM components.

“The Apollo windshield is a good example of how we move into a market niche. I was doing glass for a 2600 Zagato Alfa Romeo — only 105 were ever built — and found 18 owners around the world that wanted them. And one of those owners had an Apollo. That contact led to a run of about 18 Apollo windshields. And the mold for that cost \$3,600.

“When we need something

for our customers, we try to find the guy that originally made it — if he’s alive. We always go with original materials and compounds, which have a high difference in quality (the old stuff is much better and has the right feel). We’ve also branched out into locating a lot of difficult-to-find NOS parts [New Old Stock — left over original replacement components — ed.].

“You know, every little nut and bolt is important. When somebody restores a car today, and deviates from original specs, 30 years from now it’ll be considered original, which is not right. It maybe costs another 20 percent to do it correctly.

Matt’s interested in doing a recreation project of the Abarth mufflers that graced Apollos so many years ago. If enough of us want them, he can proceed (see last issue of *Gran Turismo*).

You can contact Re-Originals for material samples or a catalogue by calling 713-849-2400.

