



**Porsche's Moby Dick**  
The Ultimate 911

**SHADOW CAN-AM DN4** Track Drive



# Vintage Motorsport<sup>®</sup>.COM

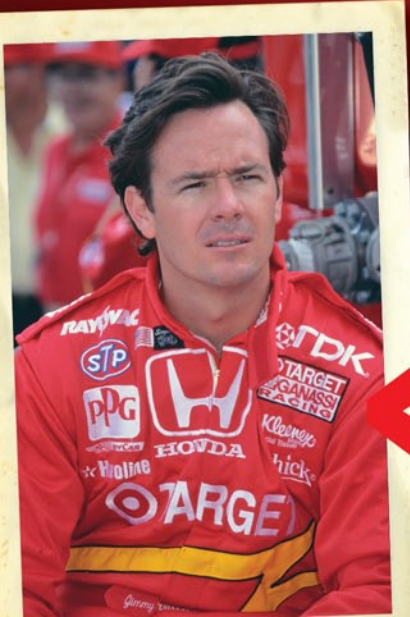
2016 4  
JUL/AUG

THE JOURNAL OF MOTOR RACING HISTORY

# OUTRAGEOUS!



650-hp BMW McLaren  
320i Turbo 4



**STU HILBORN** Fuel Injection Pioneer

Lotus Elite  
Hits the Road

Racing at  
Candlestick Park

My Favorite Race:

**JIMMY VASSER**  
1996 TOYOTA GRAND PRIX OF MONTEREY

**ALL THE ACTION FROM**

- Monaco's Historique
- HSR Mitty
- VRG Jefferson 500
- SVRA Sonoma
- HMSA Barber
- Historic Gasoline Alley
- The Quail Motorcycles
- VARA High Desert

Don Nichols and his Shadow Can-Am Cars



Pegaso to Pontiac,  
Connecticut's A.R.I.  
is deep into the  
rebirth business.

BY TED WEST

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DON HEINY

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# Automotive Restorations, Inc.

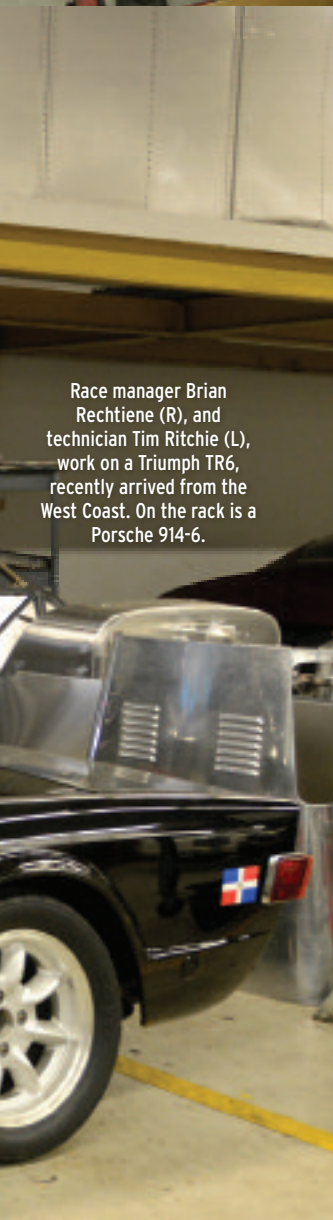




Jim Coleman of Coleman Performance Engines checks out a Cosworth YB engine after a dyno run.



Kent Bain and part of his loyal crew shown here combine multiple talents and expertise to stay on top of the diverse projects that enter the shop.



Race manager Brian Rechtiene (R), and technician Tim Ritchie (L), work on a Triumph TR6, recently arrived from the West Coast. On the rack is a Porsche 914-6.

**K**ent Bain doesn't mince words. When as a very young man he decided to open one of the earlier classic and old racing car shops in the Northeast in 1978, he called a spade a spade. Because no one else had thought to use the name yet, and because "it is," as they say, "what it is," he named his new business Automotive Restorations Inc. Any questions?

This multi-purpose facility in Stratford, CT, does practically everything that car people like us could want: sales, service, refurbishing, restoration, and downright reincarnation, not to mention, full track support for vintage and historic racing vehicles. Nothing is too exotic, rare, or beyond saving for Bain and his 40 employees to, er, step in.

One of their more demanding projects, an arduous journey that at times required the most fundamental fabricate-from-zero machining and engineering, was resurrecting an impossibly arcane '55 Pegaso Touring. Pegaso, if you don't know, are rare as shark feet. Made in Spain in the 1950s, they were assigned the sobering task under dictator Generalissimo Francisco Franco of proving that Spain was not only the equal of the Italian supercar masters ... it was capable of higher technology, and, yes, more performance. While Jaguar was building XK road cars that made headlines because their "120" model was capable of 120 miles per hour, Pegaso was building ludicrously advanced DOHC V8 supercars that would simply rip the skin off the planet. In an officially certified 1953 Spanish Automobile Club test, a Pegaso did the flying kilometer in 161.1 mph. Subsequent production Pegasos were bona fide 160-mph GTs, while a new Corvette was still toying with 110.

The trouble with Pegasos is, car to car, many were hand-built to a heart-stopping degree ... which makes restoring one an adventure in 1950s supercar engineering. To "restore" the aforementioned magnificent '55 Pegaso Touring, A.R.I. had to machine or fabricate countless fundamental mechanical details practically by imagination, using only the ghostly, corroded remnants that remained of the originals. They even had to fabricate the internal components of the Pegaso's unique shock absorbers, reincarnating these definitively "unobtainium" devices.

Done.

The project was completed in 2010 for owner Richard Kocka, and the miraculously A.R.I.-reincarnated Pegaso beauty went to Pebble Beach. And as you may have heard, Pebble takes its judging reasonably seriously. Given its high shade-tree standard, the '55 Pegaso Touring, inspected and savored rivet by rivet, won its class award—ultimate testament to a meticulous job splendidly done.



This 1952 Pegaso Saoutchik body project was a recent barn find and will only be restored to running condition. Keron Legerton is the detail man.



A Lotus Seven gets its needed attention on a busy work day.



Tiny engine is an 1100cc 4-banger from a Cisitalia.

### Starting At The Top

Where does a young man like the very young 1978 Kent Bain, only five years out of college, get the chutzpah to start a business grandiosely titled “Automotive Restorations Inc.?” Well, besides thinking of it before you did, it helps if he has some entirely exceptional credentials. Kent Bain did. He graduated from the University of Bridgeport in 1973 with a Bachelor’s Degree in Engineering, and not incidentally, he also won the nationally prestigious Industrial Designer’s Society of America’s Student Merit Award for 1973, graduating at the top of his and the entire country’s industrial-design class. He immediately embarked on a successful five-year design career, consulting with the northeast offices of Raymond Spillman Industrial Design, in Stamford, CT, Edward Second Design, and Will Tressler. Working as a freelance consultant during these years allowed him to indulge his ever-intense love of vintage cars and sports car racing, and just as important, served to keep him solvent during the first formative years of A.R.I.

Bain has never looked back. His 1978 partnership with two others in A.R.I. subsequently led to formation of the subsidiary Vintage Racing Services, providing sales, service, and track support for a wide variety of vintage and historic racing vehicles. Among many other successes, V.R.S. has achieved several podium placements for many clients in the extraordinarily grueling modern Carrera Panamericana in Mexico, an event that yearly demonstrates the old adage that racing isn’t all fun.

Over succeeding decades, A.R.I. has



1947 Rolls Royce Silver Wraith Hooper is having new body panels made.

thrived. Its 40 employees work in a new-in-2007 40,000 sq.-ft. facility in Stratford, doing \$5M in commerce annually. The business-service profile currently comprises about 80% restoration work and 20% vintage racing and maintenance, with healthy collectible-vehicle sales and acquisition activity adding to the mix.



Kent Bain started his shop in 1978.

### A Collectible-Auto All-Skate

When we visited A.R.I., it was like Automotive Oz. Over 90 wonderful vehicles of every description were crowded in, bumper-to-running board. If you didn’t care about the first three cars you saw, the next 10 broke your heart—and for every one of us, the “next 10” might be completely different cars. All categories and vintages of collectibles were on hand—Rolls to Ferraris to Lancias to woodies to customized Lincolns to MGTCs to sublime

prewar pickups to 1919 Buicks and Cisitalias, E-Types, Siatas, an exquisite ’49 Cadillac convertible ... oh, it was awful!

Of course, this immense breadth of subject matter demands a staff with a lot of expertise—and just as surely, a good variety of outside technological support services for really specialized restoration and vintage-racing work. Bain is extremely serious about replacing vital stressed elements like sub-frames and suspension parts in vintage race cars; corrosion and hidden abuse can cause mortal structural weakness not visible to the optimistic vintage race car buyer at point of purchase. But located in eastern Connecticut, A.R.I. is well situated near extremely sophisticated aerospace metallurgical analysis facilities, centers of expertise commonly doing work for nearby Sikorsky Helicopters. What needs inspection ... gets inspected. And whenever necessary, things are made right, before something ugly happens on the racetrack.

A.R.I.’s 36 technical employees work in a full variety of specialized departments, each



Race cars in the shop: 1997 Porsche GT-2R, Triumph Spitfire, 1971 Triumph TR6.

with its own work area and parts resources. Bodywork, paint, start-from-scratch seat and upholstery, chassis shop, engine and drivetrain shop, full machine shop, and much more, were all working and smiling during our long day's gawk. Good stuff.

But the results of A.R.I.'s expertise speak for themselves. Whether it's the long, painstaking reincarnation of a phantom Pegaso, or the full-speed six-month resurrection of a badly aged '53 Ferrari 166 MM Spyder with rare Belgian Martial Oblin coachwork, A.R.I. has the guns. The Pegaso was a prize winner at hallowed Pebble Beach, and the 166M went on to Retromobile and Artcurile. A.R.I. also did major restoration work on the only surviving M-B 300SL Prototype, before sending it to Stuttgart to be beatified. And they resuscitated the one and only Steve McQueen Porsche 908-2 camera car that ran at Le Mans during the 1970 24 Hours, shooting precious live race footage for the movie "Le Mans" The 908-2 then went on display for an extended period at the Petersen Museum in Los Angeles.

But if all that sounds just too exotic, don't feel left out. A.R.I. will be just as happy reviving a "plain" old '57 T-Bird or your uncle's '53 Pontiac Chieftain station wagon and having either looking sweet as new. Go ahead ... try and stump them! 🏁

**AUTOMOTIVE RESTORATIONS INC.**

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This 1976 March Formula Atlantic brightens up the showroom.



A Morgan, Mercedes 190SL and Aston Martin DB2 are real eye-catchers in the showroom.



Technician Charles Webb works on a 1947 Cisitalia 202.



Race manager Brian Rehtiene is loading an '85 Swift DB2 on the semi for a race in Indianapolis.

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