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GIANT KILLERS n STIRLING MOSS AND THE ASTON DB4 GT n FIAT DINO BUYING

**ROVER P5B
GRAND TOUR**

**‘Compared to Ferraris
it was simply brilliant’**

Gordon Murray on the Honda NSX

TOPLESS '30S STYLE
Bugatti 57C Stelvio &
Horch 930V showdown



HAPPY BIRTHDAY STIRLING!

Britain's favourite race star Moss talks about his strengths and fears

PLUS HIS ASTON MARTIN DB4 GT TESTED





Morgans of all ages mark the Malvern firm's centenary at Saint Saturnin

CLASSICS BOLSTER LE MANS WEEKEND

ENTHUSIASM FOR CLASSIC CARS at the Le Mans 24-hours weekend shows no signs of deteriorating as a record 850 classic and sports cars, and 4500 people, stopped at the Classic British Welcome at Saint Saturnin ahead of the race.

The Morgan Club de France was instrumental in attracting examples of the Malvern marque to the Val de Vray site for a celebration of Morgan's centenary, with more than 100 there from three-wheeler Super Sports to Aero 8s and Keith Ahlers' 1961 Plus 4 'TOK 258' which won its class at Le Mans with Chris Lawrence and Richard Shepherd-Barron in 1962.

Before Peugeot's diesel 908 silently won the main feature at La Sarthe, 61 1949-65 competition cars fought for victory in Motor Racing Legends' Le Mans Legend encounter. Neil Cunningham qualified his Jaguar E-type on pole but when the XK engine expired on the third lap of the 45-minute race it was left to Carlos Monteverde's ex-Ecurie Francorchamps Ferrari 250LM (second overall with Pierre Dumay and Gustave Gosselin at Le Mans in 1965) and Justin Law's spaceframe Frank Costin-styled Lister Jaguar GT (retired at Le Mans with Peter Sargent and Peter Lumsden in 1963) to slither their way to the chequered flag. Both Monteverde and Law took turns in the lead, but the Ferrari driver took advantage of the Lister's fading brakes to win by 7.8sec. Experienced Le Mans campaigner Tony Dron was almost a minute further behind in the ex-Phil Hill/Wolfgang von Trips 2.4-litre V6 Ferrari Dino 246S, outperforming far more powerful machinery.



ABOVE Carlos Monteverde's Ferrari 250LM finished 7.8sec ahead of Justin Law's Lister Jaguar GT. **INSET** (from left) Law, Monteverde, and Tony Dron celebrate additions to their tinware collections

OPINION

SIMON KIDSTON

Hang on, lads, I've got a great idea for a celebration...

FORTY SUMMERS AGO a film was released which became a classic of British cinema – ironic perhaps, given that it was called *The Italian Job*. As a car nut, the chances are you've seen it more than once – I'm not admitting how many times I've sat through it.

It's a blatantly jingoistic, flag waving slice of Sixties escapism, putting plucky would-be gold robbing Brits led by Cockney Michael Caine up against the might of the sinister Italian mafia. In the course of 99 minutes car lovers are treated to a parade of Sixties classics being mandhandled, abused and ultimately trashed, starting with renegade Mafia boss Mr Beckermann who meets a fiery end when the Lamborghini Miura he is deftly piloting over the Alps turns out to be no match for a big yellow bulldozer.

Ultra-suave rival Mafioso Mr Altabani, chauffeur-driven in a black Fiat Dino coupé (have they ever looked cooler?) then plays a cat-and-mouse game with the British underdogs, during which his henchmen (cue another earth mover) crunch the gang's svelte Jaguar E-type roadster and unceremoniously scoop up a handsome silver Aston Martin DB4 convertible and dispatch it down a cliff to oblivion. That's in addition to the seemingly endless supply of Mini Coopers which our heroes either wreck during practice for their city centre getaway, or those they consign to history themselves (more cliffs) once the job is over.

So where are they all today? Well, the Miura has long been something of an enduring mystery. Car dealer Mike Fisher, who helped procure wheels for the original shoot, recalls that a wreck was found which had already killed an Arab prince before it went over the edge on camera. Researching

with Marc Sonnery for our book on the Miura, I reckon we found the Miura used for the opening driving scenes: a factory-loaned car on test plates which was delivered to an unsuspecting client as 'brand new' shortly after.

As for Caine's Aston (which, not having a licence, he couldn't actually drive), actor and stunt driver David Salamone, who played plummy Mini getaway driver Dominic, tells me it was bought for £1500 and was so scruffy the production crew had to paint the soft-top black with a brush. Cheap or not, they decided to mock-up a rusty Lancia as a stand-in when its final moment came and the Aston survives, in rather better nick, in a private English collection to this day.

The manhandled E-type has also fared well: it's now a concours winner owned by Jag guru Philip Porter.

And the baddies' cars? Mr Altabani's sweet-sounding Dino – laid on gratis by Fiat, which recognised the PR value, unlike British Leyland, which charged for every Mini – was bought after filming ended

by director Peter Collinson and imported into Britain where it rusted away to the point where only its doors survive today. For someone obsessive enough to investigate all this, it seemed only right to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the film's release by taking a trio of Miuras back to the Alps and retracing Mr Beckermann's exact wheeltracks, which is exactly what two other Miura-owning friends and I have just done. The verdict? If the bulldozer hadn't done Beckermann in, the heat and noise would have – but as workouts go there are none more rewarding. For the rest of the story, you'll have to wait for the book!



'If the bulldozer hadn't done Beckermann in, the heat and noise in the Miura would have'

Simon Kidston lives and works in a world filled with the finest classics. In between acting as a consultant to collectors and performing as the multi-lingual presenter at top European events, Geneva-based Simon (www.kidston.com) finds time to enjoy his own cars, including a Porsche Carrera 2.7 RS and a Lamborghini Miura SV.