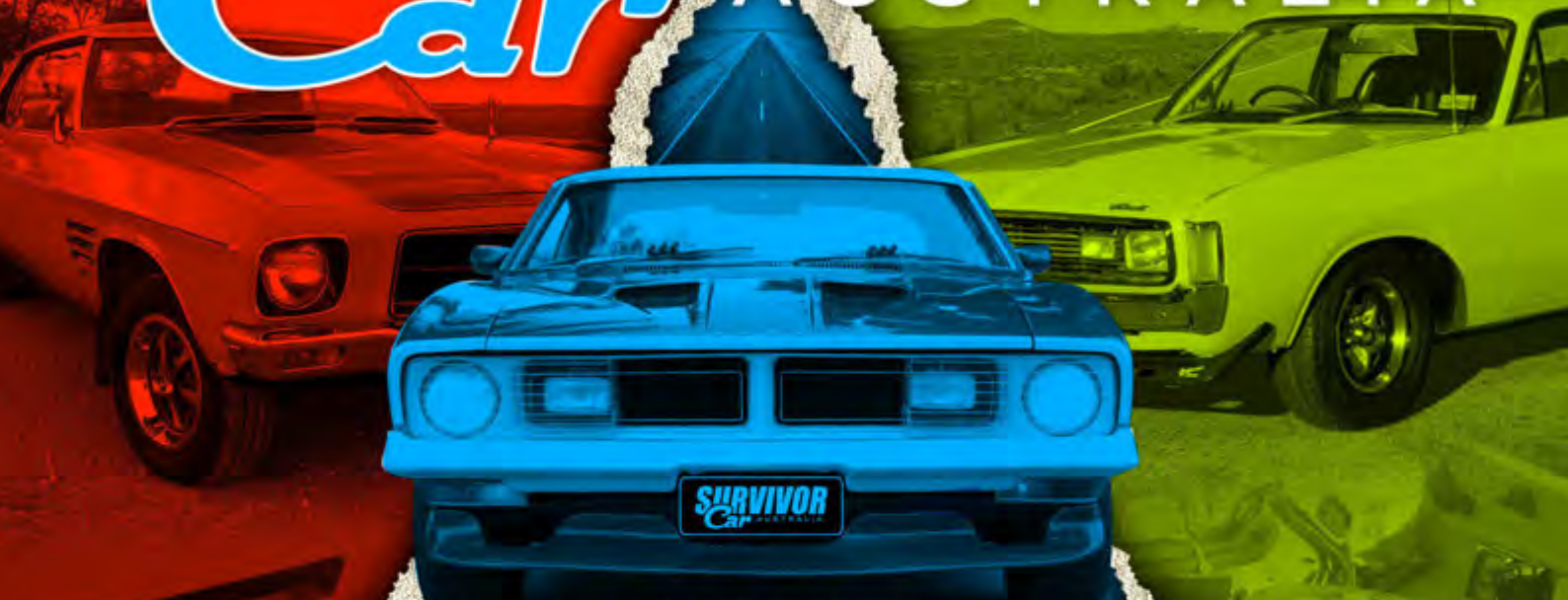


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SURVIVOR

Car AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MUSCLE CARS

THE BIG THREE

Every Survivor Has a Story!

FEATURING A DOZEN OF YOUR FAVOURITE AUSSIE MUSCLE CAR SURVIVORS

HOLDEN HQ MONARO GTS • HOLDEN LC GTR XU1 TORANA • HOLDEN VC HDT COMMODORE • HOLDEN HX LE MONARO
FORD XB GT HARDTOP & SEDAN • FORD XW GT FALCON • FORD XB JOHN GOSS HARDTOP • FORD XC COBRA
VALIANT VH E49 • VALIANT VH PACER • VALIANT VJ E55 • VALIANT VG PACER

DEPUTY Ed's Intro

THE BIG THREE!

Firstly, allow me to introduce myself! My name is Aaron, and I'm the deputy editor of Survivor Car Australia magazine. I'm one of the many passionate and proud contributors to this publication, working hard each and every issue to make sure you're seeing the best Survivor cars in Australia and across the world!

Thank you for checking out this 'Online Special Edition' Australian Muscle Cars! This unique digital magazine is an opportunity to showcase Survivor Car Australia to a new audience in a new style, with the view that we can evolve this magazine and continue to grow in these crazy modern times. It also means that enthusiasts and readers can enjoy this FREE edition on a number of devices, no delivery, no waiting, no worries!

This issue is jam packed with twelve full features! And these aren't just any regular stories, these are some of

the most popular and memorable Muscle Car stories that Survivor Car Australia has featured over the years. These are cars with exceptional stories, interesting history, distinctive characteristics, and most importantly, originality and provenance. These are the cars that Australia grew up with in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, from the era when we built our own cars with pride.

For the fans of General Motors, we've got one of the toughest Australian Muscle cars of all, a stunning HQ Monaro GTS, this particular car has been in the same family for many decades. Then, we've got the car that helped propel the Torana into a racing superstar, the LC GTR-XU1. This 'Plum Dinger' is understood to be the first XU-1 ever built! Plus, there is an incredible HDT VC Commodore, which has travelled just 96,000km and has never been driven in the rain!

Those who love the blue

oval are going to love the double feature of XB Falcon GTs, one Apollo Blue sedan, the other a Red Pepper hardtop, both owned by the same owner who he can't decide which he likes better. We've got the phenomenal story about Dot and her XW GT Falcon, which she bought new all those years ago! And how about what might be the best original John Goss Hardtop in Australia, with its 'Day Two' mods and all!

We've got a great array of Valiants too, including a VH Charger R/T E49 that has travelled less than 30,000 miles from new. Its just one of 21 'Big Tank' Track Pack cars built! One owner Muscle Cars are rare to see, however we've managed to secure two! The first is a gorgeous VH Pacer 265cid that is still enjoyed by its original owner and is one of just 17 built like this! The other is a VJ E55 Charger which a farmer bought new opting for the E55 with its 340cid

— Aaron

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Car AUSTRALIA
DIGITAL SPECIAL EDITION

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This FREE online magazine showcases some of the best Australian Muscle Car Survivors we've had over the years. If you like these stories, subscribe to our print magazine today!



FROM FATHER TO SON

The bond between a man and his first car is always strong. Especially if it was passed on to him by his dad – and even more so if it happened to be a HQ Monaro GTS.



words Nik Bruce **photos** Ross Vasse
special thanks Tony & Sonja Robins, Hagen Zerk, Holden Historical Services, Norm Darwin 'Monaro Magic'

Growing up on the family farm near Port Lincoln, SA, it was inevitable that Tony Robins would develop a keen interest in all things mechanical. Filled with farming machinery, his back yard would have been the kind of playground that city kids could only dream of; while in the shed, his father's collection of vintage cars and bikes would kindle an innate appreciation for cars that would stay with him for the rest of his life.

"Dad must have had about 18 bikes and 12 or 14 cars in his collection," remembers Tony. "He had Model T and Model A Fords, amongst others. There weren't many runners though. Being so busy with the farm he didn't have much time to restore them himself, but he still collected them and kept them all in the shed, out of the elements. He didn't want to let them just rot away."

While having access to such an amazing collection



Tony Robins when he was a kid.

On wedding duty, complete with bullbar.

Dad used the Monaro in his 2nd marriage.



would have had a profound effect on him, the most seminal moment in Tony's motoring life would come in 1975, when his Dad brought home a nearly new HQ Monaro GTS in Salamanca Red. For the wide-eyed 12-year-old, it would be a very memorable day indeed!

"It was pretty special to have something like that come home," laughs Tony. "There were a few other Monaros kicking around in the area, but not a red and black GTS like that one. So to see Dad come home with something like that was pretty exciting."

NOT THE KINGSWOOD

Ironically enough, while he was in the market for a new Holden to replace his old HK Kingswood V8, Tony's father had no intention of buying a Monaro at the time. Alexander, or 'Dick' as he was known, had been content to simply order a new Kingswood from his local dealership; however, after being given a delivery time of several months, he decided to cancel his order and have a look around the car

yards for a suitable replacement instead.

As luck would have it, one of the yards he wandered into had just taken a beautiful 253 V8 Tri-matic in on trade. It may have been stock standard with no air con, but having being bought locally and traded in after nine months with just 9,000km on the clock, it must have ticked all the right boxes for Dick. So, despite having no intentions of ever buying a

"WHEN HIS DAD BROUGHT HOME A NEARLY NEW HQ MONARO GTS IN SALAMANCA RED. FOR THE WIDE-EYED 12-YEAR OLD, IT WOULD BE A VERY MEMORABLE DAY INDEED!"

DID YOU KNOW? Holden built both a high and a low compression version of the 253cid V8 for the HQ range. Identified by its 'QR' factory code, the high-compression 253 ran a 9.0:1 ratio and produced 138kW, while the low-compression 'QS' unit used dished pistons to reduce its ratio to 8.0:1, which churned out 130kW. Very few 'QS' engines were ever made.



“I NEVER EXPECTED THAT I WOULD GET THE MONARO, BUT WE CAME TO AN ARRANGEMENT AND IT ENDED UP BEING MY FIRST CAR!”

THREAD OF Survival

1974-1975
Bought new by Mr Brady
Port Lincoln, SA

1975-2014
Sold to Alexander Robins
Port Lincoln, SA

2014-CURRENT
Acquired by Tony Robins
Port Lincoln, SA

Monaro, the sleek looking coupé was just too good not to take home.

Dick would use the GTS as his daily driver for the next five years; however, a hankering to explore Australia led to the purchase of a Kombi Camper, which in turn saw the GTS being used less and less as the years wore on. By 1982, Tony had turned 19 and, having joined the family business, had a pool of company vehicles at his disposal. As handy as that arrangement was, however, Tony still wanted to buy a car of his own and announced his intentions to his Dad, which led to a surprising offer.

AN OFFER TOO GOOD TO REFUSE

“I’d started looking around for a car of my own and

Dad said, ‘The Monaro’s there, I’m not using it, so why don’t you just take that?’” remembers Tony. “I never expected that I would get the Monaro, but we came to an arrangement and it ended up being my first car!”

“I loved it, it was a really nice car. At one stage I had a set of roof racks on it as I used to go sailboarding. It didn’t take me too long to figure out that the car was just too good for going to the beach and things like that, so I didn’t use it for sailboarding for very long!

“I used it for about 3 or 4 years and it got to the point where I didn’t want to put any more kilometres on it than I already had. Because it was my father’s car I didn’t want to drive it into the ground – it was still in really good condition so I wanted to preserve it. Dad wanted it back, so we made another arrangement. I got a new car and the Monaro went back in the shed.”

Aside from the odd Sunday drive, the GTS saw very little use from 1985 onwards, but despite the fact that it was rarely seen in public, the family still had people queuing up to buy it – including the son of its original owner.

KEEPSAKE

“The car was originally bought by a Mr Brady,” says Tony. “I think it was about 15 years ago that his son got in touch with us, looking to buy the car back, but Dad was never interested in selling.”

As time passed, and Dick grew less and less mobile, Tony took on the responsibility of looking after the car, changing its fluids regularly and running it around the yard every few months until 2014, when Dick sadly passed away. Having such a strong connection with the car, Tony decided to buy the Monaro from the estate and set about giving the old girl a new lease of life.

Despite his efforts to keep the GTS moving over



Can you decode these tags?

There's a little Ford in this Holden!

W. J. FORD
MOTOR ENGINEER
LINCOLN HWY, PORT LINCOLN.
Ph 84 3570

DATE	23/11/2014	KLM
RECORD	1000	SERV DUE
SERVICED		



Decades on, Tony still has his first car!



SPECIFICATIONS

- MODEL**
1974 HQ Holden Monaro GTS
- ODOMETER**
232,363km
- POWER**
253cid V8 High Compression
185bhp/138kW @ 4,400 rpm
- TRANSMISSION**
3-speed Tri-matic auto (Code M40)
- PAINT**
Salamanca Red (Paint Code 1824)
- TRIM**
Black Vinyl (Trim Code 30X)
- OPTIONS**
Automatic transmission
- DEALERSHIP**
City State Motors, Adelaide, SA
- MODEL DURATION**
1971 – 1974
- NUMBER BUILT**
2,536 (Estimate)
- ORIGINAL PRICE**
\$4,790



the years, many of the engine seals had perished along with the rubbers in the suspension and steering. The tyres had developed flat spots, while the shocks and springs all needed to be replaced. Once all the mechanical work had been done, Tony was happy enough to just put the car back on the road and enjoy it – for him, there was never any question of undertaking any sort of cosmetic restoration.

“The car is part of my history, so preserving its originality has been really important to me,” says Tony. “It’s funny, but I don’t think I ever really appreciated just how significant the car was to me

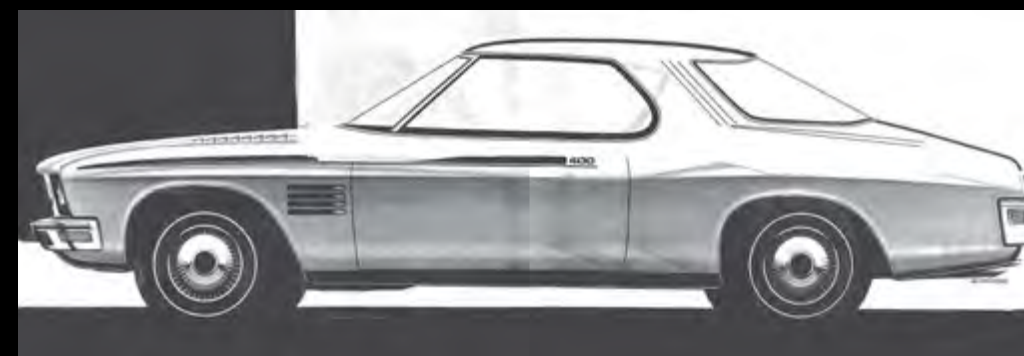
personally. I never expected to end up with it, so I don’t think I ever allowed myself to become too emotionally attached to it until the estate was finally settled and it became mine.”

Like his Dad before him, Tony is usually too busy with the farm to take the Monaro out as often as he’d like – in fact, he’d be lucky if he drove it more than half-a-dozen times a year. Even so, Tony has no intention of selling. One day, he’ll have time to give it the attention it deserves and, having two kids to pass it on to, that GTS is destined to be part of the Robins family for generations to come. *SCA*



STUFF YA ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE HQ

The HQ program commenced in 1968, with the design team lead by John Schinella whom Phil Zmood was an Assistant Chief Designer. Zmood was responsible for penning some of the drawing and clay concepts for the HQ Monaro coupe. The HQ model was a radical departure from previous Holdens, not only for body development but also mechanicals.



With GM throwing down the gauntlet to design a coupe style that ‘fitted’ into the sedan body with the minimum amount of panel changes, much of the HQ coupe is interchangeable with the sedan. Zmood had initially put down a number of very different styling proposals favouring a wrap-around glass style. This concept was further refined as a clay model, however the US designers said that the wrap-around style was too great, and told GM-H to tone it down. “I think the compromise that we ended up with was a good design,” said Zmood in Norm Darwin’s book *Monaro Magic*. Coincidentally, the wrap-around rear window glass style was later seen on mid-1970s Chevrolet Camaros and Pontiac Firebirds! Talk about theft of intellectual property, but

Initially, the designs favoured the wrap-around rear screen for the HQ, but a compromise was reached when the US designers requested it be toned down. Coincidentally, they used the design in mid-’70s Camaros and Firebirds!

then again Holden was part of GM, so it was a case of the same coat but different pockets. Design team leader Schinella, also had strong links at the time with Pontiac Design, so it is not surprising to find a Pontiac Firebird steering wheel design and 14-inch rally wheels on the HQ Monaro GTS.

The HQ coupe saw a new direction for marketing, which was pitched at the average buyer seeking a sporty looking car but will all the creature comforts. Sadly though, coupes lost their flavour and as such, only accounted for 2.8 percent of total production.



DID YOU KNOW?

The follow-up facelift model to the HQ, was to be coded the HV, which was scheduled for release in November 1972. But marketing research conducted in a clinic by GM-H at the time, found public perception of the HQ was that it appeared too soft, that it looked ‘feminine’. A more aggressive look was preferred. As a result, the HV model was canned, and a new release date of October 1974 was proposed for the next model which was designated the HJ instead. The irony to all this was that the actual public loved the HQ model, which resulted in total production 485,650 units built, far outselling its predecessor the HG and its successor the HJ, three to one!

How many differences can you spot from the real thing?



The 900km test drive **PLUM DINGER**

Some cars are designed to be used and abused. The manufacturer builds them for a specific reason, and that reason is anything but surviving in original as-delivered condition for just shy of 44 years and counting – especially when the car is a 'racing' model. Even more so, when it's the first XU-1 on the production line...



Left top: Home safely after the 900km road test from Adelaide.



Left: Taken back in the '90s wearing Victorian number plates, it was used sparingly until parked for 15 years.



words Ben Stewart photos Leah Teirney
special thanks www.HoldenHistoricalServices.com.au

Whilst this fact alone may be simply amazing for an Australian made car of any make and model, it begins to take on an entirely new dimension when the subject vehicle is an LC Torana GTR XU-1 in the 'look at me' shade of Plum Dinger. However, we can't just stop there as this incredible series of events unfolds.

The featured car isn't just any old LC GTR XU-1. Whilst many people may find this almost unbelievable, we can reveal that this bright purple coloured car is the actual car arranged for Vin Kean – the man behind the Holden Dealer Team (HDT). It is a classic case of, "There are Survivor cars and then there are SURVIVOR cars!"

Learning of the existence of an LC XU-1 surviving in as-delivered condition is enough to get the full attention of any fair dinkum Torana enthusiast, but when it

1970 HOLDEN LC TORANA GTR XU-1



Your ticket, sir.

DID YOU KNOW?

Would you chance trying to outrun a Torana GTR Police car? Not all of the cars destined to become Police units were created equal. 'Disguised' as a GTR, some were actually XU-1s under the skin. You can imagine the look on the face of a Falcon GT driver who gets bailed up by a 'GTR' on the highway!

is revealed that the car in question is directly tied to the HDT... well, words are almost inadequate when describing just how such a rare race car survived in such an original, unrestored and unmodified state.

But it does happen, and here is a perfect example of just that. The owners of this Survivor car may have never known of its significance in the HDT story. And would they have done anything differently with it had they known?

A SURVIVOR IS BORN...

Our story begins when the first run of cars were scheduled for production in mid-June 1970. The Torana GTR XU-1 was GM-H's answer to the Ford Falcon GT-HO in motorsport competition. It had come about through the clever means of devising a limited-run vehicle that would be very competitive on the racetrack, yet represent the best value high-performance car available to the public. In amongst the initial twelve units built at the Elizabeth (South Australia) plant was our feature car. As a measure of appreciation, Vin Kean's United Motors in Adelaide was to receive a very special car – this car. The first XU-1 ever made.



“AS A MEASURE OF APPRECIATION, VIN KEAN’S UNITED MOTORS IN ADELAIDE WAS TO RECEIVE A VERY SPECIAL CAR – THIS CAR. THE FIRST XU-1 EVER MADE.”

Below: Chris Tierney has grown to love the Purple Pocket Rocket.



Documentation proves provenance and this XU-1 is certainly well documented.



THREAD OF **Survival**

MID 1970
Delivered new to Vin Kean,
United Motors Ltd
Adelaide, SA

MID 1970
Bought new by Alfred Blight
from United Motors Ltd
Adelaide, SA

1985
Sold to Gary Hall
Adelaide, SA

1986
Sold to Gary Fasano
Adelaide, SA

MID 1989
Sold to Adrian Koehler
Melbourne, Vic

2006 - CURRENT
Sold to Chris Tierney
Devonport, Tas



The latest 'Trident' Auger mag wheels were fitted to this XU-1 when new back in 1970.



Above: The original issue SA number have stayed with the car all its life.

The Holden Dealer Team (HDT), under the control of Harry Firth, had been formed in 1969 as a way of GM-H actively participating in motorsport – something not permitted by General Motors, the parent company. The HDT was a separate entity that owed its existence to Vin Kean – close friend of GM-H heavy, John Bagshaw. Heading up the sales and marketing side of GM-H, Bagshaw knew full well the importance of the rub off on vehicle sales from success in motorsport. GM-H was riding the crest of a wave, having won back-to-back Bathurst 500 races in 1968 and 1969. For 1970, they had a new 'weapon' – the Torana GTR XU-1.

The GTR XU-1 was officially introduced on

August 19, 1970 by way of a newsletter to dealers. Of course, one Holden dealer with 'connections' not only knew of the car prior to this, but also had one in their possession! John Bagshaw made sure Vin Kean had a Plum Dinger example – the same colour as used in all publicity and advertising for the car. Available in four vibrant colours that certainly grabbed attention, the one that really stood out was Plum Dinger. Whilst various reds, yellows and greens had all featured on Holdens previously, a vivid purple was something completely new for the company. In time, all but Plum Dinger would carry over to other car lines making the shade on our feature car somewhat 'exclusive' as it were.

THE FIRST XU-1

John Bagshaw (pictured right) was a powerful force within GM-H. What he wanted he got in almost every situation. Not one to hold back, he had a famous 'no surprises' policy. So long as there were no surprises in what was presented to him, it was game on. Bagshaw wanted the GTR XU-1 advertising and promotion to feature a Plum Dinger car. The support from Vin Kean (pictured below right) in connection to the HDT meant Bagshaw wanted the first GTR XU-1 to go to the man responsible. Without Vin Kean, there would never have been the HDT set-up that resulted in so many victories over such a long period of time. In Bagshaw's eyes, only one person was worthy of



receiving that first XU-1.

The Production Schedule was drawn up and a total of 19 units were to be built in mid-June 1970 – 12 at Elizabeth, South Australia and seven at Acacia Ridge, Queensland. All these units commenced manufacture in June and were all plated 6/70 on the ADR Safety Compliance plate. The Acacia Ridge cars were all completed on the same day (26/6/70) ahead of the Elizabeth cars.

But those Elizabeth cars were destined for activities and usage of far greater importance than the units from Acacia Ridge. As a result, they remained in the plant for longer, receiving more attention in touch-up and final QC (quality control). This car, the lowest Body Number for an Adelaide XU-1, is considered build

#1. The first car started. The car used in the advertising and Promotional material (L155340) finally left the plant on 9/7/70, whilst our feature Survivor car (the first car) left the next day (10/7/70). The cars assigned to Engineering at GM-H headquarters also left the plant on 9/7/70 and 10/7/70.

The production process is a very complex predictive system that ensures minimum delays in the manufacture and assembly of cars. Just because a specific vehicle has the first entry on the Production Schedule does not ensure it is first to enter the Rolling Schedule and so on. The first of a batch may end up being the last out the door so to speak. This is why all the identification numbers present on a Holden product are of equal importance when telling a story.



The rally eater.

Toranas thrive on rallies. Look at the recent record.
First, Dulux Rally, August 16.
First, Calder Rallycross, June 27.
First, Snowy Mountains Rally, June 12.
First, Newcastle Rally, May 16.
First, BP Rally, May 12.
We don't always win. (We've had a fair share of seconds and thirds, too.)

Torana the Great. Sporty good looks. For sure. But it takes more than that to succeed. It takes performance, reliability and good driving. And you get them all in the great Torana range—1200's, 1600's, 2250's, 2850's and GTR. Get the taste for Torana, now, at your Holden Dealer.



Torana the Great



Left: The data tags have never been removed.

Below: That spare tyre looks old enough to vote! Note the 17 gallon Bathurst fuel tank in the foreground.



FIRST OWNER

United Motors kept this very special GTR XU-1 for in-house use until mid-September, when it was sold to a Mr A E (Alfred) Blight of 363 Burbridge Rd Lockleys in South Australia on 16/9/1970. Whilst at United Motors, the car was fitted with the latest Aunger Triden 'mag' wheels (yes, they really were magnesium alloy back then) as a way of promoting the local Adelaide firm.

Alfred Blight was a 50-year-old mechanical engineer who used the car as his daily driver up until he retired at age 65, when he sold the car with approximately 115,000 miles showing on the clock to a workmate. It is easy to picture Alfred as the original 'hip dude' driving around in a purple XU-1 with mags on it. One wonders on how many occasions he was pulled over by police expecting to find a young 'hoon' behind the wheel. As they say, you should never judge a car by the owner and vice versa.

SECOND OWNER

Gary Hall worked with Alfred Blight, and in 1985 bought this special XU-1 from him. The car was still in remarkably original condition despite having been 'around the clock'. The original owner had really looked after it. Hall owned the car for only a year, as he didn't particularly like the Torana GTR XU-1s in spite of the fact he had bought it because it was in such good condition. Gary rarely drove the car given his dislike for it, and in 1986 sold it to his brother-in-law who was a car collector and restorer.

THIRD OWNER

Gary Fasano bought the Plum Dinger XU-1 from his brother-in-law Gary Hall. Fasano was particularly interested in E-type Jaguars although he owned other pedigree marques. He could appreciate quality original cars given his restoration interests. Whilst in his possession, this special XU-1 featured in the publication *The Muscle Car Legend* (1987). Like his brother-in-law, this Gary also hardly drove the car and as a result decided to advertise it for sale in *Unique Cars* magazine. The odometer was still showing approximately 115,000 miles. It would take a couple of years to finally sell the car – with little if any addition to the mileage.

FOURTH OWNER

Adrian Koehler saw this special XU-1 advertised in *Unique Cars* magazine for more than a year. In the end, he decided to do something about it having just sold his white LC GTR. The originality and condition stood out. "I just wanted to get into an XU-1, so I flogged off the GTR to upgrade to an XU-1", he said.

One of the reasons the car had remained in *Unique Cars* for so long was due to the fact that seller Fasano was sick of young people wasting his time. Koehler himself was not yet 21 when he rang to enquire about the XU-1. On arrival in Adelaide, Adrian caught a taxi to go and look over the car. What caught his attention was the Survivor status of the car, even in 1989 – it was incredible.

The car was unregistered but in very good company with an HG Monaro GTS, an XA GT and

"THE 900 KM TRIP BACK HOME WAS THE TEST DRIVE!"



A HUM-DINGER OF A COLOUR!

Plum Dinger was officially an exclusive XU-1 colour. From March 1971, the other two exclusive 'high impact' XU-1 shades of LIna Mint and Yellow Dolly were made available as a selection on both Holden and Torana car lines. Plum Dinger remained as an XU-1 only shade. The colour has also appeared on a select few special order cars including a 10/70 HG Monaro GTS 350, a 5/71 HG Premier sedan and a 1/72 HQ GTS to name a few. Holden experimented with several 'purple' hues in the early 1970s even making several available for use.

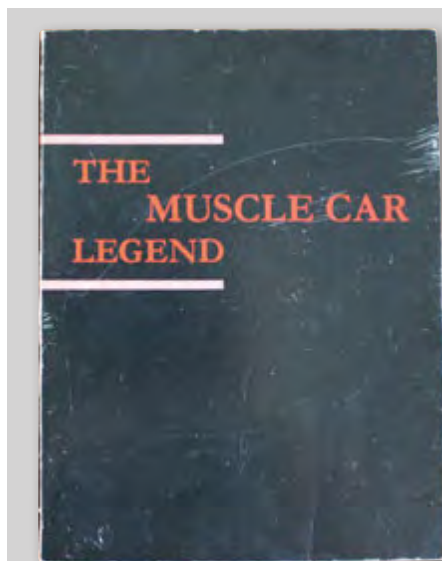
In the overall scheme of things, Plum Dinger was the least used of the 'high impact' shades. The colour re-appeared in another guise as Berry Nice in 1976 at LX/TX release – also to a limited application – and then again (but also further re-worked) as Ultra Blue in 1977 at HZ release.

These high chromatic paint colours did not fare well under the harsh Australian UV rays. Purple Holdens hold a special place in our history as they sure grab attention when new but 'date' so quickly when compared to more traditional hues. As an aside, purple hues are the most difficult for a television camera to faithfully reproduce.





“BY CHANCE, THE GUY ACROSS THE ROAD ASKED IF HE STILL HAD THE PURPLE XU-1. ‘DO YOU WANT TO BUY IT?’”



A BOOK WITH MUSCLE

The Muscle Car Legend publication was first self-published in 1987 by local authors; J & S Gray, and is best described as the rarest book about muscle cars ever printed, and harder than Chinese arithmetic to get your hands on! It includes a detailed write-up about Monaros, Falcon GTs, Pacers, Toranas and Chargers with a special chapter about determining authenticity. Our Plum Dinger XU-1 Torana was featured with a full colour pictorial. If you ever see a copy of this book for sale, jump on it! (courtesy Survivor Car Australia vault).

three E-type Jaguars sharing the garage. Koehler continues, “I liked the XU-1s, prices had come down a bit and I had already seen a few which were mostly in crap condition”.

They made a deal between them and with a short test drive to the local RTA arranged a permit to get the car back to Victoria. “The 900 km trip back home was the test drive!” Adrian beams. “It ran like a dream all the way home, although I was pulled over in Ararat at 4 am for doing 80 kmh in a 60 zone. Whilst one officer booked me, the other was admiring the car and could not believe the condition of it.” A Survivor car will do that every time.

The car was then registered in Victoria (DYI-587) and in the following years travelled a further 3,000 miles (odometer now showing 118,000 miles). Registration lapsed in 1991 and the car would sit in a garage for the next 15 years.

The car had made two trips to Bendigo where Adrian caught up with a few mates. On one occasion the exhaust flange gasket had let go, so in 40-degree heat he changed it at the back of the Raywood pub. He had fluked buying a replacement part at the servo across the road – something that simply wouldn’t happen today! Whilst his mates were inside drinking, Adrian was sweating his arse off under the car. They did bring him out a cold beer though!

CURRENT OWNER

In 2006, by chance, the guy across the road asked if he still had the purple XU-1. “Do you want to buy it?” Adrian asked. “No, but I know someone who does”, came the reply. Adrian reflects, “With the kids growing up, they had put a few bangs in it with their bikes. I’d had it for 17 years, 15 of those it sat in the garage unregistered. I had tried to get my hands on the book The Muscle Car Legend but it was impossible. Nobody would sell me a copy.”

After some photos of the car were emailed to the prospective (current) owner, it was bought sight unseen. “By word of mouth, I sold it in a week. One phone call, one buyer – no fuss. Sure beats getting

“THEY DIDN’T HESITATE IN INSURING IT FOR TRIPLE WHAT I PAID FOR IT...”



Above: The XU-1’s current owner collects pocket rockets, here is his 1963 GT Cortina and 1970 MK1 Twin Cam Escort.

a bunch of time-wasters coming to tyre-kick it,” Koehler recalls. “He bought it without looking at it. Sold it on the Friday and a tow truck took it on the Monday.” The only things Adrian did to the car in those 17 years were repair the radiator, re-built the carbies, fitted new tyres and put in a stereo with a pair of speakers.

Chris Tierney of Devonport, Tasmania bought this special XU-1 sight unseen from Adrian Koehler in 2006. Being a car enthusiast and owning a 1963 Ford Cortina GT (4-door) and a 1970 Mk 1 Twin Cam Escort, Chris was always into the factory ‘pocket rockets’. “I initially bought it as an investment but have grown to like it more and more since. I knew an unrestored car was always going to be worth more than a restored car”, he says, and continues “They were never a nice car to drive but I’ve grown to love it. I like it for its rarity and that there aren’t that many left”.

“We brought it across on the Spirit of Tasmania to Devonport. It was showing approximately 118,000 miles. Since purchase it has sat mostly unused but regularly started in the garage under cover”, Tierney continues. “The interior vinyl trim still smells like new.”

The car has been back to the mainland twice to visit Chris’s brother-in-law, a farmer in Berrybank, Victoria. It has also made a trip to Launceston, as well as the odd half-day trip. The mileage is now

119,000 and a bit, so in the last eight years it has only added 1,000 miles or so to the total. “I seldom use it, but I like the fact that when I do drive down the street in it, everyone puts their thumbs up when they see it”, says Chris proudly. “People can’t believe it’s unrestored – never pranged”. The original RGJ-540 South Australian plates are still with the car today although it is on club registration.

The challenge of continuing to maintain the car in its as-delivered Survivor state will ensure the current owner is kept on his toes. One area Chris doesn’t have to worry about is with insurance. Shannons Insurance appraised the car and were amazed at its unrestored, Survivor condition. “They didn’t hesitate in insuring it for triple what I paid for it”, says Chris. As far as a replacement value goes though, this car is irreplaceable given its background and how it has got to where it is today. **SCA**



SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL	1970 LC Torana GTR XU-1
ODOMETER	19,193 miles – 2nd time around
POWER	3100X (186cid) L6 160HP (119kW) @ 5200rpm
TRANSMISSION	4-speed manual
PAINT	Plum Dinger (568-12573)
TRIM	Black vinyl (40X)
OPTIONS	Dealer fitted radio and mag wheels
DEALERSHIP	United Motors Ltd., Adelaide SA
MODEL DURATION	June 1970 – November 1971
NUMBER BUILT	1,397 on Vehicle Master Listing incl. 19 (6/70) build pilots
ORIGINAL PRICE	\$3,148

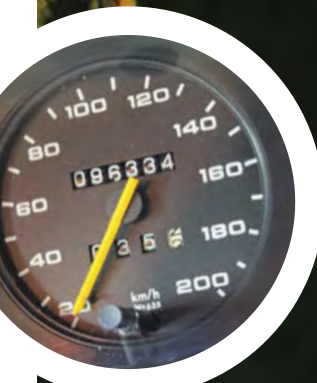
Below: This is the GTR that Adrian (4th owner) flogged off to buy the XU-1, do you know where it is now?



words David Veers & Simon May photos Andy Reid

VICTORIOUS VC!

In some ways the '80s could be summed up with the words; bold, big, bright, brash, bad-ass and, well... Brock!



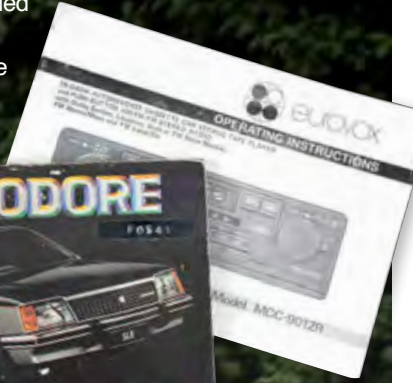
This story featured in Issue 25. [CLICK HERE TO ORDER IT NOW!](#)



The very first Holden Commodore, the VB, represented a shift in Holden's design thinking, adopting a smaller and more European style. It borrowed heavily from sister company Opel's products although adapted to suit Australia's unique market. Nervous of how the buying public would accept their new baby, the VB was sold alongside the outgoing Torana and HZ Kingswood – They needn't have worried, the Commodore became Australia's biggest selling car by 1979.

Despite this success in 1979, Holden officially pulled out of motor racing after their dominating wins with the Torana. Holden's golden boy Peter Brock purchased the Holden Dealer Team (HDT), he then set about creating souped up Commodores to be sold through selected dealers to generate the funding and parts homologation needed to continue racing and development.

The VC HDT started out as a top spec SL/E Commodore which was then subjected to some engine tuning resulting in 210hp (160kW) a healthy 22 per cent increase over the stock 169hp (126kW). This was mated to uprated suspension and brakes bolted to fat rubber on 15-inch German Irmischer wheels, and all wrapped with a visual package including bold graphics, gratuitous wings and flares.





Wheel arch flares, three piece rear spoiler, and Irmischer wheels, all of a sudden the humble Commodore starts to resemble a race car!



Above: The VC HDT shared some visual style with Brock's ATCC race car, which is a huge part of its appeal to enthusiasts.



RACE OF CHAMPIONS

A clever bit of marketing saw the VC HDT being introduced to the buying public at the Formula One Grand Prix at Calder Park in 1980. Eleven VC HDTs were to line up with a range of star drivers as a two-race preliminary event dubbed 'The Race of Champions'. After a brazen first lap the wildly competitive driver's somehow survived unscheduled trips to the outfield and infield, a great deal of

rubbing, bumping and crashing and general mayhem to complete the first race with a young John Bowe coming up trumps. A reversal of grid positions for Race two on Sunday brought more thrilling and frantic door to door bumper to bumper racing with Peter Brock holding out for first place followed by John Bowe the overall winner based on accumulated points.



Chassis 001 was sold at Shannons Auctions in 2015 for \$125,000.



This interior is simply stunning. The red carpets and seat trimming is all original – as good as the day it left the factory.



Many VC Commodore owners will be familiar with shrinking console coverings.

Each steering wheel was individually numbered, as you can see this car is number 422.



The back seat can only be described as mint condition. Plush and well cushioned, not many people have sat back here in this cars lifetime.

Brock's investment paid off taking out the 1980 ATCC plus another Bathurst for himself and Jim Richards (the pair's third in a row). Incredibly, the first seven places were filled by Commodores at race end.

THE FAMILY CAR

Giovanni Zuppa like many Italian migrants came to Australia in the early '50s to carve out a new life in Australia the lucky country. As a 17-year-old he started work in factories and then in vineyards and market gardens, he typified the work ethic of the many migrants of that time. While Italians from that era are stereotypical Chrysler or Valiant owners, Giovanni was a Holden man.

In 1971, Giovanni bought a HG 6-cylinder, the Trimatic did cause some problems, particularly when

DID YOU KNOW? The first Commodore HDTs were actually VBs used for testing and assessment and wore more subdued hues, Chassis 000 was Atlantic Blue in colour and Chassis 001 was two tone Malachite & Sage Green, 001 also signified the first of the batch of 500 cars.

1980 HOLDEN VC HDT COMMODORE

“MY JAW DROPPED WHEN THE GARAGE DOOR OPENED...”

The VC HDT looked fast standing still, and was quite a spirited performer!



THREAD OF Survival

- 1980 - 2008**
Bought New Giovanni Zuppa, Angle Vale, SA
- 2008 - 2015**
Sold to Ross Vasse, Melbourne, Vic
- 2015 - CURRENT**
Sold to John Klinsic, Cranebrook, NSW

it decided to not select any gears at all, or the wrong gear when travelling at highway speed. He persevered with the HG for eight years and then moved it on. There were other Holdens too, but they all made way for the best Holden he had ever owned!

In 1981, Giovanni, now in his mid-40s thought it was about time he rewarded himself with a new car, and what better choice was there than the newly released HDT VC Commodore. Giovanni's wife Winsome was driving a Fiat 132 at the time and like many wives of car enthusiasts, was talked into trading her beloved Fiat in on a more sensible "family" car! So the VC was ordered in Palais White as a four-speed manual, the only options he allowed himself was the external rust and interior fabric protection packages. As we know the VC HDT was based on the top of the range SLE, so many of the base Commodore options were already included as standard on the model.

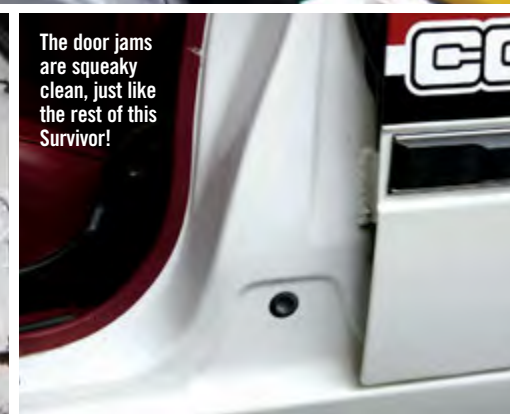
Why Palais White and not Firethorn red or Tuxedo Black (the only other optioned



Above: Current owner John Klinsic has owned hot Holdens in the past. His first car was a Zodiac Blue LJ GTR XU1. Below: "When I bought it, I didn't even know how to drive manual!" – John Klinsic. Bottom: John's Torana had wedding day duties back in the early 1980s.



The 308cid V8 pumped out 160kW of power – which was plenty in a car as light as the first generation Commodore.



The door jams are squeaky clean, just like the rest of this Survivor!



The Irmscher spare wheel and original tyre is tucked into the boot... just.



Castrol GTX was the preferred oil for the HDT Commodores – until the Mobil 1 sponsorship began in 1985.



Original owner Giovanni Zuppa with his pride and joy.



The carpet inside the boot is immaculate, and has not been used often to cart the groceries home from the supermarket.



The stripes and decals are unique to the HDT, and were the inspiration for Holden's VF Commodore Motorsport edition.

1980 HOLDEN VC HDT COMMODORE

colours offered on the VC HDT)? Given #422 was a late build, Giovanni didn't have much choice. Palais White was really all that was available, but he insists that he would have chosen a white car anyway. He loved how the car looked with its decals, flares and body kit, he reckons that white showed these features off the best. So on the 23rd of June 1981 HDT VC build #422 was delivered by Plaza Holden in Valley View, South Australia, and registered SPT 074 to its first owner.

The car was used sparingly over the next 25 years, never driven in the rain (on purpose) and always garaged. The Brock only covered a mere 96,000kms while in the ownership of Giovanni. It dutifully provided the transport for a number of weddings including Giovanni's son's wedding in the 1980s.

The incredible condition of this car is testament to the care bestowed on it. The Carmine red interior material used on the VC SLE are notorious for fading and the material is almost impossible to obtain now. VC HDT # 422's interior is in amazing "like new" condition with only the centre console vinyl shrinking on the sides – the same as many other first generation Commodores have done. The unblemished Palais White acrylic paintwork is also incredibly original. The engine bay shows only signs of heat related deterioration on the brackets and power booster, but otherwise is an untouched time capsule. The car retains its original "unused" Uniroyal Wildcat spare tyre as well. Cars in this condition are today rare to find.

DEAL OR NO DEAL?!

But like all good cars, time rolls on and people's needs change. So sometime in 2008, Giovanni decided to trade the Brock in on a new Lexus, but the Lexus dealer wasn't interested in trading the Brock in on a luxury Lexus, not even for \$20,000!! So Giovanni kept the Brock and bought the Lexus anyway.

While still torn between keeping or selling the VC, Giovanni's mind was made up when he became too afraid of driving it around because people would



The wipers on the headlights were a carry-over item from Opel. In Europe, they were require to deal with falling snow.



Irmscher wheels filled the bigger wheel arches nicely, and whilst they are basic in design, the suit the car well.



Every VC HDT built carried Peter Brock's name, a celebration of his 1980 Australian Touring Car Championship success.



1981 HOLDEN HDT HDTCOMMODORE No.422/500. Best survivor in Aus. Orig. 96,000kms, drives & smells like new, 12 mths Reg/rwc. Fastidious owner, will only sell to right person. Never seen rain. REGO: SPT074 (JCW3654605) **\$67,500**

THE LIMITED EDITION HDT COMMODORE

Fine-tuned by Peter Brock

This is a unique opportunity for the motoring enthusiast to acquire a remarkable motor car certain to become a collector's car from the day of release. This very special sports saloon is available now through the sponsoring HDT Holden Dealers.

Each car will be prepared by HDT - Special Vehicles Pty. Ltd. and will be individually road-tested by Peter Brock or John Harvey. Every one will feature equipment levels and road performance unmatched by any other Australian car.

Peter Brock

<p>Special Mechanical Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 5.0 litre V8 engine modified for greater flexibility and performance, and better fuel economy <input type="checkbox"/> Close ratio 5th manual gearbox <input type="checkbox"/> Cast-iron cylinder head porting and high capacity air cleaner <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel-air air filter <input type="checkbox"/> Oil separator <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy-duty limited slip differential <input type="checkbox"/> Revised rear shock absorbers <input type="checkbox"/> Improved braking <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy-duty battery, alternator and radiator <input type="checkbox"/> Revised HDT radiator air filter/hydraulic transmission <input type="checkbox"/> Unusual 1980/113 steel ball-bearing (steel) wheels 	<p>Special Exterior Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Special hood air ducts <input type="checkbox"/> 3 three rear door spoilers <input type="checkbox"/> Front and rear wheel bases painted in high black, high durability Acryl <input type="checkbox"/> Black, white or red body stripes <input type="checkbox"/> Revised HDT Commodoro paint treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Revised front bumper with rubber insert <input type="checkbox"/> Revised interior features <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy-duty battery, alternator and radiator <input type="checkbox"/> Revised HDT radiator air filter/hydraulic transmission <input type="checkbox"/> Unusual 1980/113 steel ball-bearing (steel) wheels <input type="checkbox"/> Front wheel wheel 	<p>Power door locks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's side only <input type="checkbox"/> All HDT models with manual door locks <input type="checkbox"/> All HDT models with automatic door locks <input type="checkbox"/> All HDT models with manual door locks <input type="checkbox"/> All HDT models with automatic door locks <input type="checkbox"/> All HDT models with manual door locks <input type="checkbox"/> All HDT models with automatic door locks <input type="checkbox"/> All HDT models with manual door locks <input type="checkbox"/> All HDT models with automatic door locks 	<p>Electrically heated rear window</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise control with wireless, covered control compartment and parking brake <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise control with wireless, covered control compartment and parking brake <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise control with wireless, covered control compartment and parking brake <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise control with wireless, covered control compartment and parking brake <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise control with wireless, covered control compartment and parking brake <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise control with wireless, covered control compartment and parking brake <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise control with wireless, covered control compartment and parking brake <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise control with wireless, covered control compartment and parking brake <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise control with wireless, covered control compartment and parking brake
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Above: The original brochure encouraged buyers to purchase a car that was fine-tuned by their hero. Below: Brock's VC was a handful on the track, and won many fans. The red and white Marlboro/HDT livery is a fan favourite, and is unmistakably "Brock". Right: Behind the scenes at the HDT assembly line.





The VC HDT was the first of many desirable Brock Commodores built. It paved the way for following models, a ground breaking achievement for Brock and his team at HDT Special Vehicles.

always stop him whenever he was out in the car, and ask if he wanted to sell it. He feared someone would follow him home and steal the car, he also feared the harm that would come to any person he found trying to steal it, as Giovanni's other hobby is clay shooting, and he says he is a pretty good shot!

READY TO BROCK AND ROLL

So after 28 years of ownership the car was sold to well know car hunter, author and collector Ross Vasse in 2008. Ross garaged the car as an investment giving it a warm up and short drives on occasion to keep it fit until selling it on to the current owner John Klinsic in 2015.

John was encouraged by his three sons to find a new classic so they could all go cruising together.

The boys discovered the VC HDT in an online ad, the description sounded too good to be true but after calling owner Ross, John and son decided to jump in the car and drive through the night non-stop to Melbourne. On Saturday morning they were standing in front of a slowly opening roller door – “My jaw dropped when the garage door opened,” exclaims John. A deal was done and the car was loaded on a rented trailer and they pointed north for the drive home to Sydney. “Everywhere we stopped people came over to talk about the car,” John says, “I just love it”.

John has since added a Black VC HDT to his collection and is hoping to finish the set with a Red one if the right car comes along, for now he's happy with what he's got, stating, “I go in most weekends and pull the covers off just to take a look.” *SCA*



When you're behind the wheel you can experience what Brock had intended – a true performance driving experience.

SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL	1980 Holden VC HDT Commodore
ODMETER	96,334kms
POWER	5.0lt / 308 cid V8 210bhp / 160kW @ 4,500rpm
TRANSMISSION	4-Speed Manual (M21)
PAINT	Palais White
TRIM	Carmine Red
OPTIONS	Paint protection, Interior protection
DEALERSHIP	Plaza Holden, East Road, Valley View, South Australia.
MODEL DURATION	1980 – 1981
NUMBER BUILT	500
ORIGINAL PRICE	\$19,800



“ I believe you should always fit GM and AC-Delco Parts to Holden – they’ve proved to be the right parts for us from the ‘round Australia rally to the high speed race circuits. ”
Peter Brock – Holden Dealer Team.



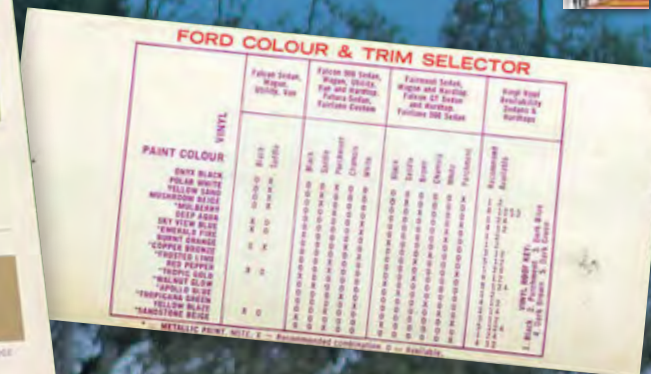
There's no better recommendation for GM and AC-Delco parts than one from the man who's grown to trust them most. And there's no better place to get quality parts and expert service than at your Holden Dealer right now.



Perfect MATCH

Carrying the flag as the last of the classic era of Falcon GTs, Ford's XB GT is top of many Ford fans must-have list. But which, hardtop or sedan? I'll take both...!

words Simon May photos Ross Vasse
data Australian Classic Car History Services (www.acchs.com.au)
and Sandy Mercer (www.aus-ford-uk.co.uk)



Which colour and trim combo would you have selected?



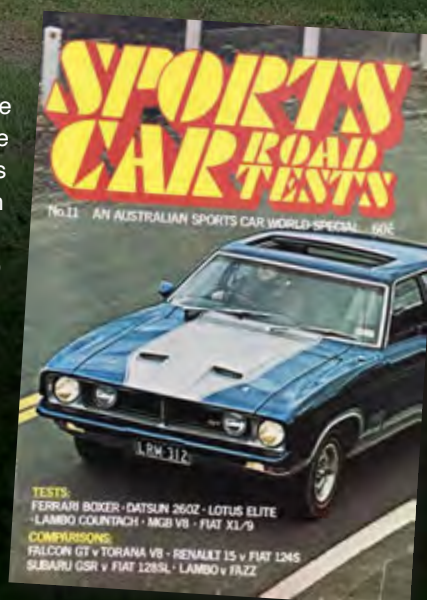
This pair of XB GTs rolled down the Broadmeadows assembly line back in 1975, just two months apart from each other, 44 years later and four owners each, they now share a garage together. Not surprisingly, they had two very different journeys to get where they are now.

Back in 1971, Paul Kennard was working as a mechanic at Courtney & Patterson Motors Pty Ltd in West Heidelberg, Victoria. During this time two brand spanking new XY GTHO Phase III's were ordered for customers, Paul was instantly taken by them, and it wasn't long before he managed to convince his father Merv to order one. Merv duly purchased a Frosted Pewter GTHO which happens to be the only documented 'Swap' GTHO [Ed: See

the breakout story to learn more about 'The Swap'], and he, and Paul soon put some hard miles under its belt on trips to various racetracks to watch the HO's battle it out on the circuits.

A few years later, Paul decided he had to get a slice of GT pie for himself and after spotting an Apollo Blue car featured on the cover of Sports Car World magazine, he decided now was the time.

Working for the dealership made the ordering process a breeze, optioning the car up with white trim with cloth inserts, air-conditioning, left side mirror, tinted band windscreen and Tutone bonnet.



The salesman also let Paul know that Ford were about to release the new option 54: Globe 15-inch alloy wheels. Paul duly added this to his order, making this only the second Ford to be factory optioned with the wheels – the first being the only HO compliant Calypso Green XA GTHO Phase IV!

Also supplied were a long range fuel tank to feed the big 351cid 4V donk and a pair of front and rear spoilers to keep it planted at high speed!

HONK IF YOU'RE HORNY

Paul also had a set of killer matching silver McLeod Ford 'Horn Stripes' fitted, toughening the XBs look even more. Some years later in 1993, the car suffered a minor collision resulting in a NOS front



Adrian can't decide which one he likes more. Hell, we'll take 'em both!

1975 FORD FALCON XB GT
SEDAN & HARDTOP



Above: Sleek and smooth lines, this XB GT looks the goods in Apollo Blue. Note: the dealer fitted Day Two radio aerial added to the rear quarter.

guard being fitted and subsequently Paul decided to treat the car to an external bare metal repaint to freshen it up, he left the rest of the car; under-bonnet, door jambs and interior untouched and original, but deleted the Horn Stripes! Paul kept the car for 26 years putting 238,000kms under its wheels. "I kept that car in pristine condition, it still looked new when I sold it," he said.



Even by today's standards, the level of luxury an XB GT emits is remarkable!

"IT IS A ONE OF ONE COMBINATION AND HE DULY PAID WHAT WAS A RECORD PRICE AT THE TIME!"

Not much is known about the car's second owner other than his name was Craig and that he purchased the car from Paul in 2001, after a short ownership the car then changed hands to Peter Tudball in 2003. Once again it was only a fleeting relationship as just twelve months later the car became available again, the car has never been advertised, only changing hands through word of mouth with Adrian Pegoraro being the next to get word. Funnily enough Adrian wasn't looking for an XB when the GT came onto his radar, but as he says, "I knew the car and thought it was an opportunity too good to miss," it is a one of one combination and he duly paid what was a record price at the time!

RED HOT HARDTOP

In contrast, the Red Pepper hardtop was trucked off to Adrian Brien Ford Pty Ltd in St Marys, South
...continued page 38



The cockpit, reserved for the pilot of this ship.



Above: According to the ACCHS report, this is the second Falcon GT to have been factory optioned with 15-inch Globe wheels, the first was the Calypso Green XA GTHO Phase IV. Below: With Falcon GTs, it's all in the numbers, and the numbers on this one show a factory built Apollo Blue XB GT sedan with white trim and cloth inserts.



1975 FORD FALCON XB GT
SEDAN & HARDTOP

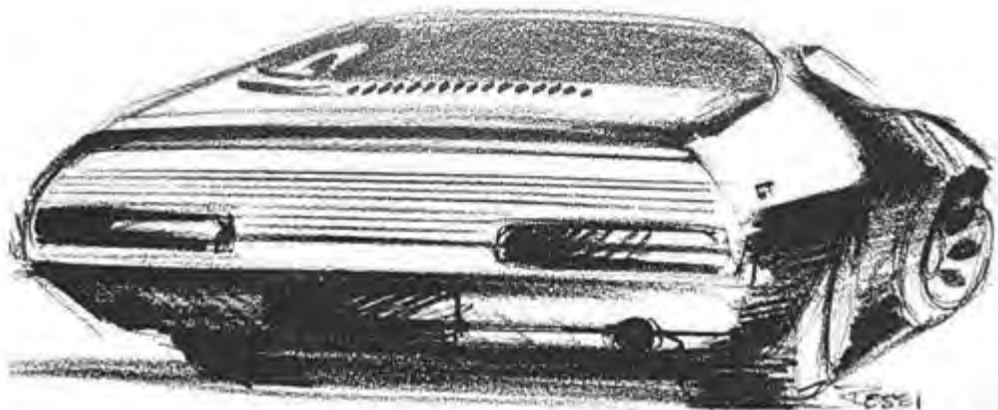


With more than a hint of Mustang influence, the snout of the XB GT looks just perfect.

...continued from page 34

Australia. It was sold to G M & B Townsend from nearby Blackwood, SA. Optioned with a 4-speed manual, Superfringe deluxe radio, wind-back sunroof, and also white vinyl interior and Globe road wheels, this unique GT remained with the Townsends for 18 years. During this time a tow bar was fitted along with over-riders, mud flaps and body protector strips. Interestingly, the car was also optioned with Option 55 Tutone bonnet, however, there doesn't seem to be any evidence of this in the early ownership history of this car's life when it was new.

In 1993, they advertised the car in Unique Cars, the advert stating 'One 69 Y.O. owner, never thrashed or smashed' it was sold with just 75,000kms and in



DID YOU KNOW?

The third generation Falcon was the first stand alone Australian design not based on an existing U.S. model. The main designer responsible for the XA-XB Falcon sedans and coupes was Brian Rossi, it is reputed that he sketched the distinctive and tough looking rear three quarters on a napkin in a bar on Waikiki beach in Hawaii. He sadly passed away last year.



Above: Let the sunshine in! Less than 250 XB GT hardtops came with a wind-back sunroof making them quite rare these days. White vinyl radiates a cool welcoming effect, which is complimented nicely with Red Pepper paintwork.



1975 FORD FALCON XB GT
SEDAN & HARDTOP

THREAD OF Survival
XB GT SEDAN

1975 - 2001
Purchased new by Paul Kennard Macleod, Vic

2001 - 2003
Sold to Craig Dayton Melbourne, Vic

2003 - 2004
Sold to Peter Tudball Western District, Vic

2004 - CURRENT
Sold to Adrian Pegoraro Melbourne, Vic

SPECIFICATIONS

- MODEL**
1975 Ford Falcon XB GT Sedan
- ODOMETER**
275,073kms
- POWER**
351cid Cleveland V8
300hp (225kW) @ 5,400rpm
- TRANSMISSION**
4-Speed Floor-shift Manual
- PAINT**
Apollo Blue (Code V)
- TRIM**
White Vinyl with Cloth Inserts (Code W2)
- OPTIONS**
Laminated tinted band windscreen (Option 11), Integrated Air Conditioning (Option 40), Globe Alloy Road Wheels (Option 54), Tutone Bonnet (Option 55) and Dual Mirrors (Option 61)
- DEALERSHIP**
Courtney & Patterson Motors Pty Ltd (Dealer Code 3133)
West Heidelberg, Victoria
- MODEL DURATION**
1973 - 1976
- NUMBER BUILT**
1,930
- ORIGINAL PRICE**
\$7,714



(ig-4) GT 351 XB 1975 MANUAL. 75,000 kms, original condition and documents, factory sunroof, 15 inch wheels. One 69 Y.O. owner, never thrashed or smashed. SBH 766. P.O. Box 742, Blackwood S.A. 5051. \$17,500



(UCP-019-423) FORD XB GT COUPE. A totally original unmolested manual GT. Documented 111,000 kms with Ford Verification Letter. Factory sunroof and factory fitted globe. 15 inch alloys. Unique and totally immaculate. Suit museum or serious collector. Reg. 1975. Ph 0411 047 764 SA. \$19,950

Above: Old classified adverts dated 1993 (left) and 1999. You'll note it was fitted with painted bumper overrides and a protector strip in the early days. no doubt a Day Two mod.

original condition to Laurie Cousin from Bridgewater, SA. Laurie certainly used the car, blazing the blacktop for the next six years covering a considerable 35,000kms in that time. It was during Laurie's ownership that the car was given a freshen-up with a doors closed repaint to help preserve its outstanding condition, the over-riders, protective moldings and mud flaps were removed and the original registration of 'SBH 766' was changed to '1975'. In 1999, the car was once again gracing the pages of Unique Cars magazine, with Laurie describing the car as 'Unique and totally immaculate. Suit museum or collector.'

CHASING UNICORNS

Moving to the present, the red Hardtop began to take on a unicorn like status for current owner Adrian Pegoraro, he had seen the car in an old copy of Unique Cars and by 2017, the idea of trying to track it down had become a mission. In Adrian's opinion

Below: Back when it was new, the original owner fitted Horn-style stripes across the flanks of the GT, and added his personalised number plate PK-555.



Adrian is still undecided...

last known licence plate XB-000, this led to an advert for the plates with the phone number, leading to third owner Paul Carthew, who had purchased it from Laurie. Paul had only covered 6,000kms in his 19 years of ownership with much of this covered by his mechanic on the initial trip from SA to NSW. A drive to Brisbane and another to Bathurst, consumed the majority of the remaining miles. The car was not for sale at the time, however, Adrian kept in contact and eventually a deal was struck and Adrian acquired his unicorn and promptly drove it home from Sydney.

LAST OF THE CLASSIC ERA FALCON GT

Introduced September 1973, Ford Australia's second model of their third generation Falcon, denoted XB, is often considered to have the best resolved styling of the XA-XC range. They were also to be the last of the line GTs of the period, as Ford withdrew its factory racing team in 1973, due to the fuel crisis and 'Supercar Scare', which also marked the death of the XA Phase GTHO Phase IV, despite this, Ford still provided backdoor support for several teams but would pull all support by 1978. This nullified the need for a sporting model as a way to homologate parts for their race cars and spelt the end of the GT.

Bold styling details made the XB GTs stand out, large NACA style scoops were punched into the bonnet and framed by bold contrasting and complementary striping and colour coded bumpers. Bonnet locking pins, spot lamps and a twin exhaust system also received some faux side vents. All GTs were fitted with the 351cid V8 with 300hp backed up by the robust 4-speed manual or 3-speed FMX auto delivering their bitumen burning grunt through a traction lock differential. For hauling the big GT back down from its 193kp/h top speed there were four wheel disc brakes which were now standard on GTs.

HARDTOP OR SEDAN - I'LL TAKE BOTH!

As the lucky owner of both of these cars, Adrian Pegoraro has had a long association with Aussie muscle cars and has built up a nice collection over the years. Whilst still keeping the keys down, both cars receive regular exercise, the annual Bright Hot Rod run being a favourite with Adrian and the fam-bam. His kids have a keen interest in the classics too which will most likely ensure these two rare Survivor GTs will be staying in the family for a good while to come. **SCA**



THREAD OF Survival
XB GT HARDTOP

1975 - 1993
Purchased new G M & B Townsend Blackwood, SA

1993 - 1999
Sold to Laurie Cousin Bridgewater, SA

1999 - 2018
Sold to Paul Carthew, Smithfield, NSW

2018 - CURRENT
Sold to Adrian Pegoraro Melbourne, Vic

SPECIFICATIONS

- MODEL**
1975 Ford Falcon XB GT Hardtop
- ODOMETER**
118,924kms
- POWER**
351cid Cleveland V8
300hp (225kW) @ 5,400rpm
- TRANSMISSION**
4-Speed Floor-shift Manual
- PAINT**
Red Pepper (Code X)
- TRIM**
White Vinyl (Code W)
- OPTIONS**
Wind-back Sun Roof (Option 10), Globe Alloy Road Wheels (Option 54), Tutone Bonnet (Option 55) and Superfringe Deluxe Push Button Radio (Option 71)
- DEALERSHIP**
Adrian Brien Ford Pty Ltd (Dealer Code 4117)
St Mary's South Australia
- MODEL DURATION**
1973 - 1976
- NUMBER BUILT**
941
- ORIGINAL PRICE**
\$8,046

SINCE DAY DOT

Dot, now 92 years old, has owned her 1969 Falcon XW GT since, well... day dot. Tracking down this elusive one 'lady' owner Survivor GT though, proved difficult with lots of dead-ends until an uncanny event took place...

words & photos Ross Vasse **special thanks** Deano Sant, Mark Barraclough, Bob Sahota, Don Campanile, Jeanette, Jenny, David, Dot, Autopics and Australian Classic Car History Services **data** www.acchs.com.au

Asking those at the forefront of the Falcon GT fraternity if they knew of how to contact the owner of this GT was proving fruitless. At the time, nearly everyone remembered seeing the GT awhile back but no one knew a name or how to contact her, that is until Deano Sant came through with a photo of Dot standing next to her GT with a small display board showing her

name, he mentioned that she had lived somewhere in the Blue Mountains.

This lead to a check with Australian Classic Car History Services (ACCHS for short, pronounced 'axe') who provide birth certificates for the classic era Falcon GTs, similar to service of that of Marti Auto Works with the Marti report for Mustangs in the USA. ACCHS cross-checked the official Ford production

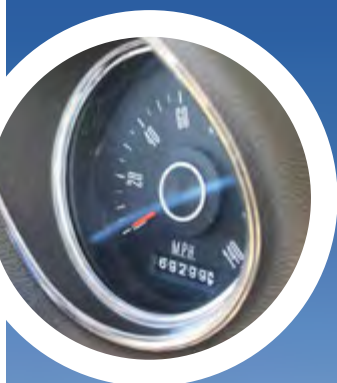
records to find that only seven XW GTs were built in Diamond White with Dark Saddle trim and a black vinyl roof, two of which were sold in rural New South Wales, one of which was automatic sold new near the Blue Mountains.

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES!

Narrowing it down, a White Pages search was performed which did not bear fruit until we looked through an old phone directory from more than a decade ago, which provided a phone number with the correct initial and last name. Dialling the number, it was answered by a lovely lady named Jeanette whose business was remedial massage and aromatherapy. After explaining that we were seeking to make contact with Dot [Ed: last name withheld], Jeanette asked a fellow work colleague who was surprised to learn that a one owner Falcon GT even existed! Then just as we were about to end the call, Jeanette says, "Hang on a minute, we had a call earlier this morning from a young lady with the same last name, she said she would call back later today to make an appointment, I could ask her



You'd be hard pressed to find another one 'lady' owner muscle car Survivor.



if you like..." Leaving our contact details we had just thanked Jeanette and were about to hang up when she said, "Wait a minute, the other phone is ringing, it could be her."

We couldn't believe our ears on overhearing the conversation, "Yes, that time is fine we'll see you Friday. Whilst I have you, we have a gentleman from a car magazine on the phone looking for a Dot with the same last name would you know her?" asked Jeanette, and then continued. "Oh great, here's his number if you could give him a call," she said before ending the call and returning to our call with the good news.

What are the chances of looking for someone, phoning an incorrect random number, and then the grandson's wife calling in at the very same time! Needless to say, within a day we were in contact with Dot and her son David to tell us the story of this one owner Survivor.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Dot tells us that her and late husband Ernest, better known as 'Digger' bought the GT new on Wednesday the 12th of November 1969 from Genders Motors in NSW. "We were looking at buying a new Holden Brougham when our eldest son David talked us into ordering a GT," tells Dot. "We placed an order with Basil Genders for a Diamond White one with a black vinyl roof," continues Dot, "Vinyl roofs were a thing of the time, and we liked it."



XW GT'S ABROAD

Australian built XW GTs and HOs were exported abroad to New Zealand, Fiji, Japan, the UK and other non-franchised overseas dealers. Two Australian built XW GTs was sent to South Africa for evaluation which saw some 343 Fairmont XW GTs sent to South Africa thereafter in CKD (completely knocked down) kit form between July 1970 and March 1971 for assembly at their Port Elizabeth plant. These South African GTs had mostly a different colour pallet to their Aussie cousins with hues such as Wimbledon White, Sunset Red, Amber Gold, Everglade, and Fern, although Candy Apple Red and Silver Fox were also available. Interior trims were either black vinyl or cherry red. All South African Fairmont XW GTs were fitted with the US sourced 351 Cleveland 2V engine and C4 transmission. Options for South Africa were limited to power steering, air conditioning and vinyl roofs.



Despite showing its age, the engine has always been well maintained.



Above left: The side winder Superroo stripes are a little tired and shabby, but they're only original once! Top: The XW GT's grille was a combination of metal and plastic. Above right: Just like the car, this back window sticker is also a Survivor. Left: Can you imagine tailgaters looking puzzled at Dot's car when it was new. Below: The Falcon GT's cockpit was not unlike that of a fighter jet with its well placed gauges and T-bar shifter that looks like the thrust lever.



Above left: The introduction of the scoop was a pretty daring and bold design by 1960 standards. Left: It's hard to find an early Falcon that has never experienced battery splatter on the engine bay paintwork. Bottom left: The original log books are kept safely in the glovebox. Below: Do you know what this does? It scrapes the curb when parking so you know your distance is spot on.



SPECIFICATIONS

- MODEL**
1969 Ford Falcon XW GT
- ODOMETER**
69,299 miles
- POWER**
351cid Windsor V8 (Code T)
290bhp (216kW) @ 4,800rpm
- TRANSMISSION**
3-Speed FMX Automatic (Code B)
- PAINT**
Diamond White (Code R)
- TRIM**
Dark Saddle (Code K)
- OPTIONS**
Power steering (06), Laminated windscreen (11), Black vinyl roof (16), Superfringe radio (71) and Mudflaps
- DEALERSHIP**
Genders Motors (Dealer 2442)
Lithgow, NSW
- MODEL DURATION**
1969 – 1970
- NUMBER BUILT**
1,178 (Windsor V8)
- ORIGINAL PRICE**
\$4,848

“One of our neighbours called to tell us the truck with our car was parked opposite the pine forest near the cemetery,” says Dot of hearing the news that her GT had arrived. “My husband and I went to the Ford dealer later that afternoon to see our car, they said they needed a day for pre-delivery to have it ready for us.”

The GT was kept locked up in the garage, and used sparingly for special occasions such as weddings, and long trips to the central coast. “We drove it to our son’s wedding in Bendigo, getting us there in superb comfort,” tells Dot, “It has never let us down.”

After Dot’s husband Digger passed away in 1976 aged just 50, Dot was left to run their trucking business which they had started together in 1952. A contract with the DMR (Department of Main Roads) for 52 years kept her busy, until she decided to retire in 2004 aged 76 years old. A keen golfer, Dot has enjoyed some well-deserved time out chasing that little white ball across the greens, in fact, her handicap is down to 21 and she’s scored a hole in one on two occasions!

Up until her late 70s, Dot was still actively water skiing! Also until recently, she was still mowing her own lawns. Oh, and she also doesn’t mind a bit of knitting in her spare time. Dot doesn’t drive the Falcon GT as much as she’d like now, but when she does she says, “People twist their heads off their necks watching me drive by.”

Dot has only ever entered her GT in a car show once where it was admired by many, especially given that it was fitted with Fairmont wheel arch moulds from the factory.

Dot’s son David tells, “After talking Mum and Dad

FOR SALE

THE BILL BOURKE SPECIAL

RARE FACTORY 428 XWGT

The number plates THE 428 accompany the vehicle.



This car was handmade for Ford's Managing Director, Bill Bourke, in 1970 to his own specifications, and his idea initiated the concept of the GTHO Falcons of that era. It is the only car made by Ford Australia with a "Big Block" motor – a 428 cubic inch Shelby equipped Cobra Jet. It boasts many features not found in Ford Vehicles until later years, which makes "The Bill Bourke Special" even more unique and desirable.

This exceptional vehicle is in excellent condition representing an outstanding investment as a piece of Australian motoring history, which should be preserved for all enthusiasts of muscle cars to enjoy.

\$57,500
Ph.: 362 3414

DID YOU KNOW? Probably one of the most famous XW GTs was the Bill Bourke Special which was a standard GT sent to the USA to be fitted with a big block 428cid V8.

“PEOPLE TWIST THEIR HEADS OFF THEIR NECKS WATCHING ME DRIVE BY.”



Dot’s GT is quite an unusual combination with its black vinyl roof, dark saddle trim, and wheel arch moulds.

into buying the GT, I bought an XT GT myself a year later – it’s been sitting in the shed covered in dust and cobwebs with flat tyres for decades,” before continuing, “I must get it back on the road someday.”

Dot’s other son Grahame purchased a Capri GT/V6 new, in the same colour and trim combination as the XW GT. “We’ve always had big cars with V8s like Customlines and Mainlines growing up, but Dad had a Fiat 2300 which was handed down to my brother Grahame when Mum got her GT,” tells David.

“Our family have always liked cars with appeal.” Both David and Grahame were lucky to drive their Mum’s GT when it was new.

BY THE NUMBERS

Genders Motors Ford was no stranger to selling high-performance cars, in fact they have sold 13 XW GTs in total, five that were Windsor powered like Dot’s car, and the rest with Cleveland V8 engines. Genders also ordered a GT-HO Phase 1 and a GT-HO Phase 2 according to Australian Classic Car History Services (www.acchs.com.au), with the former entered in the Hardie-Ferodo 500 numbered 63D driven by R (Bob) Genders and J (Joe) Butta at Bathurst in 1969, finishing 12th overall.

Reminiscing about her GT, Dot becomes very sentimental, “We have a lot of memories with that car... it’s our pride and joy.”

Dot remembers the time she was pulled over by the police when taking her mother to the chiropractor in Bathurst, “He said that I was supposedly speeding



Above: No strangers to high-performance, Genders Motors Ford campaigns a GT-HO at Bathurst. Below: Dot, Digger and their two boys, David and Grahame.



which I wasn’t,” and then continues, “he was a bit of a louse trying to be stern with me, telling me I shouldn’t be driving such a big car.” Dot was having none of it, and gave him a piece of her mind, “Mum was hitting me on the leg saying, ‘You’ll be put in jail!’ so I thought I better stop and accept the ticket,” chuckles Dot.

NEARLY 50 YEARS OF OWNERSHIP

With such fond memories over a lifetime, Dot cannot fathom ever letting go of her GT as it will remain in the family for a long time to come. At a guess, we’d say there wouldn’t be another one ‘lady’ owner Falcon GT left, let alone an unrestored Survivor example. **SCA**



Dot has only ever displayed her GT at a show once.



THE JOHN GOSS SPECIAL

words Paul Murrell **photos** Ross Vasse (at Jack Badcock Memorial, Westbury Tas)
special thanks John Goss, Shazza, Peter Cassidy, Wade Hill, Sheriff Caravans Launceston, Mark Barraclough, Australian Classic Car History Services, Gav Brown, Cameron Manewell



The John Goss Special was one of the early examples of a "Limited Edition Package" but after decades in the shadow of its more illustrious Ford siblings, it has become highly collectable in its own right.

By the mid-70s, motor racing was becoming ever more professional, with factory-backed teams vying for supremacy. But proving that there's always room for a talented loner, privateer John Goss (partnered by Kevin Bartlett) surprised everyone by winning the 1974 Bathurst 1000 in the McLeod Ford Falcon XA GT Hardtop.

Ford Australia overcame its surprise and was quick to capitalise on the win by releasing a limited

edition XB Falcon 500 Hardtop in 1975, called the John Goss Special.

GOOD MARKETING

The John Goss Special wasn't a separate model but a well-specified XB Falcon 500 'Limited Edition' Hardtop specially painted in distinctive and unique livery.

Power came from the 302-cubic inch Cleveland V8 and each car came complete with the GS Rallye

Pack that included full instrumentation, three-spoke imitation wood steering wheel, GT bonnet vents, locking hood pins and white painted 12-slot styled steel wheels. They also got the purely cosmetic side body vents from the Falcon GT Hardtop.

Despite some unsubstantiated claims to the contrary, the John Goss Special was available exclusively in just two colours: Apollo Blue metallic or Emerald Fire green over a mostly-Polar White body. The accent colours of blue or green were applied to the bonnet, engine bay, chassis, lower sail sections, the A-pillar and on the feature panel between the tail lights. Road wheels, front grille assembly and bumper bars were painted in Polar White. Orange side stripes and oversized '302' decals completed

the makeover. Interior trim was white vinyl.

A Ford dealer bulletin dated July 30, 1975 confirmed that the John Goss Special was to be fitted with regular production options (RPO) such as four-speed manual transmission or three-speed T-bar automatic, sports console, carpets, 185SR14 steel belt radial tyres, sports



"FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, SURVIVOR CAR AUSTRALIA MAGAZINE, CAN ACCURATELY ANNOUNCE THAT 700 JOHN GOSS SPECIALS WERE INDEED BUILT."



1975 FORD XB FALCON 500 'JOHN GOSS SPECIAL' HARDTOP

handling suspension and Rallye Pack ('without stripe'). It concluded: "All other minor options as available on 500 Hardtop can be specified."

The first John Goss Special was released in July 1975 and the last one rolled off the line in November. Until now, actual production numbers had never been released with estimates ranging from just 260 to as many as 800. Motor Manual tested a John Goss Special in January 1976, tester Tim Britten wrote that Ford was in production of "the second run of 400" but since then, production output has never been confirmed. For the first time ever, Survivor Car Australia magazine, can accurately announce that 700 John Goss Specials were indeed built. There were 400 built in the first batch of production, and 300 built in the second batch. Of all of these, 371 were Apollo Blue, and our feature Survivor is just 1 of 193 built with the 4-speed manual gearbox. See page 41 for the complete production breakdown.

THERE'S MONEY IN CARAVANS

The first (and only previous) owner of this immaculate Survivor was Gerald Sheriff of Launceston, Tasmania. Mr Sheriff owned the eponymous Sheriff Caravans and was something of a Ford fan; he also owned a lime green Falcon XB GT Hardtop. The two cars must have made an impressive display.

Gerald Sheriff ordered a number of Day Two options to be fitted by the dealer, including



Peter Cassidy, the current owner took these photos in 1978.



The cloth inserts were fitted by the dealer when it was new, and have survived in superb condition!



Mint! Everything is like new inside, and everything works.



DID YOU KNOW? Despite being called the John Goss Special and advertised as such, John Goss's name doesn't appear anywhere on the car!

fog lights, colour coded Hot Wire mag wheels to replace the Polar White standard steel wheels, lurid seat inserts, and spoilers front and rear. As current owner Peter Cassidy comments, "There must have been a lot of money in caravans!"

OWNING THE GOSS

Peter Cassidy isn't your usual rusted-on Ford or Holden man. When he first saw the Apollo Blue and white John Goss Special at Tilford Motors in Hobart, it was an immediate attraction. "I saw it and decided I liked it," he recalls of that day way back in 1978 when he traded his ZB Fairlane. Gerald Sheriff must have enjoyed his Goss Special because he put 50,000 kilometres on the odometer between 1975 and 1978, when Peter fell in love with it. "The Goss Special was \$6,500, and I could have bought a '68 Falcon GT for \$5,000. I should have bought them both!"

Since then, the car has had sparing use, adding a paltry 35,000 additional kilometres in the last 39 years – that's less than 900 kilometres per year! Peter explains why. "The car is just as it was sold new. I take it out twice a year and start it up regularly and run it around the block." Peter has taken the car to a couple of car shows, but not "for a couple of years because too many people keep asking if it's for sale." It isn't!

...Continued page 58



Large 302 decals adorn each fender adding to that 'sporty GT' feel, but kept insurance premiums at bay flying under the radar as just a Falcon 500 on paper.

FALCON-FAIRLANE XA-XB-XC-XD-XE-XF-XG-XH-XI-XJ-XK-XL-XM-XN-XO-XP-XQ-XR-XS-XT-XU-XV-XW-XX-XY-XZ

SECTION EXTERIOR TRANSFER

Colour	Type	Front Fender	Front Door	Rear Quarter Panel	Rear Panel - Side	Rear Panel - Centre	Trunk - Front Panel	Trunk - Rear Panel
Orange	Non-reflective	XB 180143-3AA -D.N.S.	XB 89 208046-8AA -D.N.S.	XB 89 251151-3AA -D.N.S.	XB 89 281174-9AA -D.N.S.	XB 89 600114-AA -D.N.S.	XB 180174-AA -D.N.S.	XB 89 423030-AA -D.N.S.
Orange	Reflective	XB 180143-1AA -D.N.S.	XB 89 208046-1AA -D.N.S.	XB 89 251151-1AA -D.N.S.	XB 89 281174-1AA -D.N.S.	XB 89 600114-1AA -D.N.S.	XB 180174-1AA -D.N.S.	XB 89 423030-1AA -D.N.S.

XB - BODY SIDE TRANSFER - SPORTS PACK - BODY TYPE 88

INFORMATION SHEET

JOHN GOSS FALCON HARDTOP

Information from Dealer Bulletin, July 30, 1975.

The John Goss Hardtop to be introduced in August 1975.

The vehicle will be a base Falcon 500 Hardtop fitted with the following regular production options (RPO).

- 302 cubic inch V8 engine
- 4 speed manual transmission or 7-Bar automatic 3 speed.
- Sports console.
- Carpets.
- 165 SR x 14 steel belt radial tyres.
- Sports handling suspension.
- Rallye pack (without stripe)

The main body colour of these cars is white with two accent colours available - Apollo Blue and Emerald Fire. All interior trim is white vinyl.

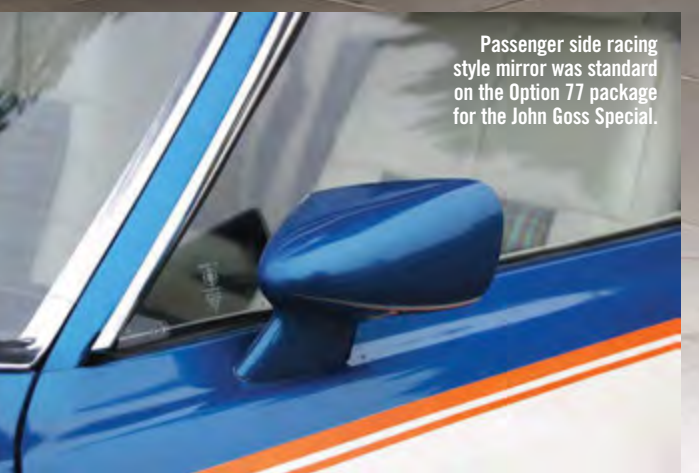
Each car has special hood, belt line and A pillar paint treatment accent colours, body side and rear end tape stripes plus GT bodyside and back panel paint treatment in the accent colours.

All other minor options as available on 500 Hardtop can be specified.

According to the parts book, reflective stripes were also available!



Aside from the snorkel being removed for better air-flow, the engine bay is standard.



Passenger side racing style mirror was standard on the Option 77 package for the John Goss Special.



It's not often you see a bootmat this neat.



'Day Two' Hotwires were colour-coded, and fitted to the Goss when it was delivered new to the first owner.



A total of 700 John Goss Specials were built, of these, 371 were Apollo Blue and 329 were Emerald Fire.

BY THE NUMBERS

It has always been a mystery as to how many John Goss Specials the Ford Motor Company of Australia actually built. A mystery that is, until now!

For the first time, Survivor Car Australia magazine can accurately announce that **700** XB Falcon 500 John Goss Specials hardtops were indeed built. There were **400** built in the first batch in July 1975, and a further **300** built in the second batch ending in November.

Of all 700 John Goss Specials, 386 were built with the 4-speed manual, with the remaining 314 fitted with T-bar automatics. Apollo Blue was more popular with 371 built in total. The rest, a total of 329, were painted Emerald Fire. Of each colour, there were 193 made with the 4-Speed manual gearbox, leaving 178 cars in Apollo Blue and 136 in Emerald Fire with automatics. All John Goss Specials had the standard Falcon 500 vinyl interior in white.



Above: If you've found a 1975 XB Falcon hardtop with a model code 18313, and a chassis number prefixed with JG65R, which has the engine code 'Y' on the identification plates, with either an 'L' or 'B' code for the transmission, and either an 'S' or 'Q' as the paint code, then you're heading in the right direction towards verifying it as a John Goss Special.

This XB Falcon 500 hardtop special package was cooked up by Ford's gun sales and marketing executives, Max Gransden and Keith Horner to lure the youth market to showrooms. The challenge was to deliver a youthful appealing hardtop that wasn't a GT, in order to skirt around insurance companies who were charging premiums like wounded

bulls. A talented young Ford designer, John Orlando Birt was given the project of giving the Falcon package a special look whilst utilising the base hardtop fitted with the smaller 302cid Cleveland V8. The JGS was part of Ford's 50th Anniversary celebration models which included the gold P5 LTD Town Car, an anniversary model Fairlane, and a Falcon

Sovereign. Pricing for these hardtops started from \$5,716 for the first batch, and from \$6,217 for the second batch.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A JGS

Since Ford never assigned a specific model code to the John Goss Special, identification requires caution. The VIN should begin with JG65R (followed by S – J – U or M



Matching Numbers: The engine number matches the chassis number, which both match the ID plates.

denoting July, September, October or November build date). Take for example our feature John Goss Special – JG65RS26126K which decodes as follows; J is for Australia, G indicates Broadmeadows, 65 identifies the Falcon 500 Hardtop, R indicates 1975, S decodes as being built in July, which is then followed by the five digit serial number and the final K, identifying it as a V8. The model code for all John Goss Specials is 18313, the same as the standard Falcon 500 hardtop. Whilst Ford records state there were no John Goss Specials built in August 1975, the compliance date for the July built cars is 08/75.

For the John Goss Special, three identifiers should be present. The first of these three identifiers is the JG65 number which should be stamped on the passenger side shocker tower. The second identifier is the engine number which is also prefixed with the same JG65 number, and can be found on the passenger side of the engine block, above the fuel pump. The final identifier, are the all-important identification plates which are affixed with rivets to the passenger side of the bulkhead firewall. All three identifiers should match.

The engine code on the

identification tags should be a 'Y' denoting the 302 cubic inch Cleveland V8. A 4-Speed manual John Goss Special is stamped with an 'L' in the space for the transmission code, whilst the letter 'B' indicates an automatic.

The paint code should either be code 'S' for the Apollo Blue/Polar White, or code 'Q' for the Emerald Fire/Polar White version. The trim code on the identification plate will be a 'W' for white. Here's where it gets tricky, the regular Ford paint code for Apollo Blue was code 'V', and code 'P' for Emerald Fire but Ford in their wisdom changed them to code 'S' – Apollo Blue over Polar White, and code 'Q' – Emerald Fire over Polar White for the John Goss Special only. To further confuse the topic, when these same codes are applied to the 1976 XB models, paint code 'S' denoted Brown Satin and paint code 'Q' represented Coolmint Green! And there were definitely no John Goss Specials built in 1976. You'll need your wits about you when considering the purchase of a John Goss Special, especially if it is not an unrestored Survivor.

So, if you've found a 1975 XB Falcon hardtop with a model code 18313, and a chassis number prefixed with

JG65R, which has the engine code 'Y' on the identification plates, with either an 'L' or 'B' code for the transmission, and either an 'S' or 'Q' as the paint code, then you're heading in the right direction towards verifying it as a John Goss Special. There is however one more step to confirming a JGS.

REGULAR PRODUCTION OPTION 77

All John Goss Specials were allocated with the Regular Production Option (RPO) 77 – Value Add Package for 1975. This 'Value Add Package' consisted of (paint scheme, colour coded bumpers and grille, colour coded rallye wheels and large 302 decals). Other options that made up a John Goss Special were RPO 32 – Sports Console, RPO 39 – Carpets, RPO 48 – Grand Sports Rallye Package and RPO 68 – Sports Handling Suspension. Optional extras included power steering (RPO 06) and integrated air-conditioning (RPO 40) but very few were built with these.

Appearances to the contrary, the initial batch of 400 John Goss Special hardtops were first painted in the accent colour (Apollo Blue or Emerald Fire) and the Polar White was then painted over the top. This makes it quite easy to

identify how original any car is because the engine bay should all be either blue or green, not white. According to Mark Barracough of Australian Classic Car History Services, "The second batch were painted white first, and therefore had white engine bays beneath the green or blue paint." Orange pinstripes accented the flanks, the Ford parts manual indicates there was a reflective pinstripe option also available. Unlike standard Falcons, the Goss Specials did not wear badges on the side panels, only a large '302' decal and that unique paint job.

Coincidentally, nowhere on the John Goss Special did his namesake appear. At the time, Allan Moffat was approached to lend his name to publicise the special XB hardtop package on TV, and said yes, but by the time the first batch of 400 were built, Moffat had disappeared overseas for a holiday and was not on hand to make the TV commercial. Goss as a result was asked to appear in the TV commercials in prime time for selling these special hardtops before the Bathurst. Ford had always been reluctant to add a person's name to one of their models, although the Allan Moffat Special in the XC range did receive the distinctive

1975 FORD XB FALCON 500 'JOHN GOSS SPECIAL' HARDTOP

Australian flag with Moffat's signature on the door with Henry Ford II's permission. And although Goss' name did not appear on the special XB hardtop, inadvertently he did get his initials on the chassis number which was prefixed by JG65!

RUMOUR HAS IT...

There have been rumours of John Goss Specials in colours other than blue/white and green/white. One rumour suggests at least one car in brown (Walnut Glow over Polar White), but Ford's own records refute that. It could have been a dealer-built one-off, but we can find no record of that either.

Perhaps the source of this rumour was from confusion with the 1976 XB colour range with listed code 'S' as Brown Satin, in any case, no record exists of such a car.

OTHER GOSS SPECIALS

When we asked John Goss, he said he remembered one in "beige or brown" but further research indicates this was probably one of a batch of "Goss Specials" (not 'John Goss Specials') built for Sydney (Rockdale) dealer McLeod Ford in the XC range.

John Goss was behind this aftermarket Goss Special in the XC range which was through McLeod Ford.



Trad Trim & Sunroofs built Goss Specials in the XD Falcon range, which could be had with the 4.1 litre six (as shown) or the 4.9 and 5.8 litre V8.

These XC Falcon two-doors were finished in a single colour and had a signature line running from the front of the front guard and under the side windows. It widened to about two inches where the words "Goss Special" appeared on

the front guard.

A Goss Special XD Falcon was also available as an after-market offering by Trad Trim & Sunroofs of Sydney, NSW. These comprised of a performance dress-up kit with flares, bonnet bulge, front &

rear spoilers, upgraded sports suspension, Auger 'Turbo' alloy wheels and special Goss striping. Sunroofs were an optional extra.

Rumour has it only seven of these XD Falcon Goss Specials were ever made.



1975 FORD XB FALCON 500 HARDTOP 'JOHN GOSS SPECIAL'

700 BUILT IN TOTAL

400 IN 1ST BATCH (JULY 1975) - **300** IN 2ND BATCH (SEPT, OCT, NOV 1975)

386 WERE 4-SPEEDS - **314** WERE AUTOMATICS

371 WERE **APOLLO BLUE** (PAINT CODE S)

WITH **193** FITTED WITH 4-SPEEDS,
AND **178** FITTED WITH AUTOMATICS.

329 WERE **EMERALD GREEN** (PAINT CODE Q)

WITH **193** FITTED WITH 4-SPEEDS
AND **136** FITTED WITH AUTOMATICS.

ALL 700 HAD WHITE TRIM

ALL HAD THE Y CODE 302 CUBIC INCH CLEVELAND V8

ALL HAD THE RPO 77 OPTION CODE

THREAD OF **Survival**

1975 - 1978

Bought new by Gerald Sheriff
G M Jackson Ford
Launceston, Tas

1978 - CURRENT

Sold to Peter Cassidy
Launceston, Tas



Peter's daily driver is this HK Monaro.

... continued from page 52

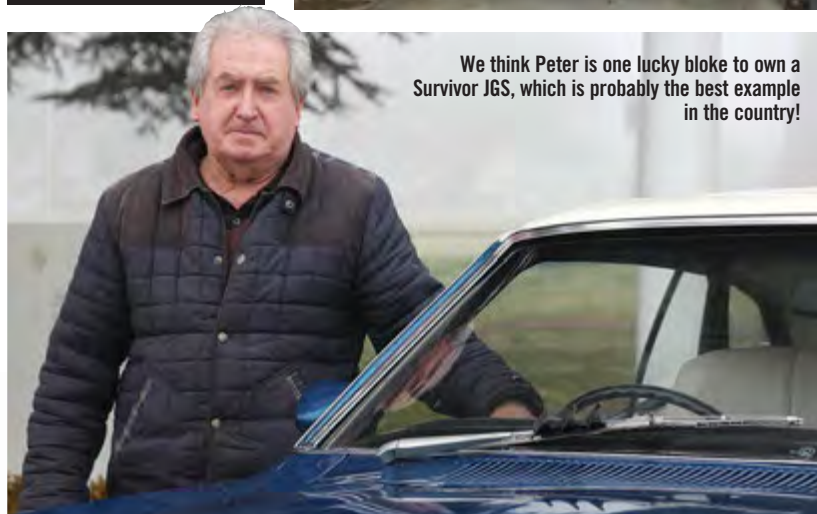
MONARO DAILY DRIVER

Another reason Peter's immaculate John Goss Special stays home is that he also owns a 1968 Holden Monaro GTS fitted with the 308 V8 and four-speed manual gearbox. "I drive the Monaro quite a lot," he says, "but not the Ford because it's such a good car, some idiot might run into it. Modern drivers don't make allowances." He bought the Monaro after seeing it broken down by the side of the road. "My daughter knew the young bloke who owned it and I told him I'd give him \$1,800 for it. He took the money to buy something else."

And Peter is a true custodian of his classic Survivors. "I've never touched the Falcon in all the years I've had it. I just do enough to keep it going. You could spend every weekend on them if you wanted, but if it's going, leave it alone. I've done a bit of work to the Monaro - when something goes wrong, I'll fix it and just keep driving."

Naturally, there's plenty of interest in buying both the John Goss Special and the Monaro, if Peter ever considered selling. "I've got a few blokes who are serious about buying. If I had a dozen John Goss hardtops, I could sell them all." We're glad to say, that's not going to happen. Survivors like these belong with their loving owners. **SCA**

We think Peter is one lucky bloke to own a Survivor J6S, which is probably the best example in the country!



SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL

1975 XB Ford Falcon 500 'John Goss Special' Hardtop

ODOMETER

85,301 km

POWER

302cid Cleveland V8
240bhp (179kW) @ 5000 rpm

TRANSMISSION

4-speed floor-mounted manual (Code L)

PAINT

Apollo Blue metallic over Polar White (Paint Code S)

TRIM

White Vinyl, with 'Day Two' fabric inserts (Trim Code W)

OPTIONS

Sports Console (Option 32), Carpets (Option 39), Grand Sport Rallye Pack (Option 48), Sports Handling Suspension (Option 68), Value Add Pack - John Goss Special (Option 77), Fog lights, front and rear spoilers, fabric seat inserts, colour coded Hot Wire mag wheels and towbar.

DEALERSHIP

G M Jackson Ford (Dealer Code 3621) Launceston Tasmania

MODEL DURATION

July - November 1975

NUMBER BUILT

700

ORIGINAL PRICE

\$5,716

"I DRIVE THE MONARO QUITE A LOT ... BUT NOT THE FORD BECAUSE IT'S SUCH A GOOD CAR, SOME IDIOT MIGHT RUN INTO IT. MODERN DRIVERS DON'T MAKE ALLOWANCES."



THE EVER-TALENTED MR GOSS

Born on the 2nd May 1943 in Glen Iris, Victoria, John Goss is a retired motor racing legend who competed in Series Production, Formula 5000, Group C and Group A throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Having moved from Victoria to Tasmania as a child, Goss began racing in his adopted state in FJ Holdens and Ford Customlines. He then built his own sports car, the Tornado Ford which he took to the mainland with some success.

Goss was an aggressive and talented driver who competed (and won) against teams with much larger budgets and reputations. Teamed with Kevin Bartlett in the McLeod team XA Falcon GT hardtop, he won the 1974 Bathurst 1000 and again (this time in a Jaguar with Armin Hahne) in 1985. Then he went on and won the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne in 1976, making him the only driver to have won both of Australia's most prestigious races. He retired in 1995.

Goss debuted at Bathurst in 1969, with the McLeod Ford backed XW GT-HO painted Starlight Blue. The chequered windscreen banner, and bright yellow wheels on his True Blue 1970 XW GT-HO Phase II really stood out. For 1971 and 1972, Goss fronted the grid with a new GT-HO Phase III also in True Blue with yellow wheels.

AN ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER

Goss's first XA hardtop race



car was painted in yellow, in keeping with his Shell sponsorship. Once Shell moved on, his livery changed to blue. The bonnet and A-pillars were painted in Indigo Blue, which also continued in a strip below the side windows. The lower body was painted in True Blue, accentuating the style line. Keith Horner, vice president Sales and Marketing at Ford Australia wanted a distinctive livery for the John Goss Special and followed the lead set by Goss's race car.

Goss went on to race an XB hardtop, which was followed by an XC hardtop in a variety of different hues before settling in a V12 powered Jaguar XJS throughout the 1980s. He drove a Ford Sierra RS500 for Glenn Seton Racing in 1989, then paired with Phil Ward in his final Bathurst in 1990 driving a Mercedes-Benz 190E.

Goss gained a reputation for long acceptance speeches, with many joking that his victory speech on the Bathurst podium following his 1974 win took almost as long as the race itself! **SCA**

Left: John Goss and Armin Hahne won Bathurst 1985 in a Jaguar XJ-S.





NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

The National Automobile Museum of Tasmania has been entrusted with some spectacular cars over the years, but few would have been as original as Ken Sims' E49 'Big Tank' Charger R/T. With just 29,690 miles on the clock, this untouched Hemi has to be seen to be believed.

words Nik Bruce **photos** Ross Vasse

special thanks Ken Sims, Phil Costello – National Automobile Museum of Tasmania (NAMT), Australian Classic Car History Services

Hey, Charger! went the TV ad. And almost overnight, Chrysler's bold new coupé went from being a quirky alternative to the usual Falcon or Monaro, to become one of most desirable cars in Australia. It was a success beyond anyone's wildest dreams.

Within months of its launch in August 1971, Chrysler was churning out an incredible 83 Chargers a day – and it still wasn't enough to keep up with demand.

Considering that it had been developed on a shoe-string budget from the ho-hum VH sedan, Chrysler really did make the 'unbelievable happen' with the Charger.



A WEAPON OF MASS DISTRACTION!

Elegant and muscular, the achingly pretty fastback was a brilliantly cohesive piece of design. But while even the base-model Charger could turn heads, the high-performance R/Ts were on a different level entirely. Armed with a raucous 302bhp Hemi Six, lurid paint jobs and funky graphics, the R/T Chargers really were weapons of mass distraction.

Ken Sims had been driving his beloved S Model Valiant for six years when the Charger hit the showrooms. At the time, life was ticking along quite nicely for the 34-year-old Tasmanian. He had a good job in the construction industry, a wife, two boys and a home in the lush countryside south of Ulverstone. He



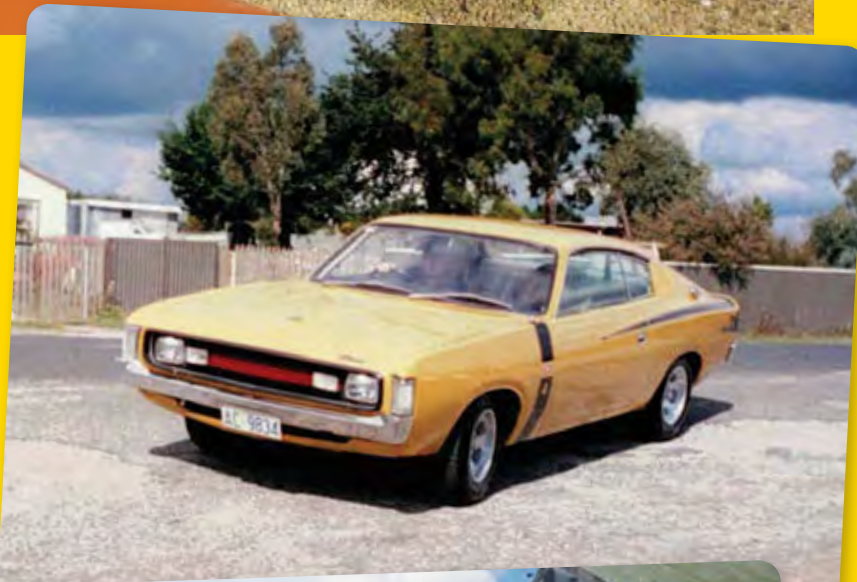


This is the closest thing you'll ever see to a brand new R/T E49 'Big Tank'.



wasn't in any particular hurry to replace the old Valiant (in fact, he still owns it to this very day!) but when a second-hand E49 Charger turned up in Reeman and Mannings' Launceston showroom at the tail end of 1973, he couldn't resist having a closer look.

"I wasn't looking for an R/T or anything like that, but I was a bit of a Chrysler buff at the time, as I'd had such a great run with the S model," remembers Ken. "The 'Hey, Charger!' business was on at the time and I saw the car advertised in the local paper



"I SAW THE CAR ADVERTISED IN THE LOCAL PAPER AND THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE NICE TO HAVE ONE."

and thought it might be nice to have one."

As it turns out, Ken was in for a pleasant surprise when he turned up to have a look at the car. Resplendent in its 'Hot Mustard' paint scheme, the E49 had all the right options, including the A84 'Big Tank' Track Pack, ROH alloys and quicker steering. Inside, the standard A95 Interior Pack was matched with optional tan vinyl upholstery. Best of all, its original owner, Graham Maxwell, had put just 2,000 miles on the clock since he bought it a few months prior.

"He apparently ended up trading it in on a station wagon because it was too much of a



Before it came to the museum, the Charger was a daily driver – although used sparingly.

NATIONAL AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM OF TASMANIA

If you ever visit the Apple Isle, make sure the National Automobile Museum of Tasmania is on your 'to do' list. Located in the middle of Launceston, the NAMT regularly plays host to some of the rarest and most historically significant cars in Australia, while the four specially themed displays it holds each year, are always particularly popular.

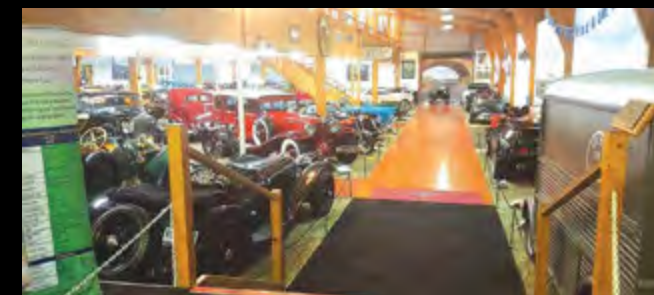
"All the cars in the museum are privately owned and on loan," says museum manager, Phil Costello. "We've been lucky enough to display some pretty special cars over the years. Right now, we have a Tucker and two Cords on display. We also held a few Peter Brock-themed displays and had some of his road and race

cars at the museum, which were very popular.

"Next month we're doing an exhibition called Japan Rising, which is quite significant, as it's the first time we've ever done a Japanese display. We've got around 8-10 cars coming in for that one, plus a few motorbikes, which I'm looking forward to.

"After that, we're doing a Torana display called 'When you're hot, you're hot', which should be pretty exciting. We're even thinking about doing a Survivor Car exhibition, as there seems to be more interest in that type of car than ever before."

For more information on what's happening at the NAMT, head to its website: www.namt.com.au



"IT WAS VERY GOOD AROUND THE MOUNTAIN ROADS AND IT WAS FAST TOO!"



THIS IS WHAT ORIGINAL UNRESTORED LOOKS LIKE!



handful for his wife to drive around town," says Ken. "This was the only E49 that I'd ever seen in Tasmania and it was in as-good-as-new condition, so I made an offer, they accepted it and I took it home."

NEARLY A RAGER

Although he had originally bought the R/T with the intention of racing it, life got in the way of Ken's motorsports ambitions, so he had to make do with stretching its legs around Tasmania's gloriously twisty back roads.

"It was a pretty hairy car to drive," laughs Ken. "But it was very good around the mountain roads and it was fast too! I never really had any close calls in it, but there were a few incidents with sheep on the road when I was making progress. Luckily they stopped pretty well!"

Aside from the odd 'spirited' drive through the countryside, the E49 spent most of its time during the next three years being driven to and from work by Ken's wife, Dorothy. But while Dorothy got on well enough



DID YOU KNOW?

Out of the 1,300 R/T Chargers produced, two were sold directly to UK customers, including the only automatic R/T ever made. Built in September '71 under the Special Order Accepted system (#301) and finished in Hemi Orange, the twin-barrel R/T was fitted with a 3-speed Borg Warner auto, power steering and a dealer-installed sunroof. Having been found in poor condition in an Essex wrecking yard, the Charger has since been shipped back to Australia where it underwent an 1,100-hour restoration.



1972 VH VALIANT CHARGER R/T E49

with the Charger, various circumstances saw it get used less and less until Ken decided to put the car out to pasture with just 20,000 miles on the clock.

"We had other vehicles we could use for the day-to-day stuff, so after it hit 20,000 miles I decided to put it in the shed," says Ken. "After that, it only got used on the odd occasion before it ended up in the museum."

HERITAGE TRUST

Although Ken had received a few offers for the car over the years, interest in his pristine R/T went through the roof soon after it went on display at the NAMT in 2002.

"I started getting bigger and bigger offers for the car when it went to the museum," says Ken. "It's value kept jumping by \$50,000 at a time. I actually knocked back an offer of \$300,000 just before the Wall Street collapse in 2008, which I'm still sort of kicking myself about."

"SO AFTER IT HIT 20,000 MILES I DECIDED TO PUT IT IN THE SHED..."

It's no wonder that Ken's E49 has attracted so much attention over the years. With just over 29,000 miles on the clock, it's widely believed to be the most original, low-mileage example of its kind in Australia.

NUMBER CRUNCH

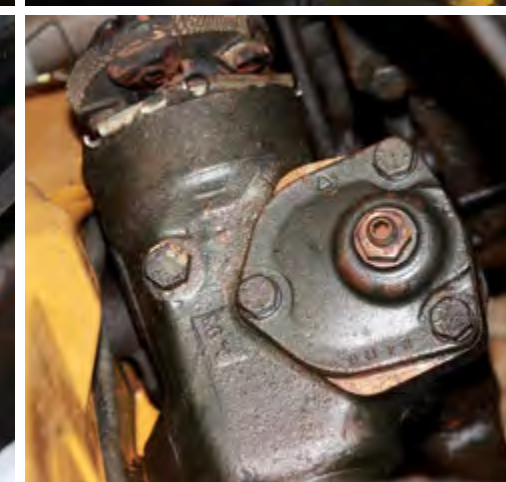
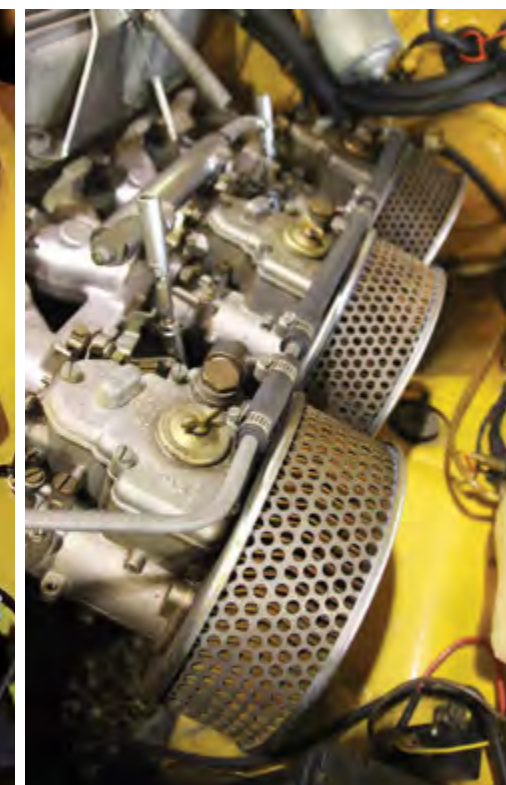
With only 21 'Big Tank' A84 Track Pack R/T E49s built, they are rare as hen's teeth. The Track Pack option refers to the twin filler 35 gallon fuel tank, quicker 16:1 ratio steering, 14 x 7 alloy wheels (W35) and heavy duty disc brakes and hubs. Our feature car: VH7S29-1111 was the fifth Track Pack E49 scheduled to be built, with final assembly taking place on Wednesday the 21st of June 1972 – exactly four days before the Supercar Scare controversy published in the Sydney Herald-Sun on Sunday the 25th of June 1972. In fact, all but one R/T E49 Track Pack were built in the week beginning the 19th June to 23rd June 1972. Digressing for a moment, ironically this was the same period that the stillborn Falcon GT-HO Phase IV program was scheduled to start with 100 cars to be produced in June, and another 100 to have been built in the following month before the pin was pulled. Holden were developing a 308cid V8 version of the LJ Torana GTR XU-1 at the same time.

VH7S29-1111 is one of four R/T E49 Track Packs painted Hot Mustard, of these, only two had tan trim (T1). 20 of the 21 Track Packs had exactly the same production options; A84 – A95 – D20 – D56 – E49 and G11. Only the last car differed, a single Limelight (YK) with white trim (W1) example which had the additional G18 option – Clear Laminated Windshield – this particular car was built four

months later in October 1972. The remaining 20 Track Packs were Hemi Orange (6), Vitamin C (6), Hot Mustard (4) and Mercury Silver (4) – 16 of these had the black trim (X1), four had tan trim (T1) and only the Limelight R/T E49 Track Pack had white trim.

These 21 cars were allocated to different regions across Australia, two were kept as company fleet vehicles no doubt as press cars (both Vitamin C), ten went to New South Wales, four to Victoria, two to Queensland, and one of each to South Australia, Western Australia, and our feature car which was allocated to the Reeman & Manning Chrysler dealership, Launceston, Tasmania. This dealership sold hundreds of Chargers, but only seven were R/Ts which consisted of an E37, an E38, two E49s and three standard R/Ts.

It is a mystery why VH7S29-1111, with its matching engine number D364C00053 remained on the dealership's showroom floor unsold until Friday the 8th of June 1973, almost a year after it was built! Rumour has it that the lairy R/T had lost its flavour, the buying public no longer attracted to hero colours and war-paint. This may have been the case, given that the R/T model was discontinued later in 1972, with only one built and sold in Australia in 1973, and the last 14 R/Ts which were also built in 1973, destined to be exported abroad.



If you're thinking of restoring an R/T Charger, then this unrestored example is the perfect 'reference' car to know how it should look from original.



1972 VH VALIANT CHARGER R/T E49



THREAD OF Survival

1973 - MID 1973

Bought new by Graham Maxwell
Reeman & Manning
Launceston, Tas

1973 - CURRENT

Sold to Ken Sims
Spent, Tas

SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL

1972 VH Valiant Charger R/T E49

ODOMETER

29,690 miles

POWER

265cid Hemi six
302bhp (227kW) @ 5,600rpm

TRANSMISSION

4-speed manual (D20)

PAINT

Hot Mustard (Paint Code YC)

TRIM

Tan Vinyl (Trim Code T1)

OPTIONS

'Big Tank' Track Pack (A84), Interior Dress-up Pack (A95), Sure-grip LSD (D56), Hemi 6-Pack Engine (E49), Tinted Glass (G11)

DEALERSHIP

Reeman & Manning (Dealer D957)
Launceston, Tas.

MODEL DURATION

1972

NUMBER BUILT

21 R/T E49 'Big Tank'

ORIGINAL PRICE

\$4,320

Aside from the usual servicing, Ken reckons that he's had to replace the exhaust system along with a diaphragm in the fuel pump and a nylon bush on the gear lever – and that's it.

"That Charger has to be one of the best Survivor muscle cars in the country," says NAMT's manager, Phil Costello. "It's pretty much untouched and an amazing car to drive."

While he may harbour some regrets about knocking back that big-money offer all those years ago, Ken has no plans to sell the car and would be glad to see the Charger being passed on to his son when the time comes. For the moment though,

he's more than happy to entrust the Charger to the museum's care and get his nostalgia fix by taking it for a drive a few times a year.

"Modern cars just don't impress me that much," sighs Ken. "I prefer my cars to be raw and involving. To be honest, I still get a kick out of driving the Charger. It still drives like new, it still smells like new and it's such a lot of fun! I really can't see myself getting rid of it any time soon."

Given that his glorious R/T is probably the best example of one of the rarest, most iconic Australian muscle cars ever made, we honestly can't think of a single reason why he would. **SCA**



No, you're not seeing double. The backdrop of the display is a mirror, but we wish there were two low mile R/T E49s!

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words Steve Hughes photos Kim Belcastro special thanks www.ValiantInfoBase.com , www.ValiantPacers.com



HEMI RACER

Teenagers and performance cars don't usually mix! But one man's 46-year ownership of a rare Limelight 4-speed VH Pacer is a Survivor-match... made in heaven.

“I was really keen on an E38 Charger but couldn't afford one,” says John Trembath from his home in Cloverdale, WA. “I remember walking into Southside Chrysler showroom, in Cannington, back in 1972... I was just 17 years old!”

John walked nervously into the showroom. His long hair suddenly felt annoying. “Excuse me...” stuttered John to the self-assured salesman brandishing a Starsky and Hutch moustache. “I'd... I'd like to take one of your new Hemi Pacers for a test drive!” “Yeah?” Snickered the salesman. “Do you even have a job?” John nodded, “I've been working since I was 14



What a package the Pacer was back in the early '70s!



This story featured in Issue 25. [CLICK HERE TO ORDER IT NOW!](#)



"I SLAPPED ON THE P-PLATES, RANG UP MY MATES THEN HIT THE ROAD!"



and I have my own milk run and I want to trade my new Valiant Ranger in on a Pacer!"

THERE WERE FOUR TO CHOOSE FROM

John smiles. "The sales bloke must have rubbed his hands together with glee," remembers John, "he quickly showed me four Pacers. There were three out the back. There was a Hot Mustang and a blue one both with 3-speeds and a red one with a 4-speed," John smiles, "but they weren't the ones that I fell in love with."



Left: Champagne on a beer budget is what you got with the Pacer package, which included full instrumentation similar to that fitted on the R/T Charger. Below: Here are some concept designs, many of which were lent from styling cues from Mopars in the USA at the time.



BATHURST PACER?

As far as Chrysler America was concerned, the "Ozzie" 4-door VH Pacer was the performance car for the land down under. It wasn't until a meeting with Chrysler International in 1969, that Chrysler Australia's GM, David Brown, unveiled his secret marketing and performance weapon – the Charger! The boys from Chicago weren't impressed. Brown had siphoned the VH budget to create what would become Chrysler Australia's greatest triumph.

Brown was right. The 1970s youth market had lapped up the 2-door Monaro. The 2-door VG Pacer had been a hit so why not keep the momentum rolling and unleash a new two-door with a new name... the sexy Charger. The verdict was in. The rev-heads of Australia had fallen in love with the Charger. Production of the R/T Charger quickly begun and with it, the demise of the Pacer pedigree. After just 1,647 VH Pacers being produced, the plug was pulled.



DID YOU KNOW? All but 43 of the 4-speed VH Pacers were exported overseas making John's Pacer Survivor as rare as rocking horse poop!

1972 VALIANT VH PACER

DID YOU KNOW? There were two VH Pacers painted factory black, and one in Magenta. 16 VH Pacers were fitted with automatic transmission, 10 had air-conditioning, and 4 had vinyl roofs. One VH Pacer was optioned up with an E49 6-Pack Hemi!

Seventeen-year-old John watched transfixed as he was led into the showroom's display area. "She's beautiful," John managed. There in the middle of the room was the car of John's dreams. "The paint colour's called 'Limelight,'" winked the salesman, "and the chicks are gunna love it!"

"The salesman and a few blokes went to work," remembers John. "They moved cars around and got the Pacer outside. From the moment I put my foot down I was hooked. I can't remember what the sales bloke was talking about that day, but I remember that first drive like it was yesterday."

"I traded the Ranger in and applied for finance... that was the first hurdle," John nods, "My older brother Barry came to the rescue. He went guarantor and the car was placed in his name. I had to wait a nervous week to get the car. The sales bloke gave me a brochure to take home. I'd lay in bed staring at this brochure all night... a week is an eternity for a teenager!"

"The week was up and I was down there Friday morning. I slapped the P-plates on, rang up my mates then hit the road!" John smiles, "My dad even

"FROM THE MOMENT I PUT MY FOOT DOWN I WAS HOOKED..."



Above: You'd be hard pressed to find another one-owner Pacer this good. John's mighty proud that he's kept it all this time. Older brother Barry had to sign as guarantor, and as such, his name is on the logbooks.

built a fibro garage behind the house just for the Pacer... I was as happy as a pig in sh!t."

CHICK MAGNET

"The sales bloke was right... the chicks did love the car," John winks. "My mates were all Chrysler boys and we drove the streets in the Pacer like there was no tomorrow. I added a front and rear spoiler and even a bonnet



Above left: Here's Johnny! Taken about the time he bought the Pacer.

Above: Even the wife had a Pacer!

Above right: Southside Chrysler, Cannington, opened in November 1972, making John's VH Pacer one of the first cars they sold.



Left: John's sister proudly displays her Dragster whilst John snaps the perfect photo capturing the 1970s complete with the Pacer in the background.



Right: The Pacer is a real chick magnet! Here it can be seen with a bonnet scoop and rear spoiler.



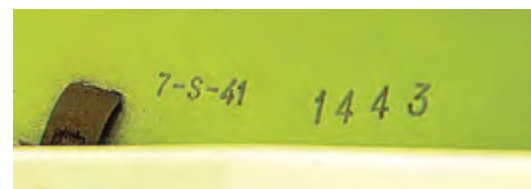
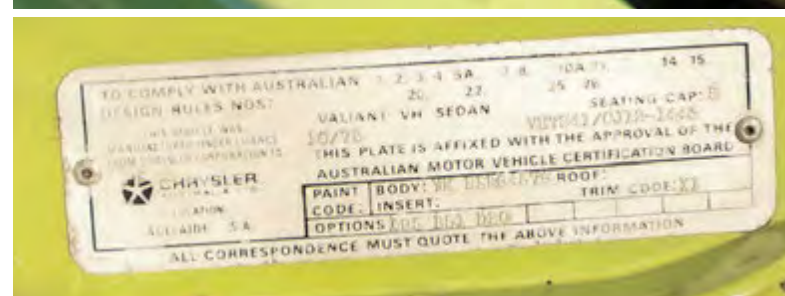
1972 VALIANT VH PACER

scoop... and before you ask, I know I put it on the wrong side." John smiles. "It was the '70s and if you were the first to pull up at the lights it was a signal to drag. If a guy pulled up in a 253 or a 308, they didn't stand a chance against the Pacer. One night, Norm, a good mate of mine who owned a Charger, challenged me to a race. We lined up at the lights and took off. It was neck and neck when this car coming the other way suddenly crossed the road and hit Norm head on. The Charger slammed into the side of the Pacer and damaged the driver's-side door. Norm was okay but we were both pretty shaken."

"Every time I'd take the car out the police would pull me over and make me prove that I owned it. One night I screeched off at the lights and the boys in blue pinched me for it. I lost my licence for a year,"



Black vinyl: All you need in sunny Perth on a stinking hot day, with no air! But if you're gonna melt, you may as well in the cabin of a Pacer looking cool.





THREAD OF **Survival**

1972 - CURRENT
Purchased new by
John Trembath, WA

Day Two mods like the addition of a front spoiler was popular in the 1970s, with many aftermarket businesses popping up with their offerings.

SPECIFICATIONS

- MODEL**
1972 Valiant VH Pacer
- ODMETER**
44,095 miles
- POWER**
265cid Hemi Six-cylinder
218bhp (163kW) @ 4,800rpm
- TRANSMISSION**
4-speed Borg-Warner manual
- PAINT**
Limelight (YK)
- TRIM**
Black (X1)
- OPTIONS**
D20 4-speed, A95 Interior Sports Package, B51 Power brakes
- SOLD NEW BY**
Southside Chrysler,
Cannington, WA
- MODEL DURATION**
1971 - 1973
- NUMBER BUILT**
1,647
- ORIGINAL PRICE**
\$3,350

John smiles, "It was probably for the best." John got his licence back, joined the army, met a girl, got married and started a family. "The army wasn't for me so I got out after a year and then life started going pretty quick," remembers John, "As day-to-day pressures grew, friends and family wanted me to sell the car... but not my wife, Rosemary. There's been times where the car's been stored away, waiting to relive its glory days." John

"BUT I WAS NEVER GOING TO SELL HER..."

John sighs, "A man has to have something to do even if he never finishes it... he has to be busy. After divorce, the passing of a loved one, I'm now focusing on myself and my mates again. I'm back on the road in the Pacer with an elbow out the window and the wind in my hair. It's like I'm 17 again!" **SCA**

Right: Chrysler Australia offered motoring journalist press cars, this one looks like it's being put through its paces.



Suddenly other performance cars had the early-60s muscle.

There's no mistaking what R/T is all about.

Not with its wide stripes, silver roof, black and black bucket seats, and its optional black bucket seats and black bucket seats.

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But if you're a tough man to convince, we have the clincher. Our optional high-performance rear 200-200 Pack, with 3 lbs. (three) Original Motor Car.

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Four 100 "Red Line" performance tires and 11" disc. Sway bar and a torsion bar suspension. The close ratio transmission and 3.23 rear axle takes 10.6 seconds for the quarter.

Mr. Moss puts it nicely: "Australia's fastest performance car for under \$3,000."

Hemi Power. The Clean Machine. **CHRYSLER AUSTRALIA LTD.**

SLEEPING GIANT

Cars were meant to be driven... In 1973, this one-owner Survivor E55 340cid V8 770 VJ Charger wasn't just driven – it was launched!

words Steve L Hughes photos Ross Vasse special thanks Greg Renet, Paul Avery, Gavin Farmer & Gary Bridger (Hey Charger), Australian Classic Car History Services, www.acchs.com.au

“I'd just been investigating a lead on a Falcon XB GS ute,” says Paul Avery, Car Hunter and mate of Survivor Car Australia, “I managed to close the deal and then I asked the owner if she knew of any old cars in the area.”
“Well...” She gave a wry smile, “I'm pretty sure there's one of those old red Chargers nearby... It's been speeding along these roads for over forty years.”

Red Charger? Paul's curiosity peaked. Speeding? Paul drove down the country road a little way then noticed a bloke with a chainsaw up a ladder trimming some trees, a Valiant ute parked nearby. “G'day mate.”
The older farmer glanced up with the chainsaw still idling. “Yeah?”
“Um...” said Paul eyeing the farmer's Valiant ute



And here is where the sleeping giant lives, a humble earthen floor open shed which protects the treasured E55 from the elements albeit with a little dust and cobwebs!



To protect Gordon's privacy, we have blurred out his details from the original log books.



1973 VJ VALIANT CHARGER 770 E55



DID YOU KNOW?

There were two VJ Ranger sedans fitted with the E55 engine option that slipped out the factory door at Chrysler Australia. These were ordered by the NSW Government at the time, more than likely destined for the NSW Police force.

next to the ladder, "You wouldn't by any chance know of someone around here that owns a red Charger?"

The farmer turned the chainsaw off and shook his head then glared at Paul. "It was inevitable someone was gunna find out about it... like death!"

Paul smiled then introduced himself. "Is it a 265cid Hemi then?"

"No. It's a V8."

"A V8? So it's a 318 Fireball?"

"No... It's a 340. One of those race engines Chrysler brought out from the States."

Paul gulped. "So it's... it's an E55 then?"

"Yeah it is! You know your Valiants." The farmer smiled, "My name's Gordon... Do you want to have a look at it?" Hell yeah! Paul followed Gordon to his homestead. "I couldn't believe the condition it was in. It was dent free and covered in dust."

It was dent free and covered in dust."

Below: Buffed once then never polished again... ever.



WAKING THE SLEEPING GIANT

"She's not bad, is she?" Gordon stood back admiring his Survivor. "Do you want me to kick her over?"

"Does it still run?"

"Run? It's still registered. I haven't driven it for a while though." Gordon turned the key, waking the sleeping giant as the 340cid V8 rumbled into life.

"Beautiful!" Paul stood mesmerised by the muscle car that never saw a race track. "Have you had it long?"

Gordon laughed. "Long? I bought it new in 73! I've always owned Valiants. I traded a VE Valiant in on the Charger – Valiants always had strong engines." Gordon smiled as he remembered the day he decided on buying a Charger. "I had read about the 340-V8s in American auto magazines. I just happened to be outside the Geelong dealership in 1972 and had my nose pressed hard against the window eyeing off a yellow SE E55 Charger and was thinking, 'I'm gunna get one of these one day'."

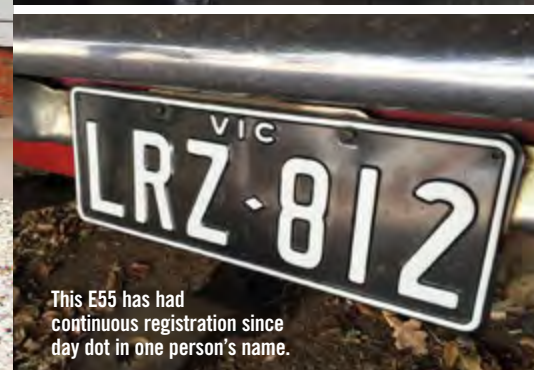
The 20-year-old shearer saved his dollars for another year. "I ran the family farm with my Mum because Dad had passed away when I was only five, and we lost my brother when he was only twenty. It was early December and I heard they were discontinuing the E55 so I marched into the Piper Maddern Chrysler dealership in Geelong and walked straight up to the salesman, 'Can I help you son?' the bloke asked, then I told him what I wanted. "I want a Charger in Vintage Red. It's gotta have the 340cid V8. I don't want any side protection mouldings just over-riders on the rear bumper..." Gordon hesitated, "and I want it before Christmas!" Gordon smiles. "The salesman was pretty happy and said 'No problem'. They were good for their word and I picked it up on the 24th of December 1973... Merry Christmas to me!"



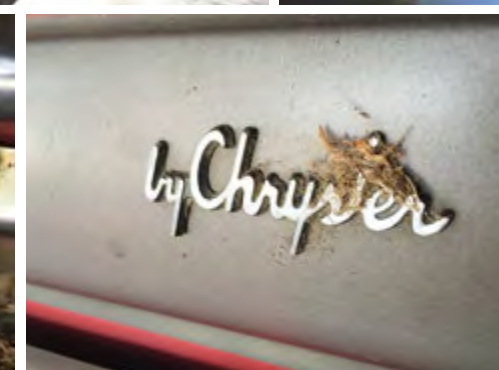
The cockpit of this rocket ship is reserved for its one and only owner, Gordon.



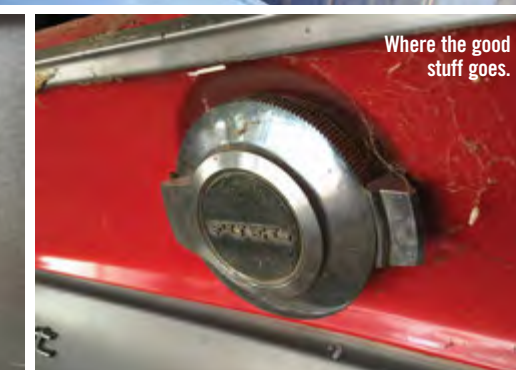
Sure she's a little dusty back here, but the seats are still as soft and pliable as they were new.



This E55 has had continuous registration since day dot in one person's name.



Where the good stuff goes.



Chrysler's top of the line flagship, you couldn't get any better than a 770 Charger as far as luxury appointments go.



Cobwebs add to the allure of this one owner Survivor.



Strap yourself in for one hell of a ride in Gordon's rocket ship. Hang on tight as your field of vision ahead becomes a blur when the secondaries open up!

1973 VJ VALIANT CHARGER 770 E55

SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL	1973 Valiant VJ Charger 770 E55
ODOMETER	302,590 kilometres
POWER	Chrysler 340cid / 4BBL V8 (E55) 275bhp (206kW) @ 5,000 rpm
TRANSMISSION	3-speed A727 Torqueflite automatic
PAINT	Vintage Red (Code RP)
TRIM	Black (Code X1)
OPTIONS	Floor console (C16), Laminated windscreen (G15), ER70 H4 Radial BSW tyres (T15), Cast alloy ROH 7-inch mags (W35)
SOLD NEW BY	Piper Maddern Chrysler (Dealer V238) Geelong, Victoria
MODEL DURATION	1973-1974
NUMBER BUILT	212
ORIGINAL PRICE	\$4,850

"That first week was a hairy one," says Gordon, "It didn't matter if you were going up a hill with a load on or on the flat, when you put your foot down it launched straight to 5,000 rpm and 120mph. It was like strapping a rocket to a tricycle – it handled terribly. I immediately added some modifications: bigger front sway bar, a 16:1 steering box – there's no point aiming for the road and ending up in the grass – extra leaf springs on the back, better shockers and a fibreglass front spoiler." Gordon shakes his head, "This bloody rabbit came out of

"IT WAS LIKE STRAPPING A ROCKET TO A TRICYCLE."

nowhere and I hit it at 120 mph – the spoiler and the rabbit disintegrated. I bugged expert metal fabricator, Tony Heath, to build me an aluminium spoiler – problem solved." A boyish grin filled Gordon's face. "The result was immediate... I could now cruise safely at 5,700rpm at around 130-140mph... and that was on the way home from the pub!"

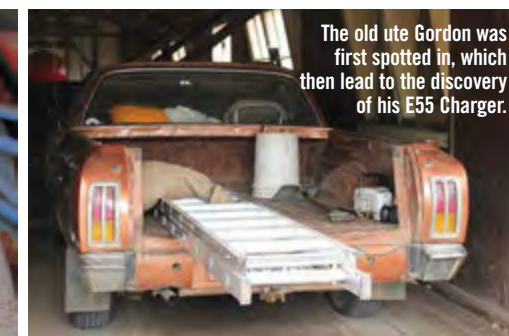
Gordon nods his head. "It was different back then. Cars were fast and we drove them fast. I lost a mate who was driving his XU-1 Torana home from the pub and smashed... That shook us all up a bit though."

Gordon walked Paul around the car. "I wasn't the only one who drove it. My Mum use to hitch the trailer up and take a load of pigs to Ballarat market. When I was back from shearing I'd take the pigs up and jump around. I found that when I cruised along at around a 100 -120 mph the pigs would just lay down and shut up!"

"I've only used the Charger twice as a wedding car. The first time was for my cousin, Peter, in the 1970s and then just recently for his son's wedding. There was another bloke at the wedding with a Charger and we spoke for hours... It doesn't matter if you're talking about or driving an old Survivor... It just makes you feel good about yourself somehow."

BY THE NUMBERS

The E55 engine option first became available in the VH Charger range with 125 built. A further 212 E55 340cid V8s were assigned to the VJ model Charger taking the total of E55s built to just 337 units, all automatics. Of these, just 40 were painted Vintage Red, with 21 of these having the black X1 trim. This E55 is just 1 of 1 built with the same specifications and options. Gordon's E55 – Vin No. 1276 was manufactured on Saturday the 8th of December in the summer of 1973, and sold new the day before



The old ute Gordon was first spotted in, which then lead to the discovery of his E55 Charger.



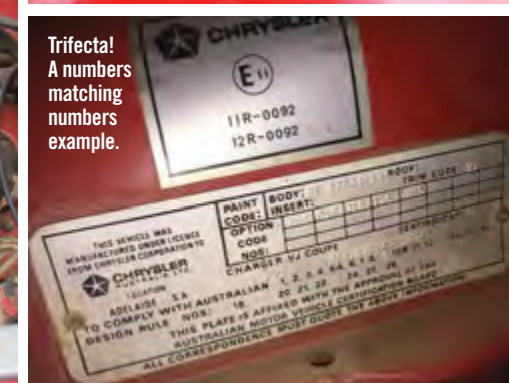
Engine number matches...



Behold, the business end of this E55 Charger rocket ship.



...The body number...



Trifecta! A numbers matching numbers example.



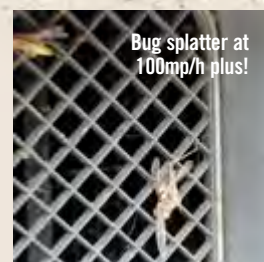
Left: And here we have a repurposed fabric softener bottle which now sees duty as a radiator overflow catchment. Right: Day Two spotlamps help to light the runway ahead. Below left: Although she's got a bit of gravel rash from the country dirt roads, the ol' girl is still in pretty good shape. Below right: She might be dusty, but she's dry and rust free!



1973 VJ VALIANT CHARGER 770 E55



Custom aluminium race spoiler, good for 140mp/h with a tail wind.



Bug splatter at 100mp/h plus!

Christmas on Monday the 24th of December. Piper Maddern Chrysler only ever received one order for an E55 – this Vintage Red example that has survived in the same owner's care since day dot. In fact, this Chrysler dealership had never sold a performance model – until Gordon's E55 Charger!

Paul watched as Gordon admired his Charger. "Do you think you'll ever sell it?"

"Hell No!" Gordon switched the engine off. "I stopped taking the Charger to car shows when the prices started going up. Blokes kept coming up and trying to buy it, they'd get pushy and I don't have time for that and that's not what the Charger means to me.

It's about the memories... and no amount of money can buy that." **SCA**

CLOSE, BUT NO CIGAR

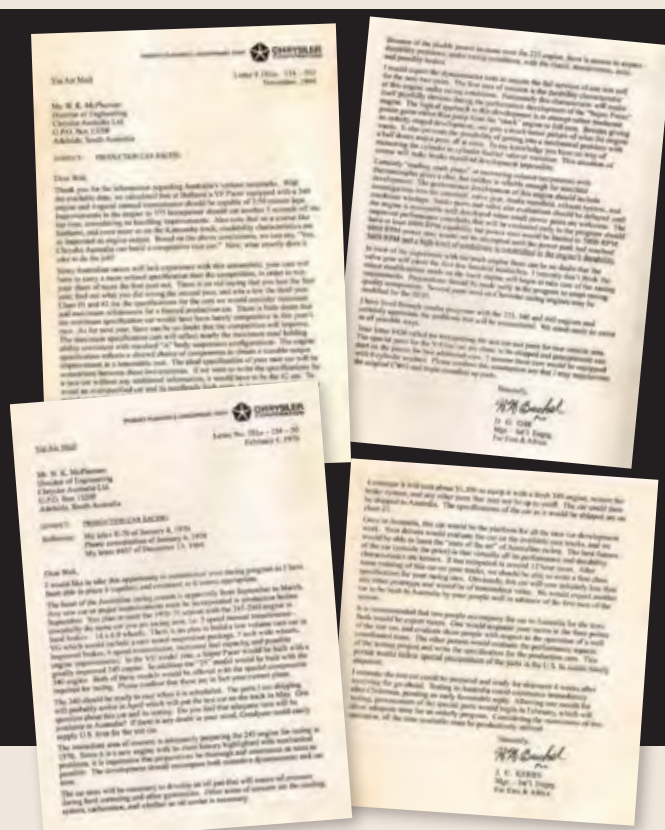
In the late 1960s, Chrysler Australia Limited (CAL) were considering fitting a 340cid V8 / A833 4-speed gearbox into the VF Pacer to make it a serious Bathurst contender against the Falcon GT-HO and Monaro GTS.

CAL found a 1967 Plymouth Barracuda that had been road race prepped by Chrysler USA, but destined for scrap. Product Planning at CAL could have it for evaluation, it was shipped over with associated race spares. (Does anyone know if this survived?)

In 1970, a prototype VF Pacer and a Valiant Regal sedan fitted with the 340cid V8 engine and 4-speed gearbox were built for evaluation. Rumour has it the Regal was crashed and written-off, we can't help wondering if the Pacer may have survived and is still out there?

Subsequently, CAL initially ordered 200 340cid V8s arriving in crates as components, and some eight to 10 A833 4-speed gearboxes at the same time, with the intention of building a genuine Bathurst contender in the Pacer, with the plan to homologate 200 units. Approximately another 138 340cid engines were imported thereafter and assembled. Ironically, a total of around 340 units of the 340cid V8s were imported and assembled – they were hot tested and stored on pallets in the basement awaiting a decision from management. That decision came more than a year later with the E55 engine option package for the VH Charger and later VJ Charger range.

Had the E55 hit the track at Bathurst, history may have been rewritten. Alas, we'll never know.



SURVIVOR Car AUSTRALIA

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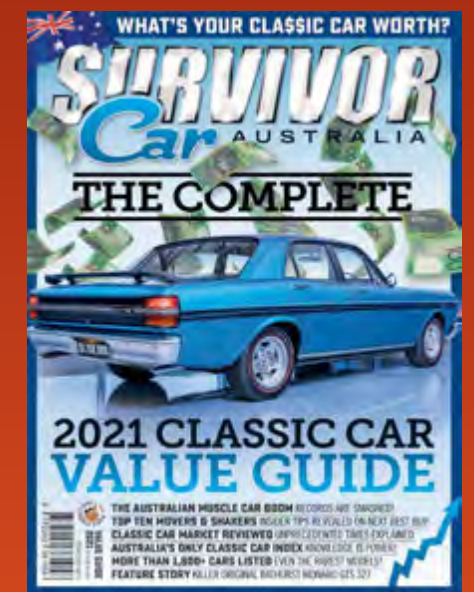
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COBRA 31

FORD'S LAST HOMOLOGATED SPECIAL

Off the line the two white hardtops' adorned with bold blue racing stripes slewed first left, then right as the rear tyres were overwhelmed by the sheer torque being forced through the axles. They grappled to keep their position at the front of the angry pack and rounded the first corner of the 1978 Bathurst 1000 side by side, each with an armful of opposite lock.

words Simon May photos Sarah Pillar, Ken Langley, Rhett Polley special thanks Ken Langley data www.acchs.com.au

A year before in 1977 Ford scored that famous Bathurst 1-2 victory, and many were expecting them to repeat the spectacular performance in 1978, however, the Bathurst 1000 is a long race and it was not to be, with the big Ford's suffering two DNF's instead.

The Cobra came about purely as a marketing campaign to get rid of the remaining hardtop bodies before the new XD was to be released in early 1979. It was Edsel Ford II that suggested the American influenced bold blue and white paint complemented

Eat my dust! Moffat and Bond lead the pack at the start of the Bathurst 1000 in 1978.



with special striped fabric for the seats, alloy wheels and spoilers, 400 of these Cobra specials were to be built.

For something a little more special, the Bathurst spec Cobras, of which 30 were made ranging from VIN numbers JG65UM00002 – JG65UM00031 known by Regular Production Option 97 (regular Cobras were Option 96) featured many further modifications and upgrades including suspension reinforcements, massaging of the rear wheel housings for fitting big race rubber, bigger long range fuel tank, a

“HE WAS THE SECOND OWNER, THE FIRST APPARENTLY SELLING THE CAR DUE TO A LOSS OF LICENCE!”

transmission oil cooler, Scheel bucket seats and an imposing reverse hood scoop on the bonnet. All were fitted with the 351cid V8 mated to the robust Borg Warner four-speed transmission.

MISSED IT BY THAT MUCH!

The car featured here is not only a pucker Bathurst spec Cobra, but it is also the last made being number

31. In fact, Cobra No 31 is the very last race homologated car produced by the Ford Motor Company! It was sold through the 'Mount Barker Motor Company' and was originally purchased by R A Hosking from Glenelg South Australia in January 1979. As it turned out, another person had made their way up to take a look at the car, Rhett Polley, only to be told that the car had just been sold.

It was five years later when Rhett was working away in Mildura that he saw an XC Cobra being put up on the display ramps for sale at a local Ford dealer. Incredibly he discovered that this was the very same car – now with 24,000kms – that he had missed out on in Mount Barker. After taking the car for a spin, he purchased it then and there. Interestingly the second-hand value of the car had risen from the new price of \$11,166 to \$14,700. Rhett was now the second owner, the first apparently selling the car due to a loss of licence!

Rhett damaged his spine in 1985 and he was no longer physically able to drive the 4-speed manual Cobra from resulting nerve damage and regrettably had to hang up the keys in 1995. The car then sat forlornly in his carport for the next 21 years slowly gaining the patina of time until Rhett finally conceded that the car was never likely to get recommissioned in his ownership.

JG65UM00031K. The ID tags to Ford Australia's very last homologated 'Bathurst Special' Cobra No 31.



DID YOU KNOW?

Of the 400 Cobras built the first 200 had the 5.8 litre V8 and the second 200 were fitted with the 4.9 litre V8 with the exception of Build No 1 which was fitted with a 4.9 litre V8 and Build No 351 which rather appropriately was fitted with the same number of cubic inches as its numeric designation!

OWNER/VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION			
Owner's Name	S.A. HOSKING		
Address	650 AHEAD HIGHWAY		
Town	GLENELG	State	S.A.
		Post Code	5045
Serial Prefix	JG65UM	Serial No.	00031
Model	1978	ETA	T.L.
Engine Number	JG65UM00031		
Date Purchased	17.1.79		
Dealer Code	4241		
Dealer's Name	MOUNT BARKER MOTOR COMPANY		
Address	46 HUTCHINSON ST.		
Town	MT. BARKER	State	S.A.
		Post Code	5251
Our Service Manager is	Mr. Bryon Jones		
Our Reg. Adviser is	Mr. Reg Smith		
Reg. No.		Phone No.	3681308

Above: Original service books show the name of the first owner and the selling dealer. Right: Covered in a car cover and with flat tyres, the Cobra sat for many years under the carport away from prying eyes.



1978 FORD FALCON XC COBRA HARDTOP



Original paintwork is aged but should come up better with a buff.



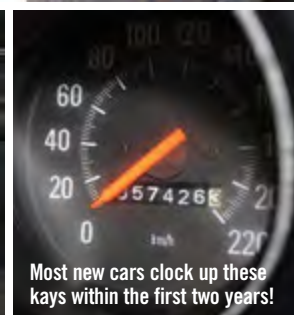
Above: Perfect match! VIN, engine number and ID tags match.

Right: The number 31 was crayoned on the underside of the reverse cowl scoop at the factory.

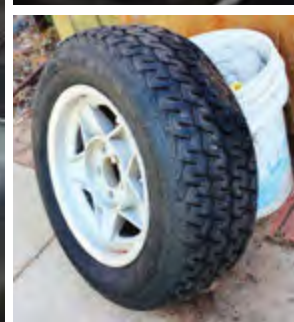
Below: Genuine 1978 coded Bathurst alloy Globe wheels still remain with this Cobra.



Option 97 Cobras came standard with the 28-gallon Bathurst fuel tank.



Most new cars clock up these kays within the first two years!



1978 FORD FALCON XC COBRA HARDTOP

THREAD OF Survival

1979 - 1984

Sold by Mount Barker Motors to Mr R A Hosking, Glenelg SA

1984 - 2016

Sold to Rhett Polley
Millswood SA

2016 - CURRENT

Sold to Mark Negri
Perth WA

SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL

Ford Falcon XC Cobra Hardtop
(Bathurst)

ODOMETER

57,426 kilometres

POWER

5.8 litre V8 (351cid)
217bhp (162kW) @ 4500rpm

TRANSMISSION

4-speed Borg Warner

PAINT

Sno White with Bold Blue
(wide stripes) and Olympic Blue
(edge stripes)

TRIM

Black with black Scheel cloth and
corduroy seats

OPTIONS

Option 97

DEALERSHIP

Mount Barker Motor Company,
South Australia

MODEL DURATION

September 1978

NUMBER BUILT

30

ORIGINAL PRICE

\$11,166 (option 97 Bathurst)



Rhett Polley, owner of the Cobra front and centre with Ken Langley standing beside him. Ken was commissioned by the new owner Mark in WA to look at the Cobra for him pre-purchase.

FOUND ON FACEBOOK

Mark Negri discovered the car unexpectedly. He was passing time on Facebook at a pub in Streaky Bay South Australia after losing a front wheel on their Landcruiser whilst travelling home to Perth from a Christmas holiday. Mark quickly organised someone to inspect the long hibernating Cobra on his behalf, and a deal was struck.

Mark remembers his dad taking him as a kid to a showroom to look at a Cobra back in the day, and at one point he owned Cobra No 62, so it was in the

blood, in fact he recently sold a Red Pepper XA GT hardtop to make room for his new purchase.

Beneath the tree detritus and dust the aggressive paint scheme of Sno White and Bold Blue is still striking, surface rust has started to creep from areas of steel where paint has been chipped away by road debris, and from thinly painted factory edges such as around the bonnet scoop cut-out. Flat tyres and corroded alloys and the fine crazing covering much of the paint detract from what with a thorough detail is a car that could well get awards in a preservation class concours.

Lifting the bonnet reveals the extra oil cooler, twin thermo fans and strut brace unique to Bathurst spec cars, and factory markings such as the '31' scribbled underside of the scoop.

The interior is complete (bar non-original steering wheel), and will no doubt scrub up to 'as new' with a little elbow grease. The odometer within the comprehensive instrument cluster now displays a genuine 57,426kms.

Mark currently has the car being recommissioned in South Australia and intends on preserving its Survivor car status, he has also since contacted the original owner who is really keen to see the car again and Mark plans to swing past his place before taking the car back home to the West. **SCA**



Thankfully she's only flat on the bottom!



These photos were taken in 1986 in Marino, South Australia when the Cobra still had some bite.



THEY'RE STILL OUT THERE!

Only 580 of the Holden HX Limited Edition coupes were built at the Pagewood plant in 1976, one of these, Build No 558 sat parked at the bottom of a driveway in a country Victorian town until renowned Car Hunter Ross Vasse stumbled across it by chance.

words Aaron Lofts photos Ross Vasse

special thanks Keith Albright, Tim Burgess data HoldenHistoricalServices.com.au



Admittedly, finding a forgotten muscle car these days is considered slim pickings given that every man and his dog knows about them, however, they're still out there if you're prepared to put in the hard yards and go looking. Finding this HX LE coupe was a fluke as Ross Vasse describes it, "I was down in Leongatha following up another dead-end lead on an old car I was chasing and had some time to spare, so I drove up and down every street in the neighbouring town of Korumbarrra. I'd driven about a dozen streets when I noticed a torn blue tarp thrown over a car at the bottom of a driveway." Stopping, and reversing for a better look, Ross could instantly make out it was a Holden coupe, "The colour was what really gave it away, soon as I saw that burgundy shade I thought... 'Hmmm, an LE Monaro'..." adding, "Yeah, I know Holden never called them an LE Monaro but LE coupe doesn't have the same ring to it does it?"

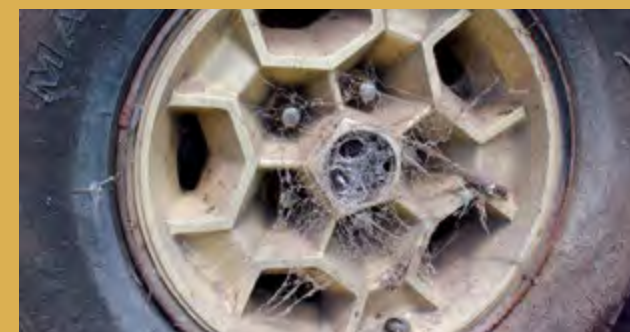
"IF THERE WAS A RECIPE ON WHAT MAKES A BARN-FIND, THEN SPIDER WEBS, FLAT TYRES AND DUST WOULD BE THE THREE KEY INGREDIENTS."

"I knocked on the door, but no one was home," says Ross adding, "Out of respect for the owner I didn't take a closer look until I had permission." Leaving his contact details on a well versed handwritten note in the mailbox which included a little trade secret that almost guarantees a call from the owner, by the time Ross had arrived home the owner of the house, Andrew had called expressing an interest to sell the HX LE coupe. The car belonged to Andrew's brother who had bought it from nearby township of Tooradin from the first owner back in the early 1980s.

SOMEDAY...

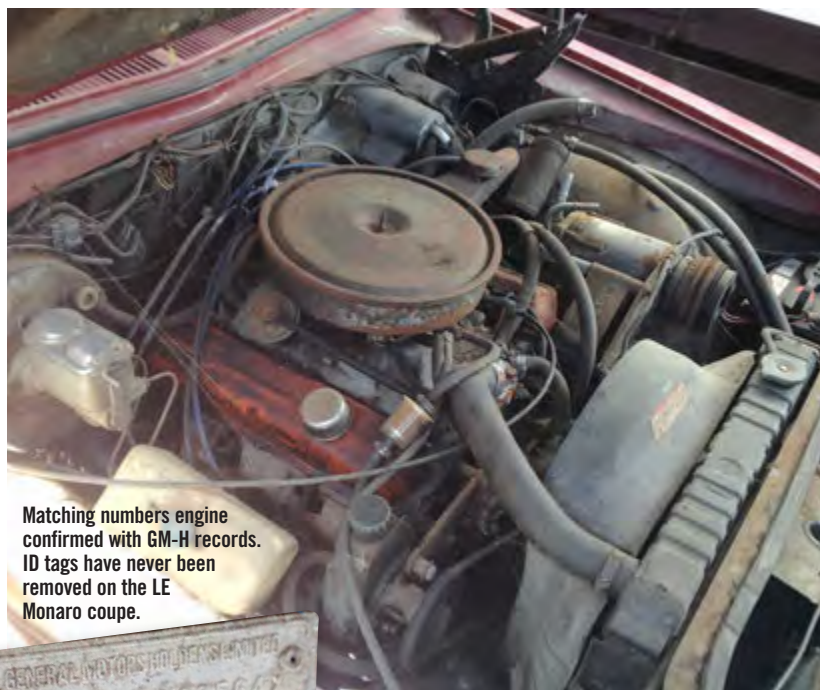
The Limited Edition coupe was being used as a daily driver until one day one of the nephews came flying down the driveway in a car with questionable brakes, slamming into the front of the coupe damaging the nose cone and the front bumper. Losing interest, the car's owner let the car sit throwing a tarp over it. After some years the tyres went hard, and eventually flat. Spiders and other insects had claimed every nook and cranny. But if there was a recipe on what makes a barn-find, then spider webs, flat tyres and dust would be the three key ingredients.

After the brief chat over the phone with Andrew, an asking price was disclosed, and a decision made for Ross to go back down the next day for a closer



Flat tyres, check! Spider webs, check! Dust and mould, check! Yep, we have a Barn Find.





Matching numbers engine confirmed with GM-H records. ID tags have never been removed on the LE Monaro coupe.



look. Upon inspection and some customary haggling a fair price was agreed to, and a tow truck arranged to collect the LE coupe.

Having sat idle for more than a decade the brakes were seized-on locking up all four wheels when it was winched onto the tow truck, "It reminded me of a cat being dragged backwards whilst it clawed the ground," says Ross. Once on the back of the truck it was taken back to Melbourne where it was stored for a few years. Ross toyed with the decision to eventually restore it but decided to move the LE coupe onto another enthusiast, an enthusiast with the dream of owning one of these Limited Edition coupes. Enter Keith Albright.

KEITH'S PRIDE

Keith was born in the UK and came to Australia in 1960 with his parents when he was 14 years old. "My first car was a HB Torana, but I have owned a HR wagon, an EK, a Holden one-tonner and two HX Holden sedans," announces Keith of his proud



Holden heritage. He's currently doing up a HJ ute as well. "I've always liked Holdens because they're simple to work on," says Keith recalling the time he smashed his HB Torana into his mum's lattice work before he had his license. "Mum wasn't too impressed with that little episode," recalls Keith. "The most fun I had was in an unregistered EK Holden that I paid \$100 for off a mate who I found out later only paid \$50 for it a few weeks earlier," says Keith, 'I took it to the panel beaters to get a quote to fix the rust and he told me it would cost more than the car's worth!"

"I WAS A LITTLE HESITANT ABOUT BUYING A CAR SIGHT UNSEEN AND PUTTING A FAIR SUM OF MONEY IN SOMEONE'S ACCOUNT I'D NEVER MET."

Keith bought the one-tonner because it was the closest thing to a coupe he could afford then he spotted the LE coupe for sale on eBay. "The LE was listed with no reserve, and after chatting with Ross we came to an agreement to buy it before the auction ended," recalls Keith. "I must admit, I was a little



As found – mouldy seats and carpets.



The mouldy seats cleaned up well.

1976 HOLDEN HX LIMITED EDITION COUPE

hesitant about buying a car sight unseen and putting a fair sum of money in someone's account I'd never met," says Keith of his hesitation, "but it all worked out well. The car arrived as expected, and Ross and I are now friends regularly staying in touch."

"IT REMINDED ME OF A CAT BEING DRAGGED BACKWARDS WHILST IT CLAWED THE GROUND."

When the LE coupe arrived, Keith quickly planned a restoration, "All was going smooth until the guy who painted it did a crap job so I had to find another painter to do it all over again," says Keith of his frustrations with the experience. The LE is now fully restored and looking the goods with its signature honeycomb wheels.

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

Here at Survivor Car HQ we regularly receive calls from readers asking us for more information about a car we have featured. One day we receive a call from a Tim Burgess who was seeking to buy a back issue of the magazine because he'd been told his dad's old LE coupe had been featured in Issue 3.



Ever reliable Jack from City Wide Towing helped drag the Limited Edition Holden coupe to its new home.

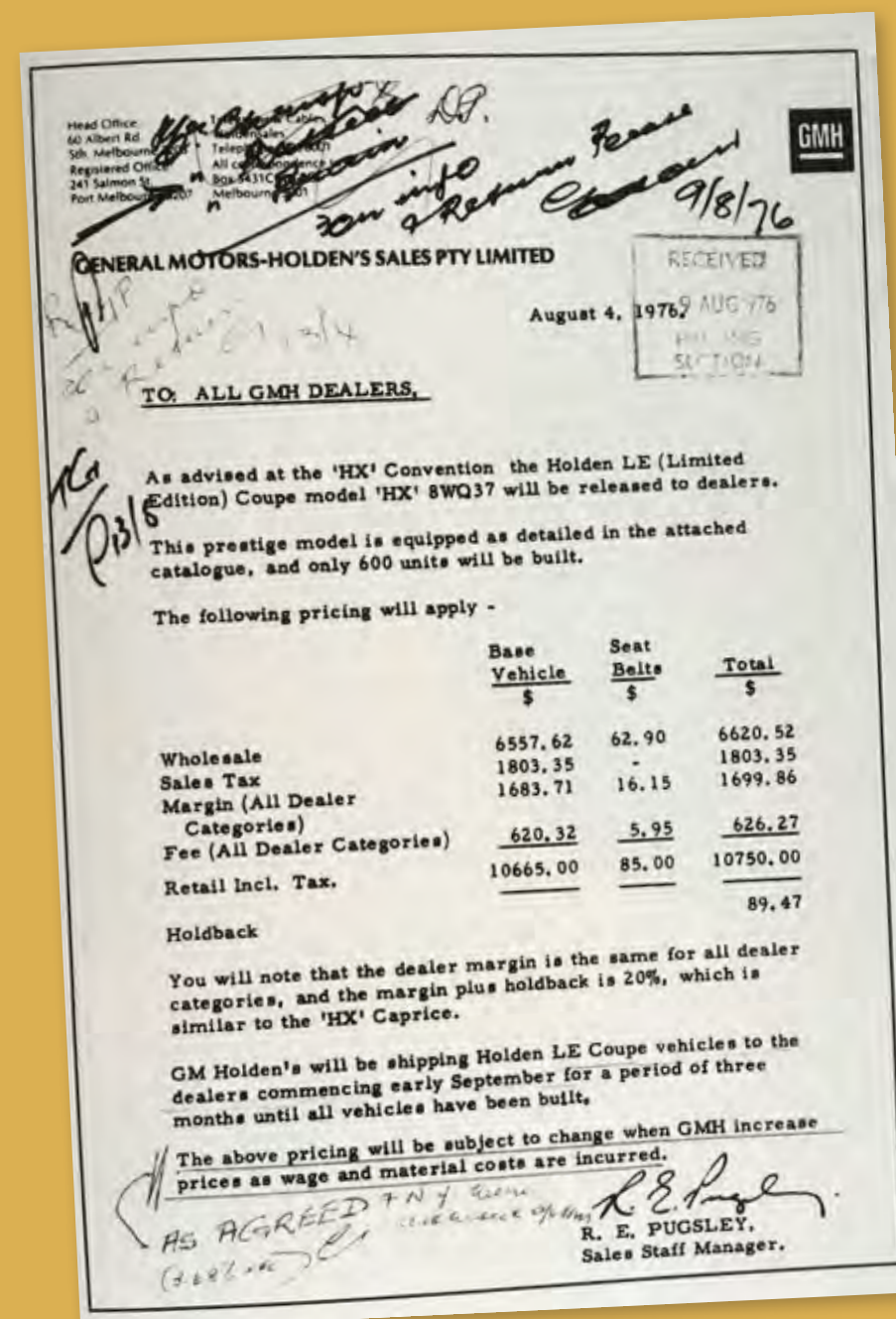


Stable-mates, the LE coupe was parked next to a few other thoroughbreds.

WHAT IS A SURVIVOR CAR?



Having sat idle for more than a decade the brakes were seized on locking up all four wheels when it was winched onto the tow truck.



Keith Albright had always dreamed of owning a HX LE coupe, and when the opportunity came along to own this one he jumped at it.

LIMITED EDITION

During a stocktake, Holden found they held more HJ coupe body shells than they could sell. The solution was to create the HX Limited Edition coupe, or LE as it was known, which was released on the 27 September 1976. All LEs were painted an exclusive metallic called LE Red. The LE was not badged or officially referred to as a Monaro.

LEs were aimed at the affluent who wanted prestige, and so combined the best of both worlds from the Monaro GTS and the Statesman Caprice with a price tag of \$10,750 to match. All the LE coupes were built at the Pagewood, Sydney plant, there were 580 in total. The distinctive gold honeycomb wheels fitted to the LE resembled those of the American Pontiac Firebird. Unique also to the LE coupe was also gold pinstripping and lettering. All were fitted with the 308cid V8, Turbo-Hydramatic transmission and a Salisbury limited slip diff. Outside the LE sported a quad headlamp front and intergrated colour-keyed front and rear spoilers.

Inside the cabin featured a GTS sports style dash instrumentation with a woodgrain finish, centre console and crushed red velour and cloth trim. Luxury appointments included power windows, power steering, power aerial, integrated air-conditioning, heated rear window, quadraphonic 8-track stereo and factory tinted windows.



1976 HOLDEN HX LIMITED EDITION COUPE



Keith's pride: now looking like the day she rolled off the production line. Gold letter personalised number plates add another touch of class to the LE coupe.



Keith's also doing up this Holden ute.

"I had just bought a Statesman, and my cousin had come around for a spin in it," Tim tells us of the uncanny moment when his cousin mentioned his dad's old LE Monaro, "I still remember the rego, it was IUI-333," Tim told his cousin. The cousin replied, "I think I've seen that somewhere..." The next day Tim received a text message with an image of the LE coupe in the mag. "I'd never heard of Survivor Car before, and called up to buy a copy," says Tim. "I couldn't believe it was Dad's old car!"

Tim tells us he worked at Noel Gould Holden, Berwick Victoria in the spare parts division when the Limited Edition coupes were released. "Dad decided to reward himself with a new car and so ordered one of these LE coupes," Tim recalls proudly. "Dad loved that car, but sold it to buy a Landcruiser in 1983 so he could do a trip around Australia."

Tim's dad Murray passed away aged 82, and despite Tim's numerous attempts to find old photos of the LE coupe when it was newer, none have surfaced to date.

The thread of Survival has certainly come full circle on this car, indeed it's a small world. **SCA**

HIBERNATING *Hemi*

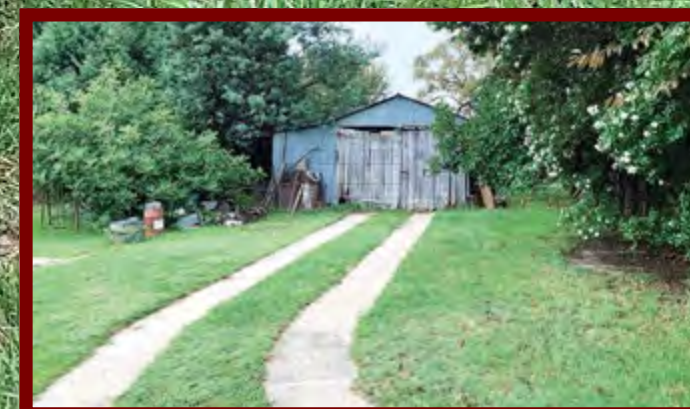
words Ian Renshaw photos Mick O'Halloran
special thanks Michael Tsoumaris,
Ken Hartman, Aaron Lofts

CANBERRA



“THE STUMPS HOLDING
THE SHED UP HAD NOTHING
AT THE BOTTOM!”

Mick opened the doors of an old shed in the backyard of a house in Oberon, NSW, and could not believe what he saw. Inside was a genuine VG Pacer which had been hibernating since 1982, under layers and layers of brown dirt. It had been in hibernation, but that was all about to change.



"I JUST HAD TO HAVE THE PACER AS PART OF THE GOLDEN ERA OF BATHURST."

“

was in total disbelief that someone could leave a car for so long and not fix it," says Mick. "The stumps holding the shed up had nothing at the bottom, it was a miracle it was standing," he continues.

The Pacer looked complete, apart from a missing front grille, headlights, and had inches of dried mud on the car underbody.

Mick found the Pacer for sale through word of mouth and within days he had driven from Canberra to Oberon, NSW, to look at the car. This Hemi barn find which was owned by Brian McMahon since new, was pulled from the shed, where Mick noticed the passenger door and rear guard was in primer.

Ben, Brian's son, told Mick he had sprayed the door and guard after rubbing it back for practice when starting his spray-painting apprenticeship back in 1996. He had also removed the grille and front and rear lights but the planned respray never happened as Ben turned his attention to an XW ute.

His father had originally parked the car in the shed in 1982, when the Welch plugs started leaking, and



Things were packed pretty tight in the shed!



In need of a good scrub, but surprisingly still in fairly good original condition!



Above: The VG Pacer was the first with Hemi power!

never got around to fixing them. Brian had a relative buy a CL Valiant, so he decided to do the same. The Pacer sat in the shed for the next 14 years until Ben's partial undercoat, and then the car was put back in the shed until 2019.

The car was bought new in 1970, from Louie's in Cabramatta. After Brian came home from the army, the car spent the next 12 hard years racking up nearly 95,000 miles on dusty, rocky unsealed country roads all over NSW, while he travelled to find work as a contract sheep shearer. Hard travelling meant replacing the idler arms in the first service and 25,000 miles were on the clock by 1972.

BARN FIND CAPTURE

Back to the barn, and the deal was done. Mick bought himself a fair dinkum barn find and loaded it onto a trailer. This Pacer Survivor is very original, and as they say "rare as rocking horse sh#t." It is an all numbers matching car with original Pacer dash, bucket seats and trumpet horns which were unique to this model.

The spare tyre in the boot is original along with the rare Pacer red carpet with black trim. Mick's plan is to carefully and sympathetically paint the primed areas and put back the original parts which were taken off, and of course get it running again. The Pacer grille with its distinctive orange stripe will be

DID YOU KNOW? The A84 option was the Competition Pack before the E31 and E34 were introduced and featured upgraded front discs and rear drums with 14x6 inch wide wheels. The E34 and E31 Track Packs upped the game by having the cylinders bored over by 0.040 inches to increase capacity from 245 to 251 cubic inches.

It may be missing the headlights and taillights in these photos, but all the parts missing off the car were found safely in the shed, and will be re-fitted to the car in due course.

1970 VALIANT VG PACER

SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL	1970 Valiant VG Pacer Sedan
ODOMETER	94,730 miles
POWER	245cid (4.0 litre) Hemi Six-Cylinder, 185bhp (138kW) @ 5,000rpm
TRANSMISSION	3-speed close ratio floor shift manual
PAINT	Bondi Beach White (Paint Code WA BERG4301)
TRIM	Black Vinyl (Trim Code X1)
OPTIONS	A88 (Pacer dress up package-mod pack), T14 (Radial tyres 185SR14)
DEALERSHIP	Louie's Motors Pty Ltd, Cabramatta, NSW
MODEL DURATION	1970 – 1971
NUMBER BUILT	Approx 3,400
ORIGINAL PRICE	\$3,026



On the trailer and heading to its new home with Mick in Canberra.

refitted along with front and rear lights and original wheels will replace the 'Day Two' period mags to make this car authentic.

Mick has owned every model Valiant, and currently has nine in his collection, including four Pacers. His grandfather drove a Valiant, his father drove a Ford and his brother drives Holden, so Mick is "Stuck in the middle".

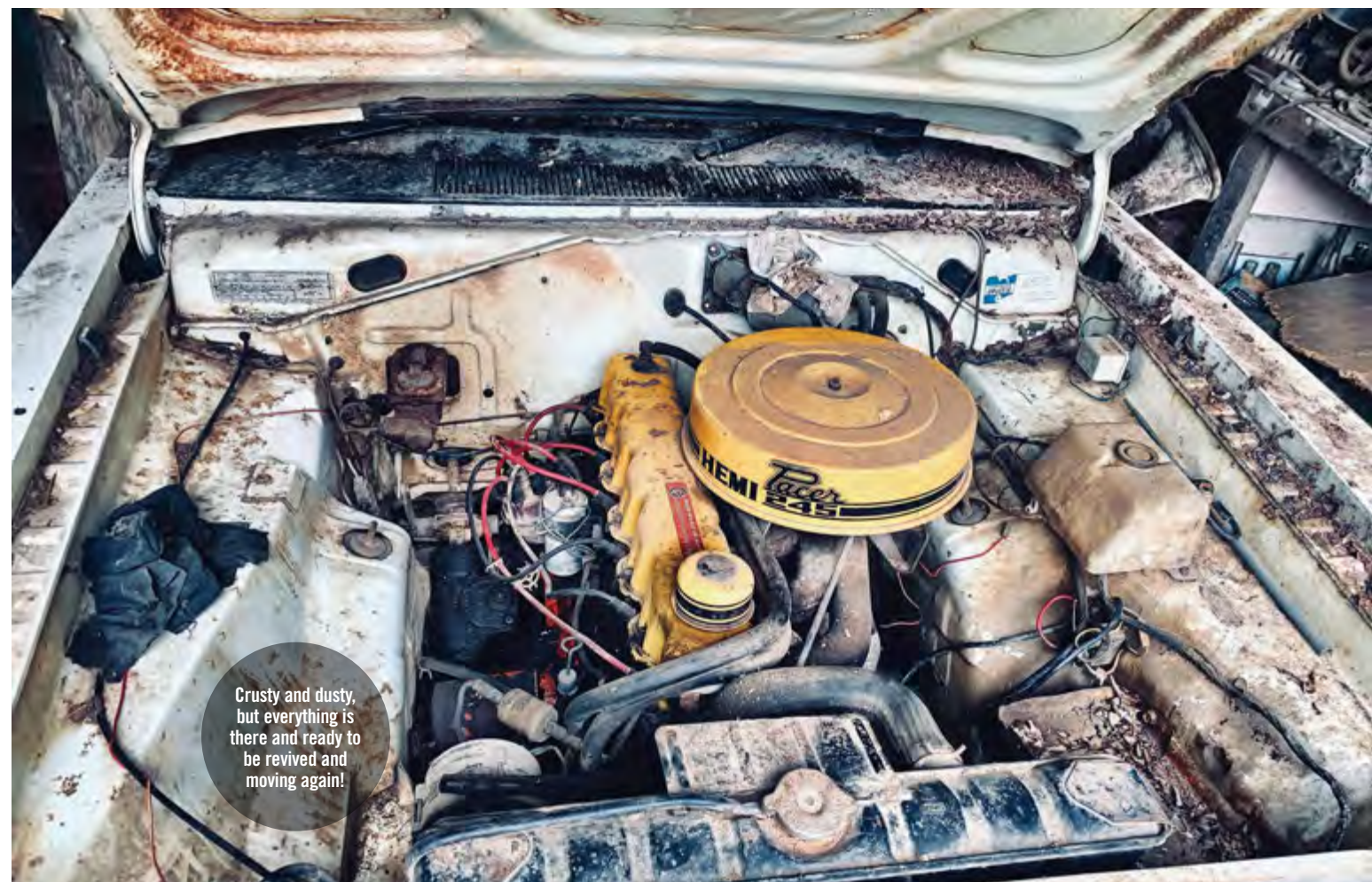
Mick has a daily driver VG utility, a worthy workhorse, and first went to The Great Race at Bathurst, when he was 12 years old. "I just had to have the Pacer, as it is part of the Golden Era of Bathurst," he says.

"This Pacer needs to live again," says Mick but he, "needs time to get it right so

it can get back on the road." For now, this rare Survivor will stay in its 'as found' condition until the time comes that it can be revived and awoken from the long-term slumber. **SCA**



Brian's family photos show plenty of fond memories in his VG Pacer.



Crusty and dusty, but everything is there and ready to be revived and moving again!



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