

# the Oily Rag

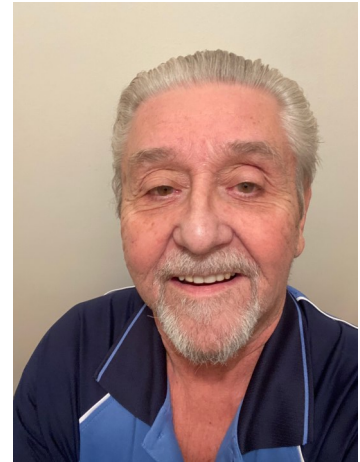
The Newsletter of the Vintage Sports Car Club of Calgary



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

## Editor's Comments

Although this has been a very warm start to the winter season here in Southern Alberta, the fact remains that we are still facing another three or month months of dark dreary days until we can once again get back behind the wheel and enjoy our vintage cars.



I have fond memories of the great drives I have enjoyed participating in the Club outings, but memories are no match for the actual thing! Even though my garage where my car resides is not heated, I have managed to fix a few items that are on my to-do list. As I am not by nature a person who strives to return my car to the same state as when it left the factory, several of my “improvements” would not be viewed favourably by the purists but it makes the car more usable and reliable. Despite my car undergoing repairs in the shop for most of the summer due to the unfortunate Deerfoot Trail incident, my 50 year old Jag now has a new high torque starter and electronic ignition. Also as a fix for the damaged exhaust system, it now boasts a complete stainless steel system installed by Kurt and the team at British Auto Specialists!

As you may have observed, I have changed my photo accompanying this column to more accurately reflect the toll the years have taken. Due to my semi-enforced seclusion at home as per the recommendations of the health gurus, I have been eating healthier as the temptation and opportunities to pick up some fast food has been greatly reduced. Consequently I have lost two and a half stones, (35 pounds) and I am sure that is a good thing in the long run.

My family and I are healthy and so far, (knock on wood), have remained Virus free. I hope all our members are too staying the course and looking forward to the spring when, god willing, the pandemic will have run its course and we can again resume our lives.

I look forward to sharing more great experiences with you in the coming year. Stay safe and enjoy the Christmas season with your loved ones!

# **T h e P r e z S e z**

**HELLO EVERYONE!**



The Pres Says

Hi folks,

Larry has done a great job putting together the Christmas/Winter edition of the Oily Rag. Everyone it seems is trying to carry on as best they can in these trying times.

I would like to thank everyone who arranged a drive and participated this summer and fall. It was difficult task to arrange but I was pleased to see the amazing response we had. Our annual highway cleanup went well. There was not as much garbage this time as we picked it pretty clean last year. Thanks to all for turning up to help!

As you are aware we carried over the Club Executive for another year as we could not get together physically at our usual venue so it was done via Skype. The meetings have gone as well as can be expected for a bunch of old geezers using modern technology! LOL.

I am sure Christmas will be different for many this year and I for one will miss our Christmas party. Hopefully with the vaccine things will return to normal next year. Should you have any questions the Exec is always available to answer any queries and the contact procedure can be addressed using the Club website.

In closing, on behalf of the Executive I would like to wish all our members and families a very safe and happy Christmas and hope that 2021 will be a better year for all!

Regards,

Chris Durtnall

# Your 2020 Executive

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

**Chris Durnall**  
403-901-5802



### Vice –President

**Brent Clark**  
403-338-0822



### Treasurer

**Sterling Rempel**  
403-229-3123



### Secretary

**Gary Beckstead**  
403-278-1950



### Membership Club Regalia

**Chris Gorrie**  
403-804-3031



### Event Coord. Interclub Coord.

**Graham Snyder**  
403-809-4419



### WebMaster

**Oliver Buchman**  
780-881-0403



### Director at Large

**Doug McIntyre**  
403-276-6283



### Director at Large

**Steve Crosby**  
403-238-1075



### Club Historian

**Don Barr**  
403-649-1088



### Director at Large

**Chris Woodward**  
403-239-7682



### Director at Large

**Vic Perry**  
403-669-8632



### Director at Large

**Tony Lamb**  
403-283-3368



### Director at Large

**Gerald Pulak**  
403-281-0839



### Director at Large

**Ian Laird**  
403-256-7188



**The Board Executive Meets  
Monthly On The Last Wednesday**

## **The story of "Guppy", a 1949 Austin Devon with a sunroof.**

**BY VSCCC MEMBER - Bruce R. Castle**

This little English car was imported new from England to Canada in 1949. Her first owner was a lady, who after a year decided she would like a larger car and so she sold Guppy to an English couple, Win and Bill, who gave Guppy her name and owned her for 34 years until storage became a problem. She was then sold to Ron who said he restore Guppy.

Nine years later she was sold by Ron as no restoration had taken place and Royanne bought Guppy with a restaurant idea she had but as this did not occur, Guppy was sold to Harold Heninger's Collector Car Group. Harold sold Guppy to her present owner at Grant Hill's Okotoks Collector Car auction in May 1996.



From May 1996 until April 1998, Guppy underwent extensive mechanical restoration. Her brakes, suspension, steering, transmission, clutch, electrical system, carburetor, gas tank, radiator, and interior were repaired and or replaced where necessary before being deemed roadworthy again. Gary Donley, at Stampede Tirecraft did the brakes and installed shocks supplied by Fergus at British Auto Specialists, and Todd at Sportscar Parts did the master cylinder. The transmission and steering parts came from Ian Cox at the British Car Shop in Victoria and were installed by my neighbour, master mechanic Ernie Taube, who over the years has been a great guiding light toward's Guppy's maintenance. Coker tires were obtained from Terry at George Moir's in Edmonton, while Mick at British Cars International replaced the plugs and plug wires, and had the radiator and gas tank cleaned and sealed. The carburetor and fuel pump were rebuilt by Ernie with parts supplied by Joe Curto in New York. Theo Degreeve at Degreeve's upholstery tucked and sealed the interior where required. Guppy has enjoyed great service from all who worked on her and or supplied parts. Her only disappointment was with a British car shop in Texas. An appraisal was conducted by David Naylor for insurance purposes, who said he was quite impressed with her condition, given Guppy's age.



## **The story of "Guppy", a 1949 Austin Devon with a sunroof.**

As her owner since 1996, I have had many enjoyable years driving Guppy here and there. Her first venture was to Three Hills for the collector car show and shine in June, and to the British Car Meet in Kananaskis, many years ago. She has also attended many of the Vintage Sports Car Club shows in Stanley Park over the years, as a spectator. Ernie Taube declared in the summer of 2017 that Guppy up and running and ready for the races with all systems functioning as designed with many trouble free motoring miles ahead of her. Unfortunately, due to health issues and another antique car to drive and a Harley, Guppy has been sitting in "dry dock" since 2018. Perhaps it is time to pass Guppy on to a new owner who will be able to appreciate and enjoy her as I have for these last 23 years, although parting with her will not be easy.

Bruce R. Castle



## **REVIEW OF THE DE TOMASO PANTERA**



The Pantera story begins with Alejandro de Tomaso, an Argentine-born racing driver and industrialist. After a brief stint in Formula 1 (de Tomaso saw two Grand Prix entries, one in 1957, and another in 1959, neither of which netted any championship points), de Tomaso turned his attention to car building, founding the company that bears his name in 1959. Headquartered in Modena, Italy, De Tomaso Automobili built a variety of prototypes, race cars, and road cars, even venturing into F1 in 1970 with a competition car for the Frank Williams team. Between 1976 and 1993, De Tomaso also held Maserati as a fully owned subsidiary.

However, the company began to flounder in the late '90s, and in 2003, Alejandro de Tomaso died, leaving his company to be liquidated in 2004. The De Tomaso factory and trademark exchanged hands multiple times in the following decade, and is currently owned by the Chinese investment company Consolidated Ideal Team Ventures, which purchased the brand for a scant 1.05 million euros in April, 2015.

## **REVIEW OF THE DE TOMASO PANTERA**

In the late '60s, Ford was looking for a high-performance GT car to replace the Shelby Cobra and rival the Chevrolet Corvette and Ferrari Dino, eventually turning to De Tomaso for an answer. The marriage made sense – Ford was already providing the Italian automaker with engines, and De Tomaso had the exotic chops to boost the Blue Oval's image. A deal was struck wherein De Tomaso would produce a mid-engine, Ford-powered coupe, which Ford would then bring to the U.S. for sale in its Lincoln-Mercury dealerships. Thus, the Pantera was born.

Slated as a successor to the Mangusta, the Pantera debuted in Modena in 1970, later crossing the Atlantic for a spot at the New York Auto Show. Production began in earnest, and in late 1971, the first U.S.-spec Panteras arrived stateside.

Over 1,000 Panteras were sold in the first year, but Ford had concerns over quality control. The first round of imports showed minimal rustproofing, lackluster fit and finish, and copious solder to cover up flaws in the body. Ford eventually got involved in production, introducing precision stamping for the body panels and significantly boosting quality in the process.

In late 1972, De Tomaso introduced the Pantera Lusso (or “luxury”) model, which incorporated a new bumper (finished in black), improved aerodynamics, a unified gauge pod, and a new, 266-horsepower Cleveland engine. In addition, many of the Pantera's quality issues were addressed.

In 1974, De Tomaso began building the Pantera GTS, which gained flared fenders and black trim. Unfortunately, the U.S. GTS couldn't quite compete with its European equivalent, as the Euro-spec vehicle got a high-compression engine, bigger wheels, and other performance enhancers never destined for American shores.



# FIRST DRIVE OF THE DE TOMASO PANTERA

**Originally published in 1971**



The basic layout of the Pantera is very efficient. Most important, there is enough room in the cockpit for two average size adults. A six-footer has plenty of head-room, his knees won't be aimed into his chin and he can stretch his arms and square his shoulders without feeling like he is in a one-man submarine. All this may seem like a very basic human need but no such convenience was available in the Mangusta. Entry and exit is a simple matter in the Pantera as well, which is probably the only design feature on which de Tomaso consistently has the inside track. Where spelunking experience is required to worm your way in over the high wide sills of a Miura or a GT Mk. III, you just slip into a de Tomaso. The doors are cut low, almost down to floor level, and there is virtually no sill. This is because the Pantera is a unit body car with much of its structure concentrated in a central backbone. And even the backbone is much less intrusive than that of the Mangusta.

## FIRST DRIVE OF THE DE TOMASO PANTERA

While the Pantera could be classified as roomy for a mid-engine car, it's still uneasy on the anatomy. The seats are strongly bucket-shaped and firm in their padding—but decidedly shaped for someone else. The driving position, too, is something of a trial. The front wheel houses seriously encroach on the passenger compartment so the occupants must sit with their legs skewed toward the centerline of the car—and the driver ends up with no really suitable place for his left leg when he is not pedaling the clutch. As if that weren't quite enough, the steering wheel is just slightly out of reach for anyone with less than simian arms. Despite the unnatural positions mid-engine cars have forced on their drivers, you can still navigate this one with uncommon confidence because you can see out easily.

Considering (you always have to "consider" when you are speaking of cars like this) the mid-engine location and relatively generous interior dimensions, the Pantera is an exceptionally compact car—15 inches shorter and 2 inches narrower than a Corvette. With 5.4 inches of ground clearance there has been no skimping there either. Even luggage space is good.

The engine on the other hand, is like an iceberg—you only see one-third of it. The top half of the car, from the cockpit back, tilts up and the trunk floor is removable so that you can reach the trans-axle and rear of the engine without too much difficulty. But if something on the front half of the engine needs attention, like ignition timing or accessory drive belts, the bulkhead between the engine and the cockpit has to be removed. In the early production cars, the mesh grille below the back window has to be unbolted just to reach the dipstick which is a colossal design flaw. Filling the gas tank, located on the left side of the engine just behind the driver has to be done with the rear lid up and isn't much easier.

## FIRST DRIVE OF THE DE TOMASO PANTERA

The engine is a 351 Cleveland V-8 with a 4-bbl. carburetor. It is the same 11.0-to-one option offered last year in Mustangs and Torinos but with a 10-hp higher rating (310 hp @ 5400 rpm), apparently due to the short-branch tubing headers. Each exhaust pipe feeds into a 2-outlet muffler that produces a rumble very much in keeping with the Pantera's appearance.

Power from the engine flows directly into a 5-speed ZF trans-axle which has a 4.22-to-one final ratio. That figure is a little misleading, however, because both fourth and fifth gears are overdrive ratios so that top gear overall works out to 2.97-to-one. In reality, the ZF gearbox is a stopgap measure (and, at more than twice the cost of an engine, an expensive one) until an Italian-made trans-axle can be put into production. ZF production volume is low (60 per month), much less than de Tomaso's capability for Panteras, so car production is being held up accordingly.

Perhaps the only case that can be made for buying an early Pantera is the transmission. The ZF is a known quantity so you will be assured of a device that works—although you may be debating that question after your first drive. The chrome maze around the shift lever leaves no doubt as to where to move the handle but it does nothing about the hang-ups which await you when you try.



In fact, with some help in the shifting department, the Pantera would be pretty tough on a dragstrip. It's not too heavy—3123 lbs.—and 59.1% of that weight is concentrated on the rear wheels so that even with radial ply tires it launches itself with gusto. Hampered by an engine that went soft at 5400 rpm (redline is 5900) the test car still cleared Detroit Dragway in 14.0 seconds at 99.4 mph.

## FIRST DRIVE OF THE DE TOMASO PANTERA

Unlike the Mangusta, the Pantera stops as well as it goes. Disc brakes are used all around (ventilated ones are scheduled for future production but they are solid for now). Power assist is standard equipment.

In the brake test, the car stopped from 80 mph at .92G (232 feet) and did so three times in succession without fade. Directional stability is exemplary as well but there is room for improvement in brake modulation. Braking force is more proportional to pedal travel than it is to pedal pressure—a situation racing car engineers take great pains to avoid.

Racing car engineers would not approve of the Pantera's handling either. Nor will enthusiastic street drivers for that matter. It has a bad habit of oversteering abruptly when you lift off the throttle in a turn. An inexperienced driver can find himself in the hedges without ever knowing what he did wrong. And he is easily caught off guard because the Pantera's normal posture is a healthy understeer. A good driver can work up to impressively high cornering speeds but everyone else should beware. Perhaps the efforts involved will discourage the less determined. With the steering wheel so far away and the extreme caster (6°) working against you, the business of cornering requires abundant muscle.

Handling is routine, over-the-road driving situations are infinitely more satisfying, primarily due to the excellent straight line feel of the steering. You can drive around ants on the freeway at 80 mph. A rack and pinion gear with zero play is used and it operates in rare harmony with the high caster front suspension.

As you drive you have to look at another example of bad judgment—the instrument panel. Only two gauges, the speedometer and the tach, are on the dash (the others are on the console), and both are blocked by the steering wheel. Not just a little bite off the edges of each, either. No sir, the wheel obscures substantial portions of both. It makes you wonder who is minding the store and what other less obvious mistakes have been built in.

Overall the de Tomaso Pantera represents excellent value for the money and is destined to be a desirable collectable in the future.





# V i n t a g e S p o r t s C a r C l u b O f C a l g a r y

Our members share a strong interest in their vintage sports cars and the friendship of like minded individuals. They share in the joy of a hands on restoration completed

## VSCCC Regalia

Chris Gorrie, our Director of Regalia, would be happy to fill your order for any of the following::

- • • • **Club Jackets**— Stock on hand includes 9 Large, 7 Med, 2 XLarge Red with the club logo and fleece lining, each \$50.00 (actual cost is more- this is subsidized by the club) Order yours before the heat wave passes.
- • • • **Club Logo Patches** - 47 in stock
- • • • **Golf Shirts**—members cost is \$25-47 in stock
- • • • **Grill Badges** — \$15 - 29 new style, 7 Old style
- • • • **Window Decals** — two free to each member
- • • • **Can Koozies**—\$2
- • • • **Pens** - 217 on stock
- • **Mugs** - lots in stock

## A b o u t   t h e   V S C C C

The motto of the VSCCC is "***Dedicated to the preservation of vintage motoring***" and the main purpose is bringing like-minded enthusiasts together for the mutual enjoyment of our automobiles.

Membership is open to all those owning, and having a keen interest in, traditional (vintage) sports cars. Our current membership owns mostly British roadsters and coupes dating from 1935 to 1980; however all vehicles are welcome. Dues are \$40.00 per year.

General Meetings are held at 7:30 pm on the second Wednesday of each month at the Austrian Canadian Cultural Centre (3112 11 Street NE, Calgary).

The VSCCC is a member of the Specialty Vehicle Association of Alberta.

Personal information is gathered from club members solely for the purposes of distributing club related information to the membership. Our membership list will not be sold or exchanged with other clubs or commercial interests.

The membership list (including members name, phone number, email and cars owned) may occasionally be distributed to club members. Distribution is intended so that members with similar vehicles can contact each other for help and advice. If you do not wish your name to appear on this list please contact the membership secretary. Please refrain from distributing the membership list to non-VSCCC members, using it for mass email or for other purposes that have not been sanctioned by the VSCCC executive.

## t h e   O i l y   R a g

***The Oily Rag*** is the newsletter of the Vintage Sports Car Club of Calgary (VSCCC) which is a registered society in the Province of Alberta (Number 50229498). ***The Oily Rag*** is published electronically six times a year (January, March, May, July, September and November).

**Editorial Policy:** Articles and letters, are welcome and may be edited subject to space. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect VSCCC policy. Publication of submissions may be delayed due to space and time requirements. Deadline for submissions is the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication (e.g. June 20 for the July issue).

**Send submissions to: VSCCC, 215 Dalcastle Court N.W., Calgary, Ab, T3A 2A7 or via Email.**

**Authors and advertisers note:** The "house style" of *the Oily Rag* is to set text in either Arial or Times New Roman. If using other typefaces (fonts) please check with the Editor as you may have to supply a font file to support the desired effect.

**Copies of the Oily Rag are distributed via electronic means**

# Classified Ads

Classifieds in *the Oily Rag* will be available as space permits.  
Ads will be included for two issues unless cancelled or renewed.  
All classified ads, including email links and photos are available by visiting  
[www.vsgcc.ca](http://www.vsgcc.ca)

NOTES: The VSGCC accepts no responsibility for errors or omissions of posted items or for the quality, quantity or condition of any item advertised.  
Watch out for scams and for potential purchasers using this list to contact vendors with any conditions.

**Classified ads will now appear on the VSGCC website. Please send all submissions to the VSGCC Webmaster.**