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Subject British Car Network - June 10, 2000
From britishcarnetwork@gmail.com
To BRITISH CAR NETWORK <britishcarnetwork@gmail.com>
CC
BCC
Sent on 06/10/2009 05:10 PM
Size 543 KB
Priority Normal

"Techniques don't produce quality products or pick up the garbage on time; people do, people who care, people who are treated as creatively contributing adults." - - Tom Peters

THE BRITISH CAR NETWORK - June 10, 2009

Dear Readers,

Just a short one this month to update you on the Brisbane Yacht Club meet coming up September 12th and 13th. Due to so much email asking us to break up the parking lot get together and the tour, we have decided to move the tour back to Saturday so people can do one or both parts of the event.

It all will still be completely free!!

We are now working on a reasonable hotel package at the Marina for people who want to do both days events.

Also, there is a story and some photos from this month's Hayward British Car Meet and a piece on British Motorcycles being reproduced in India.

Best,

Rick Feibusch, Editor

32nd year in the San Francisco Bay Area.....

THE 2009 BRISBANE MARINA BRITISH CAR DAY
AT THE SIERRA POINT YACHT CLUB - BRISBANE, CA.

And now for something completely different.....

TOUR TO CAMERON'S PUB - SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th
Leave anytime between 8:30AM and 10:30AM

BRUNCH & CAR PARK DISPLAY - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th
Parking Lot Show & Tell - 8:30AM to 1:30PM

Join your British car friends for a smashing weekend at the Brisbane Marina. Over 200 quirky, classic, and lovable British cars will once again gather in the Bay Area for our 32nd Annual British Car Meet. We've been presenting this event on the same weekend for over three decades and because the times, they are a-changin', we will be a-changin' with the times.

After careful consideration of the present economy, fading sponsorship,

and smaller attendance, combined with the decentralization of the hobby and a number of new competing Northern California events, we have decided to try something that is quite like the very first British Car Meet held in Palo Alto in 1978. A one day FREE event...

That's right, FREE.

* Saturday - Tour To Cameron's Pub (leaving between 8:30 & 10:30AM)

This tour will take you over some of the most beautiful roads in Northern California. People will be able to leave on the tour route anytime between 9:00AM and Noon. There will be two optional routes. One direct, yet still quite scenic, and another with a backroad component. The shorter route should take less than an hour and the backroads route will take a bit more than an hour.

* Sunday - Parking Lot Show & Tell 8:30AM to 1:30PM (or so):

This will be a simple, no fees, no frills, no awards gathering of British and Arcane car enthusiasts. We have made arrangements with the good folks at the Sierra Point Yacht Club to set up in the parking lots around the club. The Yacht Club will be offering an optional Sunday brunch and coffee. It all starts Sunday morning at 8:30AM and goes on into the afternoon.

Directions To The Brisbane Marina:

The Brisbane Marina is located on Sierra Point, just east of the Bayshore Freeway (101) in Brisbane, between San Francisco and the SF Airport and Highway 380. Just take the Brisbane/Sierra Point Exit and follow the signs to the Marina.

Cameron's Pub is located at 1410 S. Cabrillo Hwy in Half Moon Bay. It is just south of downtown HMB on the west side of the coast highway.

Information: 310-392-6605 • e-mail: <britishcarnetwork@gmail.com>
Website: www.allcarcentral.com/thebritishcarnetwork.html

The Hayward, CA British Car Meet - 6-6-09
Text & photos by John Quilter
Brisbane, CA

A beautiful day on the lawn in the East Bay. I brought my white Jag 3.8S and was accompanied by fellow Morris Minor owner, Gerard Chateauvieux. This year, the event had no swap meet, while the display was superb. A little of everything and most in very nice condition.

On the attached cover sheet is a very stock and unmodified Austin Mini Cooper from 1967. The engine compartment is dead stock as is the car even down to the correct 10 inch wheels. Most of the Mini Coopers seen today are modified by their owners with fender flares, hotted up engines, mag wheels and other go faster items. Nice to see one as it came out of the BMC factory.

The most rare and unusual examples on display were both 4X4s. First, there was a very rare Austin Gypsy, a four wheel drive vehicle that was made by BMC in the 1950s and early '60s. This was BMC's attempt to compete with Land Rover. This vehicle was nicely restored and was powered by an Austin 2.2 liter four cylinder engine - basically a detuned version of the engine found in the early Austin Healey 100/4. Imagine, within 8 years BMC and Land Rover would all be under the British Leyland corporate umbrella and the Gypsy would be history.

The second was the non-British, forward control Volvo 303, a four wheel drive camper powered by a three liter Volvo inline six cylinder

gasoline engine similiar to that used in the Volvo 164 model.

The baby blue Bugeye Sprite (featured at the top of the attached montage) was brought by owner Nancy McCrosky who won best Sprite at last year's Brisbane Marina event. There is also a Jaguar XJ6C which is one of the very attractive coupe models made only for two years in 1976-77. There were six and twelve cylinder versions of this car the 12 being known as the XJ12C. All are now very collectible.

Royal Enfield gearing up for a new stateside turn - from India:

Bullet Classic C5 motorcycle expected to make striking statement in American showrooms
By James Parchman
New York Times

Chennai, India -- Amid all the buzz over vehicles coming out of India, here is one model you may have missed: the Royal Enfield Bullet Classic C5.

In some circles, this introduction is bigger news than the debut of the Tata Nano; if the past is any guide, the next all-new Royal Enfield Bullet won't arrive for another half-century. While a list of motorcycle brands predating Royal Enfield is short -- Harley-Davidson, Triumph and a handful of others qualify -- the tally of bike models that have lasted 54 years is pretty much limited to the Royal Enfield Bullet.

The Bullet Classic C5 (not to be confused with the Bullet Classic, a much older design, or the Bullet Classic G5, a model that uses the newest engine in an older chassis) went on sale in Europe late last year. The first production bikes destined for the United States began rolling off the assembly line here at the Thiruvottiyur factory, where Bullets have been made for more than 50 years, in mid-February and are expected in showrooms this month.

To say that the C5 is a striking motorcycle or one that looks to have been lifted directly from a motorcycle museum is no overstatement. On a visit to the factory in this coastal city of more than 4 million people (and known as Madras until 1996), it easily stood out from the olive-green military Bullets and chrome-laden domestic-market Electras and Thunderbirds awaiting final inspection and shipment.

The heart of the C5 is its air-cooled 499cc power plant, an all-new design that continues the single-cylinder layout of its predecessors. It retains the trademark cadence of a thumper -- the common nickname given to large-displacement 1-cylinder bikes -- but now the engine and transmission, formerly separate components, have been integrated to create the Unit Construction Engine. The UCE, as Royal Enfield calls it, is fuel-injected and designed to be efficient, reliable and environmentally friendly. It will be used on all Royal Enfield export models.

The C5 will cost \$6,395, not including a destination charge of about \$300, depending on the dealer's location. It will be offered in black, deep maroon and a retro teal green that is midway between mint and turquoise. The primary color is used on the frame, fenders and side-cover lids; the fuel tank features white panels with a prominent Royal Enfield logo. Knee pads and hand-painted pinstripes complement the 3.8-gallon tank.

Taking into consideration the dense traffic and left-lane driving protocol around Chennai, my testing of the Bullet C5 was confined to Royal Enfield's track. Fully fueled, the C5 felt solid at 412 pounds, and 18-inch Avon Speedmaster tires provided good grip. Steering was

responsive, but not twitchy.

The bicycle-style sprung solo seat is comfortably large, and a passenger pillion will be available as a dealer option. The instrument panel is Spartan; I found myself wishing for a tachometer.

If the randomly picked test machine was any indication, Royal Enfield got it right with the electronic fuel injection from Keihin, a Japanese maker that supplies many bike companies. The C5 started quickly and the idle was smooth and quiet; transitions between power on and off -- a maximum of 27 horsepower, according to the company -- were seamless.

The C5 is electric-start only, though other models with the UCE will retain the kick pedal for now. A cable-actuated clutch provides good feel, allowing the 5-speed transmission to shift flawlessly. The front brake is a single 11-inch disc; combined with a rear drum, ample stopping power is on hand for the C5's achievable speeds.

The claimed top speed of 82 miles an hour will not keep the C5 in the lead dog position for long, even in a pack of 250cc Kawasaki Ninjas. However, a design requirement was for all-day cruising at 70 mph. That's higher than the speed limit in much of the United States and should not overly tax machine or rider.

An unseen cost of many motorcycles is the need for regular maintenance that requires a trip to the dealer. The Bullet Classic C5 shines in this respect. Being air-cooled, there is no need to look after antifreeze and radiator hoses. Hydraulic lifters in the UCE motor eliminate periodic valve-lash adjustments; the filters for air and oil can be replaced in minutes. Royal Enfields equipped with the UCE are being backed with a two-year unlimited mileage warranty in the United States.

Kevin Mahoney, the importer of Royal Enfield for the United States, said that the fuel economy of the UCE engine, over 80 miles a gallon in early tests, will be a pleasant surprise.

California riders need not reach for their checkbooks, at least not yet -- Royal Enfields are currently 49-state machines. The company expects California certification to be completed this year and bikes to be on sale there by spring of 2010.

If you're the owner of a few gray hairs, you can easily picture Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn, dressed in tweed and astride matching green C5s, out for an afternoon ride in the English countryside. A little younger? Substitute Brad and Angelina for Cary and Kate, leather for tweed, black C5 for green and upstate New York for the Midlands; it still works.

Submitted by John Voelcker

<http://www.detnews.com/article/20090604/AUTO03/906040334/Royal-Enfield-gearing-up-for-a-new-stateside-turn>

Mini owners unite across generation gap to celebrate birthday

Wed, May 27, 2009

Mini threw itself a massive 50th birthday party at Silverstone
by MARK NICHOL
The Irish Times

THE BROWN MINI Clubman had been there all day -- notable only by its ordinariness, honestly -- but the frenzied gaggle now surrounding it

suggested something out of the ordinary is going on.

“One more!” is the cry. That should take them up to 22. A little girl steps forward. She looks terrified, probably because she knows that she’s about to become the last human Tetris block in a worryingly packed vessel. She’s picked up and squeezed through a side door, causing the melded humans inside to begin spilling from the open back doors. A man pushes against the bodies with all the strength he can muster. It’s one of those “inhale sharply through gritted teeth” moments of discomfort, but the crowd loves it. Okay, that should be 22; let’s free them.

“17 . . . 18 . . . 19 . . . 20”, erm, what happened to 21 and 22? Ah well – at least nobody died. The crowd disperse, amusement triumphing over disappointment, and head for their tents to drop off armfuls of overpriced branded merchandise before heading back for the main event: Paul Weller.

You’ve got to hand it to BMW; this is some party. We haven’t got the official numbers yet, but by Saturday afternoon it was becoming clear that around 20,000 people had rocked up to Mini United at Silverstone race circuit in Northamptonshire, most of them with either an old British Mini or a BMW-era model. The previous day, a significantly smaller number had spent £100,000 on T-shirts and things; there’s a group of men in a Bavarian boardroom sitting on Union-Jack-upholstered chairs feeling very pleased with themselves right now, no doubt.

And so they should because – regardless of arguments about whether the brand’s incumbent keeper has bastardised Alec Issigonis’s 1959 icon – one thing is certain: new Mini is a juggernaut. Over 1.4 million have been sold since BMW retained the brand rights in the wake of the Rover fiasco and completely redefined the car in 2001. And to prove the point, even in America – where owning a small car is a tacit admission of inadequacy – interest in the Mini is approaching Susan Boyle levels, with a near one-third sales increase last year. And this when car sales are, as we all well know, dropping off a cliff.

So, BMW has arguably earned the right to celebrate not only the landmark half century of the seminal original’s creation, but also the part it has played in redefining it and carrying the torch. And here at Mini United, it’s hard not to be touched by the enthusiasm of every last one of the revellers who’ve descended on Silverstone. However, where that enthusiasm lies is not always harmonious.

See, talk to people here and it’s clear, anecdotally at least, there’s schism; there’s a generation gap. Ask a classic Mini owner about the BMW product and the amount of times the phrase, “it’s nice , but it’s not a Mini” comes back is telling. Plenty have embraced both, for sure, but the split is there.

Happily, that doesn’t seem to have stopped everyone coming together and celebrating the love of whatever era they love. Acres of tarmac space is dedicated to simply allowing owners to park up and show off their metal. It’s almost surreal, actually, to be standing alongside a pristine 1969 Riley Elf (a “luxury” Mini-based saloon), then to turn and see €60,000 worth of 240bhp, Lamborghini-doored new Mini parked only yards away, stereo blaring.

The latter owner, 29-year-old Stathis Stathakis, has come all the way from Greece to show off the unholy creation of his company, Design Perfection. He travelled for four days, but in broken English he talks animatedly about his next project: a 500bhp Cooper S with a custom four-wheel drive setup. The irony is, the humble Riley’s owner – 69-year-old retiree Kurt Jorgensen – bought his car because of its purity of handling, and would probably blitz young Stathis, should the two meet on the adjacent Silverstone track. He knows about these

things, see, because he used to rally in Sweden in a two-stroke Saab; he's all go and no show.

Further along this row of organised dissonance is 17-year-old Hannah Walter from Reading. She's brought her limited edition 1989 Mini Rose along. Only 500 were made, each brushed in white with a pink roof and door cards. She got it when she was 15 because she "fell in love with her", so her dad bought "her" and fixed her up a little before Hannah passed her test.

And, to prove the earlier point about schism, Hannah states categorically that "the new Minis aren't Minis – they're BMWs", and that she'd "never get one" because "I'd feel like I was betraying my car." Strong words, particularly from one so squarely in new Mini's target market – the aspirational hip young driver.

So is the new Mini really the icon BMW hopes it is, or, in reality, is it actually the iconoclast here? To be honest, we might have to wait another 50 years to find that out for sure, but there is plenty to suggest BMW has a bona fide classic on its hands. Enter Floriano Colasante and his girlfriend Silke Preis, two young Germans with money in their pockets, time to spare and an insatiable appetite for Mini.

Colasante, a mobile phone salesman, chose MINI "over Porsche or Mercedes" (which granted, could merely be some fanciful brand-name dropping) because "Mini is a way of life, not just a car".

And for him, it's a way of life that takes up days of his time every week, going to club meetings and such, as well as thousands of euro in tuning and visual accessories. He and his girlfriend met each other through the Mini club he runs, Team Freak; they're Mini united, you could say.

The bulk of people have come from the UK, in Minis of course, just for a wander and to pick up anything from a few little styling tips to a new car. If it's Mini-related, you can bet your aluminium hubcaps it's on sale here; everything from a Mini beach towel, through to a "Mini owners do it little and often" bumper sticker and an entire exhaust system or a set of leather chairs.

There is, in honesty, the whiff of sinister corporate marketing among the stench of overpriced beer and cheeseburgers, but the overriding vibe at Mini United is that of a massive celebration. Stuff like free go-karting, driving tuition, Mini Championship racing to watch, a chance to take your own Mini around the Silverstone circuit and loads of activities for kids all contribute to the feeling that, ultimately, MINI (or BMW) is simply the thread holding together one big excuse to party.

Strangely, the apogee of the show, Weller (who's straddled by two well-lit new Minis at either side of the stage), proves something of an anti-climax. The masses revel in the catalogue of hits he churns out, for sure, but when he finally mentions his paymasters with a quick "happy birthday Mini" near the end of his set, it seems almost like an afterthought.

The real tribute to the classless, ageless, timeless little car first scribbled on the back of an envelope by a man called Alec is what went on earlier: thousands of owners vying for a bit of limelight with the cars they've spent so much time and money making their own, and thousands more there to give them just that limelight.

submitted by Robert McGarvey

 BCN Cover June 09Mini-Enfield.jpg (233 KB)

-  Hayward 2009 - BCN Montage.jpg (209 KB)
-  The Metal Shop flyer.pdf (81 KB)

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