

Ahmad Abdo
Dallas, TX 75252
aabdo@parknet.pmh.org
Prototype Sterling (Norm Rose car)

Al Agolio
Ledyard, CT 06339
a.agolio@sbcglobal.net
Sterling # 00503

Mark Albanese
Naples, FL 34109
bettereducation@comcast.net
Sebring

Dennis Albright
Lanesboro, MN 55949
americansterling@hotmail.com
Sterling # CCC95

David Aliberti
Verona, PA
Sterling # CCC195
info@sterlingsprtscars.com

Gary Anagnostis
Gahanna, OH 43230
garya@completeweb.net
Sebring

Steve Andrejeski
Bellerose, NY 11426
momsviper5@aol.com
Sebring

Scott Bailey
Galway, NY 12074
baileys3ny@aol.com
Sterling

Nic Bardea
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
nic.bardea@clorox.com
Sterling

Anthony Bemis
Vacaville, CA 95687
abemis@comcast.net
Sterling

Nick Born
Sterling # CCC130

Seth Canterbury
Kingsland, GA 31548
tscanter26@hotmail.com
Mid year Cimbria

Jack Clay
Sumner, WA 98390
jjf42000@hotmail.com
Sterlings #CCC183 & CCC 283

Robert Davidoski
La Porte, TX 77571
caraudiofreq@aol.com
Sterling #042

Warren Daugherty
New Columbia, PA 17856
farfegnubbin@yahoo.com
Sterling

Ben Dodd
Mohnton, PA 19540
bendodd@juno.com
Sterling

Chet & Ethan Dunican
Niantic, CT 06357
cd@dunican.net
Sterlings # 002 (MCC) &
unnumbered

Mike Fabery
Liverpool, NY 13088
mfabery1@twcnny.rr.com
Sterling

Arlen Fountain
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
fountain@datasync.com
Sterling

Greg Hampton
Morgan Hill, CA 95038
unofun@aol.com
active observer

Paul Hawkins
Smiths Grove, KY 42171
paulky_2000@yahoo.com
Sebring

Larry Hoganson
Banning, CA 92220
Sterling # CCC132

Bill Jones
Dothan, Alabama 36301
Bjones9950@comcast.net
Sterling

Keith Klein
Edwall, WA 99008
kcklein@icehouse.net
Cimbria

Wally Kolcz
Warren, MI 48089
need current email!
active observer

Mike Leach
Warsaw, IN 46582
Jazz_68@yahoo.com
active observer

Donnie Luschen
Bentonville, AR 72712
dluschen@cox.net
Sterling # CCC460

Mike McBride
St. Helens, OR 97051
solster@colcenter.org
Sterling(s)

Dan McGee
Saginaw, MI 48603
dan-mcgee@charter.net
Sterling

Scott McKinley
Altoona, WI 54720
sgmckinley@yahoo.com
still looking!

Rick Milne
Downingtown, PA 19335
milne2@msn.com
Sterling # CCC114

Eddie Ortiz
Bellflower, CA 90706
Collectorman5000@aol.com
Sterling # CCC393

Tom & Mary Beth Paquette
Waterford, NY 12188
MBPaqOne@aol.com
Sterling

Claudio Perissutti
Slidell, LA 70458
labest1@bellsouth.net
Sterling

Paul & Judy Petrali
Fair Oaks, CA 95628
need current email!
active observers

Eric & Danielle Phillips
Rogers, AR 72758
eric.phillips@exide.com
Sterling

Miguel Santiago
Prunedale, CA 93907
Turkeyb0y@myrealbox.com
active observer

Farzad "Fuzz" Sharif
Harrisburg, PA 17111
Fuzz148@comcast.net
Cimbria #04246

Steve Silverstein
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779
superpuppy1@excite.com
1975 Sterling

Brian Smith
Traverse City, MI 49684
need current email!
Sterling

Mike & Karen Walz
Burleson, TX 76028
mikey90@sbcglobal.net
Sterling

Wil Weber
Farmington, UT 84025
Willden4weber@yahoo.com
Sterling

Shane Williams
Fremont, CA 94538
brastic_shane@yahoo.com
Sterling

Tracey White
Denver, CO 80249
tracey.white@comcast.net
Sebring

Mike Woolley
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
need current email!
1983 Sebring

Hank & Tracy Zellers
Bulls Gap, TN 37711
zellers@usit.net
Sebring



NATIONAL STERLING OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Seventh Issue: Jan 2007
printed quarterly (well, I try...)

Letter from the editor

Wow! The club is almost two years old already!! Our membership grows almost at a daily rate, and that can only mean that more people are finding out just how good we really are! I mean, really, where else in the United States can someone go to find information on these cars?

But, of course, the big news is Dave's purchase of the molds from Mike McBride, and his plans to bring Sterling back to the forefront of the kit car industry. Well, maybe - he's not quite Factory Five size yet! But Dave has great plans, and for those who don't know - see his website at www.sterlingsportscars.com for all the details. I know a lot of members have already made the effort to contact Dave and at least wish him well on this venture. If you haven't done so already, please take a moment to contact him via a phone call, email or letter! Let's make this incarnation of this classic car one for the record books!

Other than that, a very strange end of the year weather wise. This issue is going to be a potpourri of different articles, and not any one item will be highlighted. With the upcoming show season, I'm sure that'll change. I am also enclosing a slip for those who wish to attend Dave's debut at Carlisle this year. If you would like to go, please send the slip back to me (or email your info), as I'll try to make arrangements for a hotel for all the club members at a reduced rate. Hotels fill quickly during the season, and having reservations made in February for May are not uncommon.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Sterling kit is back in production!

"Most beautiful kit car ever made."
Road & Track magazine, 1972

The time honored classic Sterling of the '70's is back with modern features and comfort. The Sterling line now includes a new mid engine chassis as a direct replacement for existing Sterling owners, as well as offering a new, standard Beetle floorpan. Two years of research and development went into creating multiple chassis options to accommodate a wide range of engine configurations. New owners will now have the opportunity to choose a kit that fits the builders' budget and skill level. If you are a current owner - great news! Future expanded product offerings will include OEM replacement parts that have been out of production for years, as well as new Sterling body kit add-ons and accessories.



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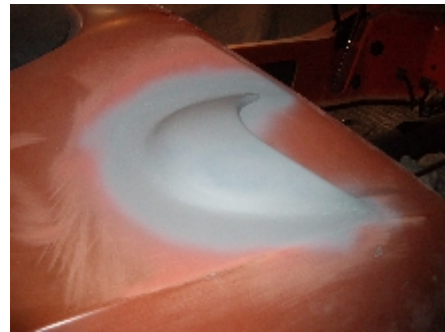
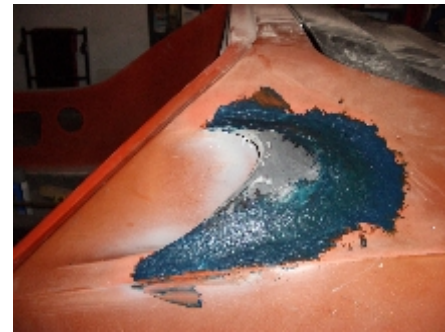


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www.nationalsterling.com
direct link to forums is:

<http://www1.nationalsterling.org/modules.php?name=Forums>

Some shots of Dan McGee's car in progress. The scoops are a Mike McBride original, and I think they work well with the car design overall. Dan's doing a snap job of blending them in along with his 'Vette rear valance. Sharp eyes will note the CNC hydraulic pedal assembly in the cockpit - a tight fit to be sure!



Owner's Rides



"Fuzz" Sharif and yours truly. I just came from a car show west of his house, so my wife and I stopped in for a visit. Fuzz just told me to stop touching his car...then he took me for a ride in his Esslinger Racing Ford powered Cimbria. A very different animal from my Sterling - and note the comparative size difference! The Cimbria is much larger in every dimension. The cockpit features a full steel roll cage integrated into the body - very neat!

THE DISPLAY CABINET

RICK MILNE'S STERLING / NOVA



Rick Milne just wanted to buy an interesting car, but got sucked right into the turbine intake of the kit car world and is now one of the founders of the National Sterling Club. He's the second owner of this Sterling, which was sold as the Nova in the UK. Interesting to note that some Novas are still evolving - there's a rumour of one being rebuilt with a Lotus backbone chassis.

Rick bought this one in Michigan from the original owner, and trailered it back home. It was drivable but rough. The car still had its 1966 VW Beetle engine; you can happily abandon those in the back of a garage for ten years and then just start them up again, no worries - there's no cooling jacket to corrode and no water pump to leak or seize.

The car was a barn find, with the usual story attached. The first owner had a Beetle that rusted out but was still mechanically fine, so he rebuilt the engine and built the pan into a Sterling in 1976 and then didn't have time to use it and just parked in the back of a garage after six months. Thirty years later, along came Rick to tow it out into the sunlight again.



Rick dropped the floors by 4", overhauled the brakes, changed the Beetle steering column to a General Motors one, rubbed the body down and gave it a coat of fresh flip-flop paint. The 30-year-old rebuilt engine is fresh as a daisy, and all Rick needs to do is to stiffen up the roof which is a bit floppy and which tends to bend the windscreen. The screens are still available but they cost \$1000. Good news

since then is finding out that Sterling/Nova kits are still in production in a small way, not too far from me in Oregon - Solid Sterling is the company, on 001 503 366 0553. The other pic features Bradleys, a cousin of the Nova, about which more later. For transatlantic Nova chat, Rick is at milne2@msn.com



I totally forgot about talking to this guy. This was printed in the UK version of Kit Car magazine!

To Brake Or Not To Brake - Pt 1 - Taking off the all the stuff

When I got my Sterling in 2003 it was all there and assembled. It had sat for 30 years, or so, resulting in my having to tackle many gremlins. One of my on-going problems have been the front brakes.

The major problem is I have no idea what, exactly, is on the front of the car. The front brakes failed last week and I can't get any pedal height. Yeah - I replaced all the lines, hoses and am on my 3rd master cylinder in 2 years. Sure, they are discs but not from a beetle. I even pulled a pad to match it to something that, hopefully, would tell me what the calipers are from so I could see if there was a mis-match from the calipers to the Master but the results showed those pads used on everything from an early 70's Porsche to a Renault. In the end I just bit the bullet and bought a totally new disc kit with everything from spindles to calipers, lines and a master. They threw in the lines for free so I'll probably store those for the future since I have new lines but I do plan to use the hoses...even though I have brand new ones already...just to remove all doubt about mis-matched parts.

When you mount the Sterling body you have cut off the stock jacking point from the Beetle chassis but the perch for the mounting point is still there on my car so I put my floor Jack under that to lift the car and then placed a jack stand under the shock perch. First, of course, strip everything off - the lugs, wheels, pull the speedo cable and then take a look at all the mounting points. What is the condition of your tie rod ends and ball joints? Are the rubber boots in tact? Are they ripped? If so, you'll need to replace them and this is the perfect time to do so since access will be easy. I needed one lower and one upper Ball joint - so back to the mail order house for more parts...oh, and if you're doing a lower ball joint - don't forget to order the sway bar clamp kit as removal and re-use of the original is just about impossible. The sway bar is clamped to the arm that holds the lower ball joint and re-using the stock clamps are a real pain when the after market offers a user-friendly replacement for only \$20.

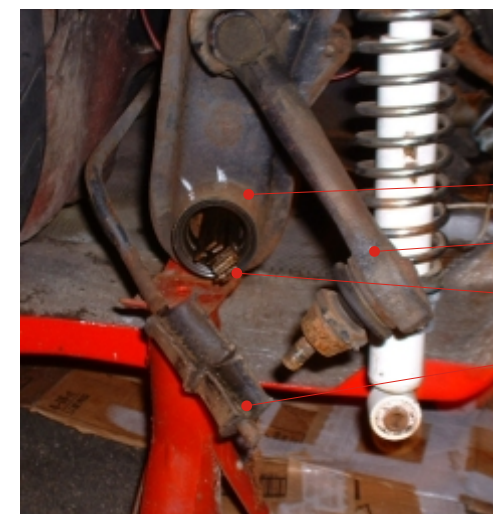
Not having a shop at my disposal, there were some tools I didn't have, a "Ball Joint Spreader" (Huge Fork-like item) and a Tie Rod End Popper were 2 items that I could not do without. The folks at NAPA have a free tool rentals service that I fall-back on when needed. You'll need these tools to take off the spindle. Their use is fairly straight ahead and is easily described in any of the VW repair books that you, no doubt, have in your car reference stuff that we all have accumulated.

Popping out the tie rod using one of the tools I borrowed from Napa and then turning my attention to the ball joints, I discovered that there is no, apparent, easy way to get the ball joint ends out of the spindles mounting points. In the end I used the Ball Joint spreader as wedge to apply pressure to both upper and lower joints allowing me to push them away from each other and remove the spindle.

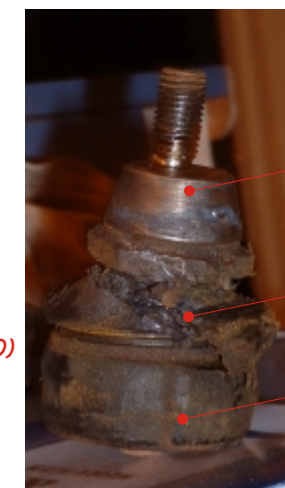
Now it's time to remove the arm that holds the ball joint. Look at where it attached to the frame - you'll notice a nut - in the middle the nut is an allen headed bolt. Loosen the nut and then loosen the allen bolt to allow the arm to slip off the Torsion bar. Before removing the bar I used a grease pencil to mark the arm and the frame to be sure I replace the arm in the same position I took it out. Better safe than sorry. Now you should have...in your lap...the Lug Bolts, Wheel, spindle...and, maybe an arm or 2 if you need new Ball Joints or tie rod ends.

Next issue - slapping it all back in. Also, "what can I do myself and what do I need a machine shop to do?"

Steve Silverstein



TORSION HOUSING
UPPER CONTROL ARM
TORSION LEAVES
SWAY BAR
(LOWER CONTROL ARM REMOVED)



CAMBER ADJUSTING NUT
(NOTCH MUST FACE FORWARD!)
VERY BEAT BOOT!
BALL JOINT

Canopy removal - the relatively easy way!

This article outlines an easy way to remove and support the canopy by one person. The only catch is that it makes the car static, so you'll be unable to move it once the canopy is removed. Helpful for replacing the hydraulic or electric actuators, if necessary. I did it to remove my hinges in an effort to clean them up and to obtain pricing from a machine shop for a replica set in polished aluminum or stainless steel. This process is greatly aided by having a garage or carport in which you have some weather protection!

First, pad everything well! You'll need a set of sawhorses, a 4x4 8' long and some scrap 4x4 and 2x4 pieces of wood. Raise the canopy to it's full extension. Put the sawhorses at the front wheels - slightly aft - and put the 4x4 across them AFTER YOU'VE PADDED THE HOOD! You want to have the wood under the meat of the canopy lip - just in front of the wiper motor where the inner canopy curve comes down. Don't support the canopy by the front edge; there's not enough to support it there. Build height with the scrap wood until you have enough to reach the canopy on both sides. Pad well!



Remove the windows and inner canopy liner - the pebbled black panels that line the top sides. This reveals the three bolts that hold the top part of the hinge mechanism. With those panels removed, now is the time to reinforce the rear of the canopy. Cut (2) 2x4's to go from the back of the canopy lip right at the curve to the floorpan behind the seats. The tighter the fit, the better. Pad the top of the wood well where it meets the canopy. Set those in place, and cross brace with a scrap piece of lumber so they don't fall to one side, forward or back.

Take a screw eye and fasten it to a wall stud or nearest sturdy object behind the car. You'll need a length of aircraft cable, spindles and 1 turnbuckle for the rest. Loop a strand of cable (I used 1/8" - it what I had on hand) around the cross brace and secure with a spindle. Place the turnbuckle on the other screw eye and open it all the way. Run the cable to the turnbuckle, lace it through the loose end, and pull tight and fasten with another spindle. Slowly turn the turnbuckle tight until the slack is taken out of the cable. You want it taut, but not pulling hard on the cross braced wood. This keeps the canopy from sliding forward when the supports are removed.

Once the canopy is secured, you can start unbolting the gas rams. Do one at a time, and have someone with you when you slide the rams off the hinges - just in case the canopy does move. Once the gas rams are disconnected, the canopy is free and resting on it's own. In my case, I was removing the hinges, so I'll continue on that.



Unbolt the top hinge portion - three bolts - and let the unit come down and rest on the body. The lower mount bolts are accessed through the common holes of the 6x9 speaker hole that most of the cars have, as well as the "glove box" cubby on the sides. You'll need to be a bit limber to reach the farthest bolt and nut - a gear wrench is your buddy here. Expect to lose at least three nuts on each side! Since each car varies in it's construction, I can't say for sure what size your bolts are. Mine turned out to be 5/16 on the top and 3/8 on the bottom. Don't forget to unbolt the little 'wing' support going down the inside of the body where the gas rams sit. The welds had broke on mine in a couple spots, so yet another reason to double check the condition of the hinges!

I hope to have pricing and photos for the next issue on whatever I decide to do with these units. Stainless may be out of the budget, but aluminum is looking good!

Rick Milne

Sorry for the messy garage!

