

You Write | We Read

All letters are subject to editing. Please address correspondence to SCM, PO Box 16130, Portland, OR 97292. Fax 503.253.2234, e-mail: youwrite@sportscarmarket.com

BIG RECORD, WEE CAR

While reading the December issue of SCM, I came across a picture of the 1935 Rytcraft Scootacar ("Goodwood Revival," pg. 39). As you can tell from the attached scanned photo, that actual car was driven around the world in 1965 in 421 days by an intrepid Mr. Jim Parkinson—with a quoted top speed of 15 mph, no less. The information was gleaned from the book *British Specialist Cars* by Chris Rees.—*Gary Kiernnan, Cave Creek, AZ*

AW, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE

Over the last ten years, I have watched SCM grow in both content and professionalism. But the one thing you've never lost is the community feeling. Above every other car mag I have ever subscribed to, SCM stands alone in its dedication to the hobby. Beyond the auction results and profiles, your passion for cars and the gearheads who love them is incalculable. You can really feel it in the pages. And most recently, I experienced it first hand.

As an long time Alfista, I received an email from the Canadian Alfa Club regarding a very pretty 1960 Alfa Spider that was for sale. My Spider senses started tingling right away—because it felt like a scam. The price was way too low, the location of the car was overseas, and shipping was a steal. But, hey, I am an eternal optimist.

I decided to reach out to SCM for help. SCM is unique this way. You somehow seem more accessible and approachable than any other mag. And your people just seem to care enough about the hobby to address other people's concerns.

So I fired off an email to John Draneas asking him for his advice on how to ferret out this scam. Within hours he replied, helping me to confirm my suspicions. Other than a club newsletter, what other publication is so responsive? What other magazine is so dedicated to its readers?

Thank you, John Draneas. And thank you SCM for fueling my passion for cars. Consider me a life-



The car was driven around the world in 421 days by an intrepid Mr. Jim Parkinson—with a quoted top speed of 15 mph

time member.—*Jon Finkelstein, Toronto, CAN*

YOU, EITHER

I don't subscribe anymore to your magazine. Seems very ignorant. I mean, here you have a sports car magazine that does not respect the '80s Ferrari and Lamborghini—the Testarossa and Countach. That's like not understanding Frank Gehry as an architect in an architectural book! I have videos that are quite long showcasing the handmade Countach from start to finish. I think you could use a copy. When you realize what was involved in the creation of these two moving works of art—the special materials, skill, advanced thinking, and pride—you have to conclude either you are hypnotized by auction house P.R., or you are just ignorant.—*Allen Friedman, Cleveland, OH*

Imagine looking into a ga-

rage and seeing a Countach and Testarossa parked next to one another. Just imagine.—ED.

TR-RIFFIC

Being the shop that built the 1963 Triumph (chassis number CT29652L) featured in August 2006 ("English Profile," p. 44), I simply had a few additional comments concerning your write-up on the sale.

Dave Kinney's article was well written and not overly dramatic. But I must disagree with the statement quoted by the author's friend and well-known British car restorer: "Would you like three (restored that nicely) for \$97,200?" I don't think so. This particular car took 1,134 man-hours to restore. This, combined with all of the quality parts purchased, adds to the \$85,000.

I was delighted to see you tell your readers that \$97,200 was just one more bid than someone else

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made. As a matter of fact there were six bidders to \$70,000, plus three over \$90,000.

As the builder, I was curious as to why someone would spend this kind of money for a restored 1963 Triumph. After the car rolled off the block, I introduced myself to the winning bidder and asked him why he purchased the car. This is what he told me:

"I was comfortable with the looks of the car, the way it was presented, and the fact all of the restoration documentation was with the car. The listing stated the engine was rebuilt, and in the paperwork with the car was the machining documentation, micrometer specifications, and a receipt for all of the parts. There was no doubt it was done."

He didn't buy the car because he knew something about the market. He didn't buy it because "his wife wanted the pretty blue one." He bought it because he was comfortable with the car, plain and simple.—*Jim Barber, Classic Automotive Restoration Specialists, Inc., Belows Creek, NC*

Dave Kinney responds: *Your shop certainly did do a lovely job on the car. As a matter of fact, I made it a point to compliment the seller in person when I looked at the car before the sale. As to my friend and restorer who made the comment about building three for that kind of money, you'd have to ask him.*

We all know how important documentation is becoming in today's market. More sophisticated buyers and those who are "paying up" for their cars are quickly learning this lesson, and we are also learning that it is more important on some cars than others.

There will always be cars sold above and below what is perceived to be the current market rate, or "fair market value" to some. As I said in my original report, that's just fine with me; anyone can spend any amount they like for whatever goods they want to buy in our society. The sarcastic among us—and every car dealer—will repeat the much-loved double (really triple) entendre—there's an ass for every seat. The less cynical will say that someone bought what he wanted at a price he was willing to pay. Bully for that.



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WHO BUILT THAT COACH?

In most instances, your auction reporters omit the coachbuilder's identity in preparing the capsule descriptions of coachbuilt cars at auction. I believe this is an important item of information and should always be included. I hope you agree.—*A.S. Carroll, Garden City, NY*

We do agree. Coachwork is an important factor in the value of a car, sometimes adding hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars to a given car's price tag. To that end, you'll see that we've begun to include the coachbuilder in the Market Reports when applicable.—ED

IT'S SORT OF A PORSCHE

In reading the latest issue, Editor Martin said the Beck Spyder was his least favorite car. As a longtime reader, I'm curious to know why.—*Bob Arnett, via email*

Keith Martin responds: *As a matter of principal, I don't like fakey-dooos or replicas or clones. I don't have laser-reproductions of the Mona Lisa in my living room, and I don't want fake cars in my garage. I don't "disapprove" of those who have them, but for me, they are bereft of any heritage. A lowly 1965 VW Beetle is more in-*

teresting than a Beck Spyder built off the same chassis, as the Beetle is true to its underpinnings. If you need to have an air-cooled, swing-axle sports car, buy a Karmann Ghia and be happy.

There are two reasons I put muscle car clones even lower than Beck Spyderys on my "not interested" list. First, the Beck Spyder can actually provide some top-down driving pleasure.

Second, muscle car clones lend themselves all too easily to fraud and misrepresentation down the line. The current seller may tell the truth about the car, but how long until a subsequent owner manages to "re-identify the car" with an altered chassis or engine block number?

Conversely, no one is going to try to convert a Beck into a real 550.

OLDSY BUT A GOODY

This letter regards Brad Brioux's report on the Kruse International sale at Seaside, CA, and in particular his comment on the offering of the 1950 Olds 88 convertible, "a relatively non-desirable lump that should have sold for the bid of \$64,000" (November 2006, "Kruse International Market Report," p. 124).

Mr. Brioux is obviously from another generation of car en-

thusiast who knows little of the Oldsmobile Rocket 88 that dominated most contests of speed held in the late '40s and early '50s. The Olds of this era dominated NASCAR and won, as well as the horrific Mexican Road Race in 1950 that ran a staggering distance of 2,178 miles from Juarez, Mexico, to El Octal in the mountainous frontier of Guatemala. Fifty-two cars finished the race out of 132 that started.

The Olds of 1950 was the car that every young man dreamed of owning. It was the car that ushered in the many later models of the muscle car era. If he could not afford the car, then the search was on for an Olds V8 to drop in his Ford coupe.

The '50 convertible at the Kruse sale, given its original condition and possibly having better documentation, could have gone for more money had the right cult of car guys been there.—*Skip Ritner, Spokane, WA*

Brad Brioux responds: *My family always had Oldsmobiles. I grew up with them, and I even took my driving test in an Olds 98. I am well aware that the first successful overhead GM engine came from Oldsmobile, and in the early 1950s my uncle raced a Rocket 88 in the Canadian stock car series.*

Regarding the Olds in question, I recall no documentation to back up the seller's claim of mileage. On a 56-year-old car with just 1,100 miles, that would seem quite important. Without proof of mileage, and with the paint and chrome in the tattered condition in which they were presented, I maintain the car was fairly undesirable and should have sold. A nice 1949 Olds 88 Woody wagon sold at B-J last year (lot# 1559) for \$76,800, and it was worth every penny because of its condition. It would thus seem the seller at Kruse had an unrealistic high reserve.

THE WEDDING CRASHER

I thoroughly enjoyed Stephen Serio's tongue-in-cheek article about the Aston Martin DB4 (November 2006, "English Patient," p. 46) and wanted to give your readers some further information.

When consigning the car to the auction, I told the vendors (the son and daughter) a logical esti-