



Gran Turismo

The Official Publication of the
Apollo Owners Registry

Once-in-a-lifetime event!

Inside this issue:

2006 Concorso Italiano	1
Editor's Message	2
New Steering Wheels	2
Mike Anderson Restoration	3
New Discoveries	3
Tech Update—Tail Lights	4
Market Place	4
Supplier Showcase	5
Post Script	6

Reunion Moving Forward for 2006 Concorso Italiano

Things are moving fast for this year's Apollo Reunion, to be held at the Concorso Italiano at Bayonet Blackhorse Country Club in Monterey Bay, California on Friday, August 18.

All original participants in the Apollo project will also be in attendance: Milt Brown, designer; Ron Plescia, stylist; Ned Davis CEO of International Motors and financier of the prototype; George Finley, sales manager; and Paula Reisner, wife of the late Frank Reisner, and son Henry will represent Intermeccanica, coachbuilder of the Apollo bodies.

So far, there are six cars already registered to exhibit: Denny Paul (our perennial exhibitor!) with coupe 1067; James Taylor, in coupe 1011; and Donald Mann, is bringing coupe No. 1043 – a car that was never completed by IMC and is soon to be brought to life).



The "concourse" of Apollos at the 2004 Concorso Italiano. Get your car in this year's event.

Bob and Sue Olsen, will display convertible 2010, and Harry Hart will bring his couple 1027.

The centerpiece of our exhibit will be No. 1000 – the Apollo prototype. Owner Will De Rothchild is now in the final stages of the car's preparation.

However, we're hoping to get a dozen or more cars on display. To register your car, or to buy tickets to view the displays, contact the Concorso Italiano management at ci@concorso.com or visit

their website at www.concorso.com.

The Concorso program will also feature a two-page write up of the Apollo.

We're planning a dinner banquet after the show...more details in the next issue of *Gran Turismo*.



Gran Turismo

Editorial Board

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



From the Editor's Desk...An e-mail prompts a new column



We all get e-mail. I get hundreds each week for work. But this one in response to the last issue of this newsletter really put into perspective why people like us band together to preserve a "marque." Peruse this "letter" and you'll see what I mean:

"Your publication with regard to the 215 experts, The Bakers, was very timely. My Apollo had been running close to the "hot" mark on the temperature gauge (especially here in the desert and in stop-and-go traffic). It was a very easy job to pull the radiator and take it to the local radiator shop where it was re-rodged and received a tube across the inside top so the entire radiator would provide cooling.

"I then contacted Ray Baker to find out about the modified water pump he recommended; he suggested visiting any local

pull apart. Instead I went to Autozone to get a Buick 3.8 liter V6 water pump, and they had a NEW ONE in stock for \$ 23.99 plus tax (Duralast water pump # 203844 CWP-450 – try that for a Ferrari water pump). The impeller design is much superior, and the gasket and all bolt holes lined up fine. The new pump nozzle slants in a downward direction necessitating a slight modification of my alternator brackets, and I utilized a different water pump pulley. The car is now running about 30% cooler.

"As you can see, I am getting ready to drive the car up to Concorso."

- Harry Hart

Harry's experience is exactly the result we want all of you to have as a member of this organization. Our objective is to help you keep your Apollo on the

road (or help you get there if it isn't yet), as well as provide information for restoring your car back to factory specs, if that is your desire.

So, beginning with the next issue, we'll begin publishing pertinent letters from you about the Apollo. Send them via e-mail to apolloreistry@yahoo.com.

Also, don't hesitate to use the Apollo forum that James Taylor has set up on Yahoo:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/apolloGT>

Bob Northrup
No. 1003

New Products in the Works

New Apollo Steering Wheels available

Through the efforts of the editor, you can now buy an accurate reproduction of



the Apollo steering wheel. Mike Lempert of The Lempert group has been build-

ing steering wheels – entirely by hand – for over three years and completed his first wheel for the editor's car this month. (See *Supplier Showcase* feature in this issue.)

Wheels are built to order and incorporate a metal "rim" – completely covered by wood – to give it superior strength. The original "Coventry" wheel used was made in England and had a completely solid wood rim. Very dangerous in an accident...

Dash Passenger Grab Handles

We mentioned a project to reproduce the grab handle in aluminum as per original. The editor now reports that his neighbor has made a few epoxy castings of an original grab handle – for use as patterns.

He plans to have them completed before August, in time for the Concorso Italiano. Currently we have orders for six. If you need one, contact the editor via e-mail at apolloreistry@yahoo.com

Mike Anderson Completes Vetta Ventura Restoration

It's always a joyous occasion when one of our own completes a major restoration

had never heard of anything about Apollos.

"Since then, this was an 'on



Only detail changes separate Vetta Ventura from Apollo. Note "V" badge for Vetta Ventura.

project, and the latest is Mike Anderson of Phoenix, Arizona:

"I found my Vetta Ventura in an ad in *Old Car Trader* in 1994, and purchased it from Larry Kay. Up to that point I

and off' project, but the majority of the restoration took place in the last six months. It was a complete nut and bolt restoration, with the car mounted on a 'rotisserie' to facilitate refurbishing the underside.



"While the car was very complete, I still needed several critical parts. Matt Jones (Re-originals) and I struck up a partnership and had a run of windshields

made. And both John Fortney (Italia Reproductions) and Matt have been VERY helpful. The rest was just chasing parts and patience."

As you can tell, the results are outstanding.

Congratulations Mike!



A nice shot of the Vetta interior.. Note unique steering wheel badge and Vanguard brand air conditioning unit under dash.

New Discoveries

Another Apollo Found *They keep turning up...*

No. 1022 is on our list of IMC-built cars, but no one knew who owned it. Then the editor received an e-mail from the latest owner, Josh Bagley:

"This car has been something of a love affair for me since I was five and first saw it under a car cover in my grandfather's garage in El

Cerrito. My grandfather, James Paul Bagley, Jr., saw the vehicle coming out of his office garage in San Francisco in 1965, and was so impressed with the car he traded a Willys Jeep, a white Corvette, and about \$3,000 cash for it.

"The car has had its ups and downs including an experience with a canal in Palo Alto in the 1960s. At that time the electrical wiring

was damaged. It has had a couple of re-paintings and repairs over the years by experienced mechanics. For the most part everything is original (or original type replacements) – all the gauges, the interior, the engine, the brakes, the suspension, the tires, etc. It has a chrome bar bumper coming our to the lower air intake.

"My grandfather passed the car down to my father and now I do much of the general maintenance. It is in running condition but hasn't been on the road for six years.

"My goal is to keep it running in as near perfect condition as possible."

- Josh Bagley

Technical Update

Apollo Tail Light Mystery

It had been assumed by everyone that only the Italian Altissimo brand tail light was used for Apollo. However, recent correspondence between the editor and designer Ron Plescia has revealed a second brand of tail light – Hella from Germany – may have been used.

In preparing Plescia's design for production, Franco Scaglione refined the rear of the car to incorporate the Italian "Altissimo" brand of light. Originally used on a few hundred Ferraris (some of the 250 Pininfarina coupes and cabriolets used them as well as 104 "250 Spyder California" roadsters) – cars already

out of production when the Apollo began – the units were already in limited supply when Intermeccanica specified them for the Apollo.

At least as early as car No. 1026 – the coupe owned by Ron Plescia and built in 1964 – was delivered with these lights. "Mine has the Hella taillights from an early Type III VW," recalls Plescia. "That's Model No. SBBL 86-2 for the lens, 311945 231 for the housing." The Type III was designed by Porsche, and chief stylist Butzi Porsche was well aware of current automotive fashion.

Of course, no records of this variation exist. Milt Brown remembers several cars com-



ing with Hella lights. Paula Reisner does not remember buying them, but concedes that may have happened.

HELP! Take a look at your tail lights and e-mail the editor at:

apolloregistry@yahoo.com

with the results. It would be nice to establish an alternative for an almost non-existent part, but this needs to be further documented.

Market Place

For Sale:

Jack Triplett offers Apollo 5000GT coupe No. 1070:



valve covers and Apollo emblems.

"It's been sitting while my con-



"Black/black, old restoration but still decent, shown many times always gets attention. Mostly correct except for nicely-done vinyl interior and wrong carpet (role of correct Italian stuff goes with car). No hard to find missing parts. Correct instruments (two newly rebuilt), four correct Borrani (two rebuilt) with no rust, strong engine with alum

vertible was being finished; brakes now flat (parts easy to get). Unlike some other cars sold recently, this one is sound

and correct, only needs a little attention.

"Auction prices of \$32-33K set the parameters for a good coupe, but will listen to offers."

Jack Triplett, 9607 West Bexhill Drive, Kensington MD 20895. 301-933-5627; email: gutting@msn.com.

Wanted:

Kevin Blount of Portland, OR is looking for an Apollo convertible in good, drivable condition.

Call him at 503-292-6646 (evenings and weekends).

Our historian, James Taylor of Los Gatos, CA is also looking for a convertible. Call 408-761-1926 or email him at: james.taylor@tgme.com.



Supplier Showcase – The Lempert Group

Your Source for New Apollo Steering Wheels

The original Apollo steering wheel was a very unique design, and sources for originals have long since vanished. Until now.

Mike Lempert is now crafting new steering wheels (the first one is the editor's!) that look to be even better than the original. We'll let Mike tell the story:



“Woodworking had been a hobby of mine since my high school days. One day I looked at one of the wheels from a well known supplier and noticed that they were just plywood cut in circles. Surely I could do better.

“Naturally, plywood is the easiest, but easy usually relates to cheap and less desirable. Also, being a wood lover, I wanted to experiment with a number of exotic woods not typically seen used on steering



wheels. I also had a hunch that others might like being able to choose from an assortment of interesting woods. So far, from my experience, I was right.

“I chose the “bent spiral” style of rim construction. This is how the premium wheels of that period were made. Since bending a solid piece of wood into a circle is really quite difficult, it also presents a problem of the joint being obvious. But the “bent spiral” method slices the board into thin strips, then it's glued and bent into the circle making sure the joints occur in different places. When done well, the joints can only be seen upon very close inspection and the ring appears to be a solid circle of wood with no joints. I call this process ‘wrapping’.

“I'm a big believer in process methodology, so my processes are in constant review to provide an improvement in quality and time. The wrapping was

once the timeliest part of building a wheel, now it's one of the quickest - but still the most important part of building a quality product. A poor wrapping will impact every other step in the process.

“After all this time and all



the experimenting, I've realized that what I'm doing is exactly the same as what was done by Walsall, Nardi, and a few others. It's only after having been through this learning process that I can now look back at an original period wheel and see that they solved the same problems in the same ways. So, I've reinvented the wheel (pun intended).

“Very quickly, customers started asking about specific designs. I realized that the real opportunity was in replicating historically important and rare steering wheels. Most of these were not available elsewhere, were too expensive, or

weren't accurate reproductions. This all fit into my business strategy. I now am making faithful replicas of not just Healey, but MGA, Jaguar, Porsche VDM Carrera, Aston Martin (early DB series), a rare Les Leston, and, of course, Apollo.

“The Apollo steering wheel is a classic design. Slotted spokes are the simplest of spoke designs yet still the favorite of most enthusiasts. The rim is nicely shaped and the finger indents look to be smoothly shaped and flowing, unlike many of the cheaper wheels. The black inlay encircling the front of the rim adds some elegance. The Apollo rim is



what I refer to as a full wrap, with wood covering all four sides of the rim. These type wheels naturally needed no rivets to help secure the wood to the inner metal rim because the wood fully encases the metal rim. And

Continued on Back Cover

Robert R. Northrup, Editor
P.O. Box 1720
Lake Dallas TX 75065
USA

Gran Turismo

Phone: 940-497-3101
Fax: 940-497-9611
Email: autocopy53@yahoo.com

The Official Publication of the
Apollo Owners Registry

Mike Lempert...continued

these, I believe, were the most elegant designs.

“However, in the case of the Apollo wheel, there is more than meets the eye. That’s because the Apollo wheels had no inner metal rim. The spoke tabs were screwed into the rim (inside where it doesn’t show) and the structural integrity of the rim was left

up to the wood itself. I find this troubling from a safety perspective, if nothing else. I suspect the wheels were built this way in consideration of cost, which is always an issue, but with no regard to longevity or the possible dire consequences of a rim failure. As a result, all “new” Apollo wheels have a metal ring inside the

wood for obvious reasons.

“Every wheel I build is custom made to order. Depending on the customers’ preference, wheels can be built as original or personalized. I offer a wide range of hardwoods, including some very beautiful exotics. To date I have never advertised; I let my customers do that for me.

“I also have a performance line to my business, including exhaust systems that carry the brand name **Rebarth.**”

If you need a new wheel for your Apollo, or just need your original refurbished, give Mike a call at 843-856-7542.

Post Script...from *Road & Track* magazine

