



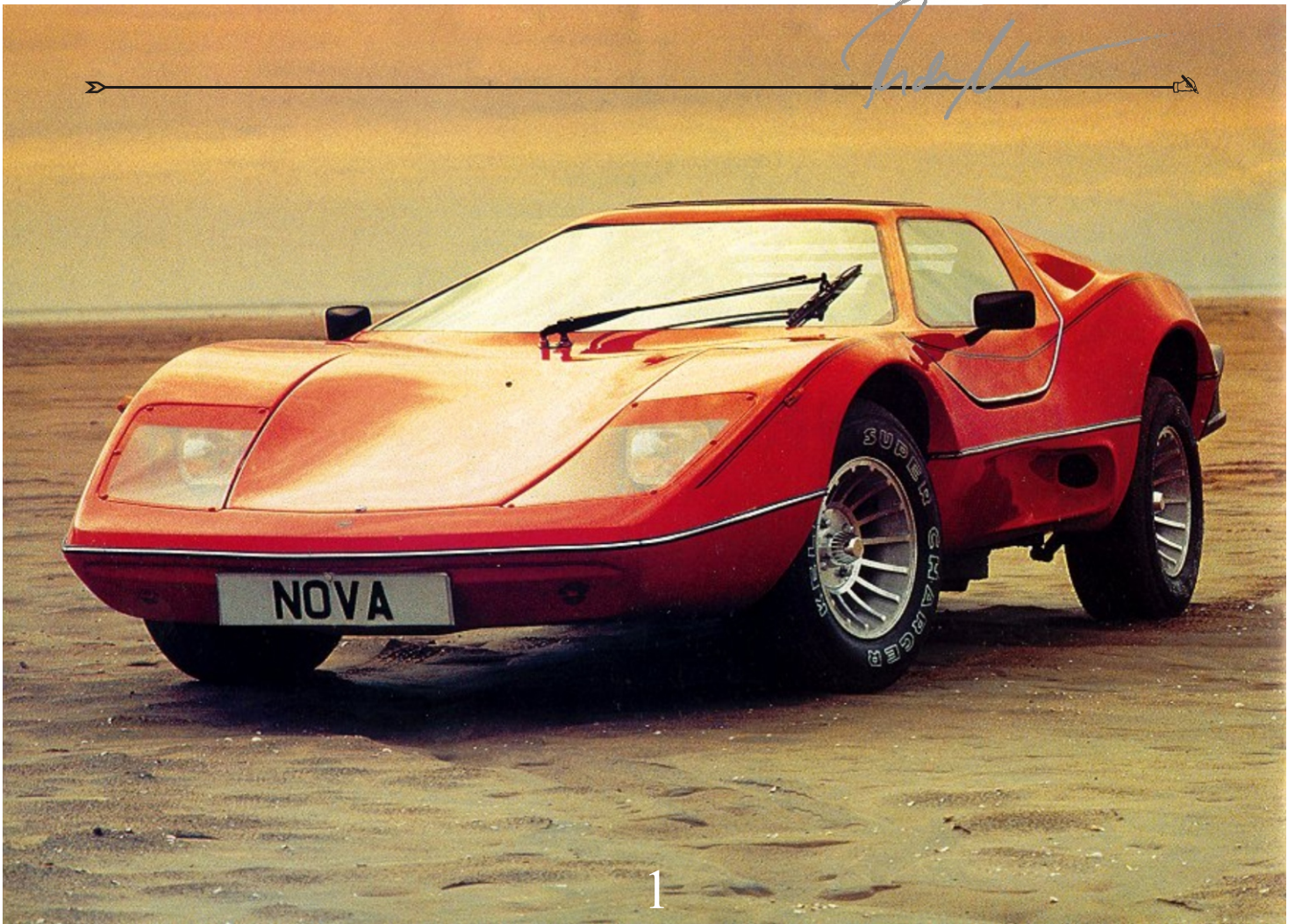
NATIONAL STERLING OWNERS ASSOCIATION

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Letter from the editor

And just that fast, the summer has started! Weird weather patterns, to be sure. My sympathies and best wishes to those caught in the midwest flooding that's been happening recently, and to those folks who may be near the California wildfires. Here in the northeast no such things are happening, though Spring seemed to skip this year and headed right into summer. That said, the Carlisle show suffered tremendously. The weather was atrocious, save for Saturday, and poor Dave was right in the middle of it. The story follows....

In other news, our website has just gone off the charts in terms of visitors and questions. We seem to gain at least one new member/owner every couple weeks, and our influence is being felt worldwide. The more information we can gain, the better off as a club we can be! Sadly, though, the economic situation has hit more than a few folks, and they are forced to sell their projects. Having been there, I commiserate, and hope that their cars go to other happy homes!



CARLISLE Events



There's one thing for sure. If it's a Spring Carlisle show, be prepared for rain. So far in the past years of covering the show there was one weekend that was clear. This weekend was the norm - almost. Due to some personal obligations and business meetings, I was unable to attend on Friday and Sunday, which was almost a blessing. Wave after wave of storm systems blew into the middle part of the state by mid week, with a bead on the showgrounds smack in the middle of the mountains. I awoke Friday morning to torrential rains, and the local weatherscan showed rain extended well past the middle of the state - and Carlisle was in the yellow and reds of the map. Not good....and I really felt for the vendors that reserve their spaces every year. Outdoor vendor spaces are behind the main show fields, behind the buildings, and occupying several rows of what is typically parking - on grass. And on a hill. The indoor vendors I'm sure were just biding their time, taking the opportunity to fine tune their spaces and clean their cars. For the buggy fans, Bruce and Winnie Meyers were to have flown in sometime Friday for the weekend, promoting their new Manxter II. My feeling is they spent only a few hours in the main display hall chatting with vendors, like everyone else, keeping a close eye on Saturday.

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Bruce (in red) and Winnie (in black & grey) stroll towards the Buggie Bums of Philly display Saturday morning.



My plan was simple. Keep checking the weather every five minutes up until midnight so I could plan my attack on Saturday morning. And sure enough, there seemed to be a break coming. It may be overcast, but it just might hold. After all, I had promised Dave I would be there to annoy him.

Up and running at 5AM Saturday the sky was crystal clear. Mid 60's, slight westerly wind...good things. And off I went! I got to the showfield around 7:30 or so, and quickly sought out Sterling Sports Cars. Dave had procured a new space for this year - the opposite end of the central vendors stands, right next to the food court. I knew that was his prime motive, not having to walk as far for the pizza and sandwiches.

Not surprisingly, Dave had more than a few folks in his space checking out the machine and chassis. The morning was starting well, and the booth was drawing quite a few people more than the other marques at the show for the moment. Since Dave was busy talking with prospective buyers, and his right hand man Chris was still setting up items in the display area, I took the opportunity to stroll the grounds and take my obligatory wide view of the showgrounds on the opening page. Note the deceiving blue of the sky....

The fields were *very* slowly coming to life. The import side was filling slowly...the kit side was vacant for the most part. A couple dune buggies huddled in the safety of the open pavilion, brought up the night before and now drying out under the assault of towels and owners. A single true vintage kit was on the field, displayed in front of the pavilion. And I was glad to see it - a vintage Aquila owned by Jack Bretall out of Chicago. Jack and his buddy bought a pair of these cars, produced by American Fibre Craft in the early '80's, from a fellow that was cleaning out his collection of kits a few months back.

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Some of our intrepid members later in the morning! From left to right:
Mark Williams, Marlana & Doug Proctor, Dave Aliberti, Warren Dougherty
Mark's building a first generation Cimbria, the Proctors are working on a couple cars, if I remember correctly, but have not signed in with the club yet! Warren...well...still in progress on three different projects!



This Aquila was the 1984 Kit Car cover car, built by American Fibre Craft as the promotional vehicle. It's powered by a 2.8l V6 Ford engine (of special interest to me!) and has authentic Ferrari 308 taillights and front turn signals. Now, if Jack would just peel that Ferrari decal off the back....

It really was a well finished car; the doors closed and latched with a solid thud - great construction there. I'll have to post at some point how the doors were hinged for the Cimbria folks. Think heavy mounted steel plate in the door supporting the hinges and the same for the center roof bar! Jack allowed me to take a seat and close the door to get a feel for the car, and I was instantly convinced I was in a Laser 917. Absolutely no rear visibility which seems to be a common theme in the kit world, very tight for footroom - dropped floorpans are a requirement, at least for me. I was impressed with the overall headroom, though. Sitting relatively straight up, I had enough room for a ball cap on my head. Forward visibility was good, and rear three quarter was adequate. Getting out was a little tough - Cimbria owners know when to duck...I didn't, and squarely caught my head on the edge of the door. Ouch...

The radiator was under the front bumper, tilted back, and still allowed enough room under the hood for some storage. Looking at the car, there are cut lines around the nose and tail. The production thought behind these was to allow these pieces to be replaced in case of an accident - great forethought!



Of course, Jack said anything is available for a price. Unofficially he put the car for sale just to see what reactions he could get. As much as I love these car, it was far too rich for my blood, regardless of the build history. If anyone is truly interested, contact me - I've got Jack's information.

The day progressed, and the crowds finally came around 10:30 or so. Vendors who were wet the day before now basked in the warm glow of the sun, even if it was only in the high 60's. Cars were brought out of hiding in trailers and tents...so far life was good on the grounds. The dune buggy crowd was waiting in anticipation for Bruce Meyers. He (Bruce) finagled some time out from his autograph sessions to see the assembled buggy crowd and sign some cars and

autographs. The day, however, was proving to be fickle. By the time Bruce got to the cars around 11:00, the clouds had returned in full force along with the winds. But even that didn't dampen the spirits of the guys there to see Bruce and shake his hand. Bruce is a true gentleman, and will take the time to talk to anyone about their cars.



Bruce with Tom from Tijuana Kustoms of New York



The Buggy Bums of Philadelphia (top) and an original Meyers Tow'd (below)

If the buggies weren't on the field, there probably would not have been a kit side to the show this year. The show regulars, the Porsche Speedster crowd and the Cobra club were hard pressed to be seen. Perhaps a dozen Speedsters and Cobra's were in attendance at the height of the day, but shortly after one o'clock, most departed, apparently convinced the rains were coming...which they were. The Porsche club kept to the field, the members content to sit and commune under a tent. Of the classic kits, there were four the entire day, and each kit took it's turn on the field for only a few hours.

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By two o'clock, I was getting tired of wandering the field, the temperatures were starting to fall a little, and the ominous skies were starting to roll over the mountains again. I took the opportunity to take a final walk of the vendors and show field to take a few photos, then start the trek home again.

Before I packed up, I decided to see if I could corner Dave for a few minutes for an impromptu interview between chatting with prospective customers. We only got in three questions to start - maybe we'll be able to finish this another time, Dave!

(paraphrased from memory - I didn't have a recorder with me...sorry :-))

Ed: One year in business for Sterling Sports Cars! How was it, overall?

DA: Well, with the economy down, oddly business is up for parts. This is a part time thing for me right now, just trying to keep the marquee alive and getting needed parts to people. The VW pan is still the most popular platform, it seems. It's more work than I initially thought returning all the phone calls and emails!



One of the stranger "kits" - a homebuilt by plan Vortex 3 wheeler

Ed: What's your take on the state of the kit industry overall?

DA: Generally good, overall, I think. With the economy the way it is, it's giving people more time to "play". The people that get hit the hardest - truckers, teachers, folks who have a lot of down time when the economy is poor seem to be the ones that are working on their cars the most. Part demand is seasonal I'm finding - spring and summer mostly, since people are outside working on their cars. What surprised me is Europe is putting in quite a few parts orders.

Ed: What direction do you see SSC heading in the next few years?

DA: (laughs) A household name, a multimillion dollar corporation....world domination! (rolling out of his seat) But seriously, I always wanted to own a car company since I was little, so here it is. We'll see where it goes from here!



Club member Ben Dodd discusses engine options with Dave



EM578, a 'McLaren-esque' looking car. Looked promising!
<http://www.emmotorsllc.com/>



An unknown Cheetah replica, finished in an authentic Hot Wheels paint color.



Exotics are starting to become more frequent at the show. Another good reason to go! Above is a nice example of a Maserati Merak, and at left, the Maserati Ghibli SS.

TECH TIPS

Molding in custom scoops from Mike McBride!

Over the years I have added scoops to the upper air intake holes on a couple of Sterlings I have built, and I thought they added to the overall racy look of the sleek body lines, and made the car look more finished. The more I studied the body and thought about it, the more I realized that scoops are really needed on all the air openings (or pseudo air openings) to really give the entire car more of a completed look.

I set about doing so by first making a set of hand formed scoops, and then making some molds from those. After making the molds, I layed up all six scoops and proceeded to install them on the car. I took a few pictures of the various scoops in various stages of installation, and will attempt to describe and show step by step what to do to install them. I will be sending the molds to Dave Aliberti so anyone wishing to add them to their car may purchase them from Dave. He already has the hood scoops, but will soon have the others, also. If someone wants to add them, but not mold and bond them to their car, they could be laid up in black gelcoat by Dave, and the person installing them could simply glue the black scoops onto their car and not try to match or blend them into the existing finish color, and also that would save the mess and painstaking job of bonding and smoothing necessary to make them one piece with the body. You would simply scratch the paint off (if your car is painted) under and just inside the edge of the scoop in several places, apply blobs of epoxy glue to the fiberglass in those places, and press the scoop into the epoxy. Tape the scoop in position until the epoxy hardens, and you have it! Just be sure to wipe off any epoxy that gets on the outside of the scoop edge before it hardens, or can damage your visible surface around the scoop.

Now, for the other method of installation. I like to place the scoop into it's proper position on the car and draw or scratch a line around the outside edge onto the body. Take away the scoop and use a die grinder, disk sander, Dremel tool, etc., whatever you have that will grind down through the gelcoat and expose the fiberglass underneath and go to it. Make the area all the way around the scoop show the fiberglass out about 3/4" to 1" from the edge of the scoop. Scratch the gelcoat all the way around the edge of the scoop about an inch wide also, so that fiberglass will bond to it better. Cut thin fiberglass cloth (available at most hardware stores) into strips about one inch by three or four inches, making eight to twelve strips per scoop.



TECH TIPS



Place the scoop in it's proper position and clamp it or tape it in three or four spots to hold it. Mix resin (also available at hardware stores or boat supply companies) and hardener in a small container in the proportions recommended by the manufacturer. With a small disposable paint brush, paint the resin on the scoop and car in the area prepared in the previous steps and lay the fiberglass cloth strips around the edge of the scoop between clamps or tape strips, half on the scoop and half on the body to bond them together into one piece. Dab resin into the cloth with the paint brush, being careful not to make it too wet or runny. Wait 'til that hardens and then remove the clamps and/or tape holding the scoop, as they are no longer needed. Sand the fiberglass around and on the scoop to remove any bumps or stray strands sticking up, and scratch the resin surface, and fiberglass the areas not yet bonded because the clamps or tape were in the way. As before, after that cures, scratch that resin to smooth it, and mix more resin. Paint more resin around the scoop and put on a second layer of fiberglass, or even a third can be added at this time to finish the bonding process.

After that, you simply mix up body filler and blend the scoop into the body all around, just as you would fill a minor dent on a steel bodied car. Just make sure you sand off any paint before applying body filler, as it will not bond well to paint. It sticks great to gelcoat or bare fiberglass, but be sure to wipe it down with solvent and sand the surface before applying Bondo. You will need a new brush for each new application of resin, or you will need to rinse the brush thoroughly with acetone after each application. Acetone is also available at most hardware stores in paint supplies section.

I wrote this article with probably more information than some of you may need, but it was done with the idea that someone who has never worked with fiberglass would be able to do this successfully, I hope :-). The pictures were just for my own album and not for a step by step instruction tutorial, so will be different scoops in different stages of installation, but will show each step in the process as I did it.

PS.

Latex disposable gloves are a good idea, too!

Mike McBride

More tips next page!

TECH TIPS

Everyone's nightmare - trapped inside with no power. No more, thanks to Steve!

"Escape Velocity"

So, you drive a car with one door, a door that's operated electronically...or hydraulically, depending on your preference. After you get past all the amazed expressions of on-lookers, sooner or later, someone asks, "How do you get out if the battery fails?"

My answer was always, "I remove the side window and slip out". Of course, never having actually done this, I hoped, I could actually do it, if I ever needed to.

4 years into ownership, being "the king of procrastination", I decided to come up with a real life solution.

For some time I had thought of replacing the stud that attached the lifting rams to the hinges with something removable that I could pull out in an emergency.

I once saw Hitch Pins on the web and figured that could be the solution. I measured the pins, that I currently had, and set off to Home Depot to find hitch pins, cabling and key chain loops.

I hit a total of 4 hardware stores and couldn't find any hitch pins short enough so I grabbed a pair of whatever I could find, along with the rest of my shopping list, and headed for home.

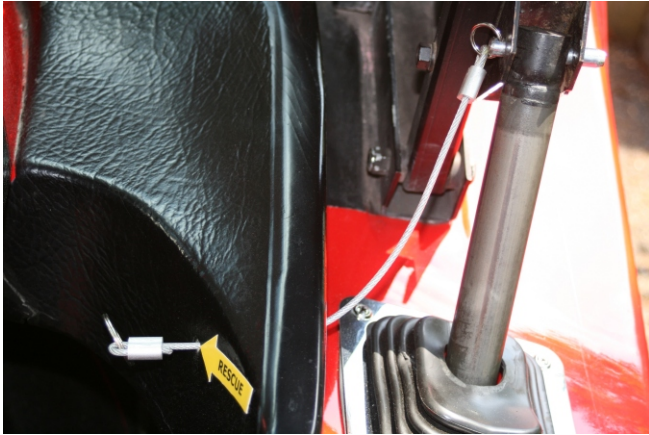
It was a fairly simple solution, the best ones usually are. Basically - take a hitch pin - attach a cable, feed the cable into the cockpit in such a fashion that when pulled the pin would fall out there by disconnecting the rams from the hinges and allow me to push open the canopy.

First things first - those hitch pins that were too long. I inserted one into the hinge and marked where I wanted the ring to go through the pin to attached the cable to. I took the pin to my drill press and drilled a new hole and then used my hack saw to cut down the pin to size. This left all sorts of sharp edges and burrs that were quickly smoothed and removed with my bench grinder. Having just picked up the grinder and the drill press from Craig's list for a total of \$80 I was excited to use my new tools.



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TECH TIPS



Once I had my re-designed pins in-hand I inserted the key chain loops and had to attached the cabling and run it into the cabin. In the first generation Sterling interior the canopy interior trim covers the hinge when the canopy is all the way down so I had to cut a hole into the trim to run the cable through. I still wasn't sure that the hitch pin was short enough. I realized that you needed enough extra space between the hinge assembly and the trim of the canopy to allow the pin to fully fall from the hinge so I drilled a large hole on the outside of the interior trim/dash panel and a tiny hole on the interior side to run just the cable through. This would present enough slack for the pin to fall into while keeping the cable hole neat and tidy on the interior.

Once all this was in order I fully opened the canopy so I could make sure I had enough cable to reach the hitch pin while it was in-place with the canopy up. I cut the cable to length and attached one key chain ring/loop. Then, I fed the cable through the interior hole, out the other side and up to the hitch pin and attached the cable to the other key chain ring/loop.

Once all this was done...that was it. Simple, yet, effective. Just a small bit of fun left to do. I had been visiting an aviation museum the week before and noticed that all the modern jets had a big yellow arrow on the outside that had the word, "Rescue" written on it. This arrow pointed to a port of the fuselage that could be opened and a lever pulled to blow the jets canopy off in case of an emergency. I decided to replicate, in miniature, this decal to use with my escape system. It's these little details that always get me jazzed. I wasn't sure how I would like them, once in place, so I used rubber cement to attached them knowing that this sort of glue would allow for an easy removal if I had second thoughts. Check out the photos and let me know what you think. I think they are "Keepers". Now...all I need is an emergency and I can get all excited about the precautions I took. On second thought ...maybe a nice boring..."All systems go" would do just fine.

Next issue more great stuff, including Warren's rotary powered car!

Owner's Rides



Chuck Suess



Rayth Orlea



Kevin Nguyen



Shane Dishman

Drivers

This section will be discontinued due to rapidly changing membership (and to conserve space).

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