

# FRONT DRIVE 90 YEARS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL MAGAZINE  
FOR CITROËN OWNERS AND ENTHUSIASTS



**CITROËN CLASSIC OWNERS  
CLUB OF AUSTRALIA**  
Australia's National Citroën Car Club

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER '09 Vol 33 No 5

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## POSTAL ADDRESS

CITROËN CLASSIC OWNERS CLUB of AUSTRALIA Inc.

The address of the Club and this magazine is:  
PO Box 52, Balwyn, Victoria, 3103.

The Club's website is:  
[www.citroenclassic.org.au](http://www.citroenclassic.org.au)

Citroën Classic Owners Club of Australia Inc. is a member of the Association of Motoring Clubs.

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The Club cannot accept any responsibility for, or involvement in, any business relationship that may occur between an advertiser and a member of the Club.

## COVER IMAGE

The cover image depicts Les Thermes, in Vichy and is from the collection of M Carpedi.

## MEMBERSHIP

Annual Membership is \$50. For overseas membership add \$17.50.

## MEETINGS

Club meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month [except December] at 8pm. The venue is the Canterbury Sports Ground Pavilion, cnr Chatham and Guildford Rds, Canterbury, Victoria. Melway Ref 46, F10.

## LIFE MEMBERS

The committee awards life membership to Club members in recognition of their contribution to, and support of, the Club. Life members are:

Peter Boyle	2003
Jack Weaver	1991
Nance Clark	1984

## CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors to this edition of 'Front Drive' include: Rob Little..

## DEADLINE

The deadline for the next edition of 'Front Drive' is Friday, November 20, 2009.

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# CITROËNING

## CH PLATES

Send your annual CH renewal form to PO Box 52, Balwyn, 3103. Please do the right thing and enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. If you do not have a Club Permit Handbook include \$5 and we will return one to you.

## ABOUT TO ARRANGE A CLASSIC/HISTORIC PERMIT FOR YOUR CITROËN?

CH permit applications must be accompanied by a RWC and \$5 to cover the cost of the Club Permit Handbook. The onus is on owners to demonstrate that their cars are safe. Feel free to consult our Permit Officers for advice regarding getting your car on the road, and keeping it going.

## FOR SPARE PARTS & TOOLS

Contact Rob Little. Phone: [03] 5823 1397 or [spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au) [If you phone, please do it at a reasonable hour.]

## CLUB SHOP

For Citroën models, memorabilia and other items contact Ted Cross on [03] 9819 2208 or [clubshop@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:clubshop@citroenclassic.org.au)

## OTHER CLUBS

VIC: [www.citcarclubvic.org.au](http://www.citcarclubvic.org.au)  
NSW: [www.citroencarclub.org.au/](http://www.citroencarclub.org.au/)  
WA: [www.citroenwa.com.au](http://www.citroenwa.com.au)  
QLD: [www.citroenclub.org](http://www.citroenclub.org)  
[www.doublechevrons.aunz.com](http://www.doublechevrons.aunz.com)

A bumper issue of 'Front Drive', with four pages more than usual. Yet I missed out on space for 'Fleet Follies'. So, you will have to wait another six weeks for the update on the motoring doings of your

Committee.

An interesting, if slightly eclectic collection of material for this edition of 'Front Drive'.

First we have report from Tom Grucza on the joint CCOCA/ CCCV visit to Vintage Wiring Harnesses in Ringwood, Vic. It certainly seems to have been a very interesting evening and I understand Ted Cross is extremely pleased with his new 2CV harness.

Some design background follows – the first part of two articles focused on the C5. Once again I must thank the publishers of 'Auto&Design' magazine in Italy for permission to reprint this article.

As part of our growing relationship with Citroën Australia and Zagame I was lent a V6 C5 for the weekend recently. My impressions of the car are in this edition.

Finally, the most eclectic article. The life of Hélène Delangle – 'The Bugatti Queen'. I accept her link with Citroën is limited [her first car was a Citroën 5CV, called Maisie]. However, her life as a Grand Prix racing driver in the 1930s make fascinating reading. Well, to my mind at least.

Do not forget that the 'early bird' booking rate for CitIn in Tasmania ends on November 30. So, do not dawdle! For those interested in going further afield there is the ICCCR Event in the United Kingdom in August 2012.

For the more 'stay at home', there is the usual listing of forthcoming events to provide reasons to get your car out.

Enjoy,  
Leigh F Miles



**Please note: if no bookings have been received for an Event, by the booking deadline, the Event will be automatically cancelled.**

**ED SED**

**CONTENTS**

ED SED	PAGE 4	C5: DESIGN FOCUS!	PAGE 18
A-TRACTIONS	PAGE 5	C5: CCOCA DRIVE	PAGE 26
CITIN 2010	PAGE 10	THE BUGATTI QUEEN	PAGE 32
GETTING HARNESSSED	PAGE 12	SPARE NEWS	PAGE 46
TABASCO: RIGHT SAUCY	PAGE 17	CLASSIFIED ADS	PAGE 47

## ● NOVEMBER

### TORQUAY MOTOR SHOW



WHEN: Sunday, 1 November  
WHERE: Torquay  
TIME: From 11:00am  
COST: \$5.00 per person  
BRING: Chair, sunscreen, lunch  
BOOKING: Preferred  
CONTACT: Greg Birchall,  
04 1291 4000 or  
gbirchall@adesse.com.au

CCOCA has been invited to participate in the 2009 Rotary Club Torquay Motor Show. The inaugural event [in 2008] was a huge success with car owners and their treasured vehicles coming from far and wide. There were over 150 vehicles on display and each and every one of them contributed to the success and shine of the event. The event will be organised in a similar fashion to last year, but with improvements to layout and the entry process with extra events and displays to add the celebratory atmosphere to the day. If you would like to enter this year's show leave a message on

## A-TRACTIONS

the Club's mobile phone number or email Greg Birchall, and be sure to complete the Entry Form [included with this edition of 'Front Drive'] and bring it with you on the day.

The entry fee is modest at \$5.00 per contestant and spectators. There will be Devonshire teas provided by our local 'Relay For Life' team and a variety of delicious food and refreshments available at the nearby cafes.

**BENDIGO NATIONAL  
SWAP MEET**  
WHEN: Sat, 14 & Sun, 15 Nov



TIME: Saturday from 6:00am,  
Sunday from 7:00am  
WHERE: Prince of Wales  
Showgrounds,  
Holmes Rd., Bendigo  
COST: Saturday: \$8.00,  
Sunday: \$5.00,  
Weekend Pass: \$12.00  
BRING: Chair, picnic lunch,



sunscreen, sunglasses,  
refreshments  
BOOKING: Not required  
DETAILS: [http://www.  
bendigoswap.com.au/](http://www.bendigoswap.com.au/)  
CONTACT: Ted Cross  
[03] 9918 2208

## A-TRACTIONS

[president@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:president@citroenclassic.org.au)

The 2009 Special Display is still 'under wraps' – check the next 'Front Drive' for details.

Highlights:

- + Over 1600 reserved sites – indoor and outdoor.
- + Show and Shine Display Cars – Saturday only – limited numbers.
- + Large number of Trade and Club Stands.
- + Steam and Oil Engines displayed by the Bendigo Steam and Oil Engine Preservation Group inc.

### COMMITTEE MEETING & CHEAP EATS

WHEN: Wednesday, 18 November  
TIME: 7:00pm

WHERE: Check with the  
Secretary for this month's venue  
COST: Cheap eats  
BRING: Refreshments  
BOOKING: Preferred  
CONTACT: Clare Hadaway,  
[03] 9598 6888

[secretary@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:secretary@citroenclassic.org.au)

### CLUB MEETING – BOULE EVENING

WHEN: Wednesday, 25 November  
TIME: 7:00pm

WHERE: Canterbury Sports  
Ground Pavilion, cnr Chatham  
& Guildford Rds., Canterbury.  
Melway 46, F10

COST: Free  
BOOKING: Preferred  
CONTACT: Ted Cross  
[03] 9918 2208

[president@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:president@citroenclassic.org.au)

Tonight we will start a little earlier to enable us to run a Boule competition between members. Please remember to bring along your Boule to participate if you have them. There will be some prizes for the winning teams and the club will provide a hot supper. BYO anything you think you will need.

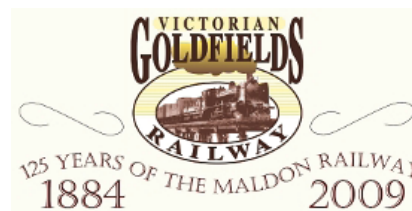
### G O L D F I E L D S RAILWAY & LUNCH

WHEN: Sunday, 29 November  
WHERE: Castlemaine

TIME: Train departs 11:20am  
COST: \$40pp, return

'Holding' deposit required  
BOOKING: Essential by  
13 November

CONTACT: Ted Cross



[03] 9918 2208

[president@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:president@citroenclassic.org.au)

Running through the Goldfields of Central Victoria, the Victorian Goldfields Railway brings to you the experience of Steam Train Travel. Linking the historic towns of Castlemaine and Maldon, your train takes you through Box-Iron Bark forest in a region that saw some of the richest gold mining in Australia.

On Sundays the railway takes great pride in offering a special enhanced travel option aboard our superbly restored First Class

carriage – Tambo. This features an open lounge, art nouveau elegance and a viewing platform [there are also elegant compartments]. Our First Class Service includes a complimentary orange juice, beer or glass of bubbly to enjoy as you sit back and savour the ambiance of these classic carriages. Attendants are on hand to serve refreshments to you at your seat.

Tambo has been refurbished with meticulous attention to detail to provide a unique travel experience – in a class of its own.

We will take luncheon in Maldon prior to the return trip, which departs at 3:30pm. [The return trip to Castlemaine will arrive there at 4:15pm.]

We have made a tentative booking for 20 people but this can be amended closer to the event. We definitely expect and need prior booking for this event to confirm our reserved seating in the First class carriage.

We will also need to get a holding deposit from you if you wish to attend. Details on deposit in the next 'Front Drive'.

Lunch venue will be confirmed closer to the event.

### ● DECEMBER JOINT CCOCA / CCCV CHRISTMAS EVENT

WHEN: Wednesday, 9 Dec  
TIME: From 6:30pm

WHERE: CCCV Clubrooms,  
Eric Raven Reserve



High St., Glen Iris  
 COST: Free  
 BRING: Picnic or food for the BBQ [facilities supplied], table and chairs  
 BOOKING: Not required  
 CONTACT: Ted Cross,



TO: Mornington Racecourse  
 COST: \$30 per vehicle  
 BRING: Sunscreen, chair, lunch  
 BOOKING: Essential by 16 Jan  
 CONTACT: Colin Brown [03] 9739 4829 or colin.brown@hotmail.net.au

This event has grown to become Victoria's largest veteran, vintage and classic car rally with travel from Melbourne to the Mornington Peninsula by the RACV, the rally is designed to promote the pleasures of classical motoring providing much needed funds to the Peter McCallum Cancer Centre.

The 2010 RACV Great Australian Rally is organised and conducted by the All British Classics Car



04 0059 2208  
 president@citroenclassic.org.au

**MASSIVE HAMPER RAFFLE!**  
 Bring a donation for the prize hamper, and buy a raffle ticket for your chance to win.  
 Remember, there is no official December CCOCA meeting. But you can still get your monthly Citroën fix with our friends in CCCV.

## COMMITTEE MEETING & CHEAP EATS

WHEN: Wednesday, 16 December  
 TIME: 7:00pm  
 WHERE: Check with the Secretary for this month's venue  
 COST: Cheap eats  
 BRING: Refreshments  
 BOOKING: Preferred  
 CONTACT: Clare Hadaway, [03] 9598 6888  
 secretary@citroenclassic.org.au

## ● JANUARY 2009 THE RACV GREAT AUSTRALIAN RALLY

WHEN: Sunday, 18 January  
 TIME: 9:00am  
 FROM: Start points listed below

Club Inc. All vehicles entered must be 25 years and older. There are three start locations this year:

- Melbourne
- Stud Park, Rowville
- Western Port Marina, Hastings

All entrants will enjoy a sausage sizzle at their nominated starting point.

Download your entry form at [www.abccc.com.au](http://www.abccc.com.au)

## AUSTRALIA DAY HISTORIC CAR DISPLAY

NOTE: AT THE TIME OF PREPARING THIS EDITION THE AUSTRALIA DAY WEBSITE HAD NOT BEEN UPDATED FOR 2009. PLEASE CHECK DETAILS IN THE NEXT EDITION OF 'FRONT DRIVE' OR ON LINE AT [WWW.AUSTRALIADAY.VIC.GOV.AU](http://WWW.AUSTRALIADAY.VIC.GOV.AU)  
 WHEN: Tuesday, 26 January  
 TIME: Participants: 10:00, Spectators: 12:00pm

WHERE: Participants Northland Shopping Centre Spectators Kings Domain Gardens, Linlithgow Ave., Melbourne. Melway 2F J9

COST: Free  
 BOOKING: Spectators: Not required  
 CONTACT: Ted Cross, 04 0059 2208  
 president@citroenclassic.org.au

This event is a real favourite with

many CCOCA members. The Kings Domain Gardens will once again

feature the famous Historic Vehicle display, with over 500 veteran, vintage and classic vehicles exhibited, free entertainment and activities, and scrumptious food stalls. Bring a picnic hamper, blanket and enjoy a leisurely day with other motor-ing enthusiasts.

## MONTHLY MEETING – YARRA BANK BBQ

WHEN: Wednesday, 27 January  
 TIME: From 6:30pm  
 WHERE: Check the next 'Front Drive' for a new Yarra-bank venue

COST: Free  
 BRING: The doings for a BBQ and insect repellent  
 BOOKING: Not required  
 CONTACT: Ted Cross, 04 0059 2208  
 president@citroenclassic.org.au

Start the Club year with a BBQ near the banks of the Yarra. There are BBQ facilities on site, but you will need to bring everything else. There is plenty of parking, but we suggest you bring extra chairs and a picnic table with you. As always, our friends from CCCV are more than welcome to join us for this relaxed evening.



Preparation for CitIn 2010 in Launceston, Tasmania, goes on apace. Most major work is completed, ready for all the good Citroën enthusiasts who will visit in April. And we aren't the only ones who have been

slackening. So book your room, and the Spirit of Tasmania, as soon as you can.

The schedule for CitIn 2010 is 'relaxed'. We want to give you some time to take in the surroundings and catch up with old friends, and new. And be fresh for your extended holiday around

Tasmania.

By the time you read this, the website, <http://cit-in.org>, will have more detail about the planned events. Subject to the final AFL roster for 2010, the Show and Shine will be in the picturesque museum precinct at Inveresk on Saturday 3rd April.

busy. Enthusiastic Citroënists have responded to the preliminary information, and webpage. There has been a steady stream of registrations but the accommodation bookings have gone wild! As at the end of September, 26 rooms (apartments and studios) are booked and the pace is not

Inveresk is close to other attractions and distractions, such as The Design Centre, Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, City Park and the National Automobile Museum of Tasmania. More information will come as planning progresses. Sunday will offer two touring options. For the competitive people there is the Observation Run along the Tamar River. The more relaxed option is a tour of historic Evandale and Longford with some spectacular historic houses to view.

Remember to book your accommodation and travel early. See you in Tassie in 2010.

#### TRAVEL

We have secured discounted for travel on the Spirit of Tasmania to and from Tasmania. There will also be day sailings which are cheaper again. Dates of day sailings have been decided but not yet announced. We will finalise these arrangements very soon.

#### ACCOMMODATION

We have 50 rooms held at a central motel in Launceston at a special Citlin rate. There are studio rooms, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments. It is located next to the Cataract Gorge, near the Tamar River and near to many of



our activities. We will finalise the booking process for you within the week.

#### REGISTRATION

The registration form will be completed now that our new Citlin bank account is finalised.

#### WEBPAGE

Everything you need to know is on the Citlin webpage, which is <http://cit-in.org/home>

#### FEES

The 'early bird booking' approach has been taken by the CCCT for this event, and prices and cut off dates are shown below. It is possible to attend the 2010 Citlin on a day-by-day basis and these prices can be found on the Citlin website.

	EARLY BIRD Pre-30 Nov., '09	REGULAR Pre-31 Jan., '10	LAST MINUTE Pre-20 Mar., '10
ADULT	\$180	\$195	\$280
CHILD [5 TO 12]	\$100	\$100	\$100
CHILD [UNDER 5]	Free	Free	Free





An opportunity to buy a wiring harness business to service the hobby car industry was just what Sue and Paul Vermont wanted. Whilst Paul claims he was 'green' when he took over Vintage Wiring

30 years ago, Paul bought the business after it had moved to Bellingen NSW and brought it to Melbourne about three and a half years ago.

Paul and Sue build wiring harnesses to order for almost any car, most commonly vehicles from pre-WWI to the GT Falcon

including British, European and US cars. Given wiring diagrams or old looms Vintage Wiring Harness can rebuild them to order and to original specifications

## GETTING HARNESSSED

Harness he had a background in IT engineering and was interested in classic cars so taking on the venture was a welcome challenge. Originally set up in Sydney some



Paul Vermont with a 2CV loom he is making for Ted Cross' 2CV van

THINK AHEAD TO 2012 !

**15th ICCCR**  
UK YORKSHIRE  
16-19 August 2012

ACI AMICALE CITROËN INTERNATIONALE  
Event of the Year 2012



[www.icccr2012.org.uk](http://www.icccr2012.org.uk)



using all new materials.

Wiring in older cars is typically cotton braided and, over time, the braiding would disintegrate and terminals could also need replacing. There's nothing more annoying than electrical

over PVC wiring results in better than factory specs and has solved many wiring problems for older cars thanks to the service Paul and Sue provide.

Unlike the USA makers like Ford and GM which had their own different wiring colour coding [which could also be different between models], post war cars produced in UK commonly used Lucas electrics which used standardised colour-coded wiring specs. Paul has charts of these. The purpose of trace colours within the cotton braid indicates exactly what function that section of wiring has. The charts also show the length, terminal types and where in the loom they are to be fitted. Each terminal in a completed loom is numbered for the owner to know what the connection is for, ready to refit to the vehicle.

Requests come in from all over the world. Paul is currently working on a De Tomaso which required some 'reverse engineering' to get the specs right. He has provided looms for BMC minis, French cars, MGs, Holdens and Fords as well as BMW motorcycles, army vehicles and a variety of vintage and veteran cars. In fact Paul has over 1000 patterns for numerous makes and models. The early Citroën wiring harness plans Paul has on file include:

- +1924 Model 5CV [10.5 Hp]
- +1937-39 Light 12 & 15 RHD UK Built

## GETTING HARNESSSED

faults in cars. Using new materials and matching terminals and cotton braiding with colour traces



## 123ignition Australia

*'Ignition systems for classic cars'*

'123ignition' - electronic ignition systems are carefully designed to replace your existing mechanical system, keeping the looks of your classic car original. The systems are currently available for ID, DS, 2cv (and derivatives), Traction and SM models.



**No maintenance EVER again.**

Contact Ted Cross

Phone: 03 9819 2208

Fax: 03 9819 2208

Mobile: 0400 59 2208

email [ted@123ignition.com.au](mailto:ted@123ignition.com.au)



# 123ignition.com.au

31/05



- ♦ 1951 Model 11BL French Built RHD
- ♦ 1951-52 Model 11BL French Built LHD
- ♦ 1951-52 Light & Big 15 Slough Small Boot,
- ♦ 1952-53 Light & Big 15 Slough

net. We thank Paul and Sue for a most interesting presentation and their kind hospitality, and thank Ted Cross for arranging the visit to the workshop.

Vintage Wiring Harness can be found at 7/477 Maroondah Hwy Ringwood. Phone 03 9870 0583 or visit their website

[www.vinwire.com.au](http://www.vinwire.com.au).

PS: Apologies to any members who were inconvenienced by the incorrect address printed in the 'Front Drive'. The correction could not be made in time although the amended details were posted on the CCOCA website. Tom Gruzca

## GETTING HARNESSSED

Big Boot

- ♦ 1953-54 Model 2CV
- ♦ 1954-55 Light 15 Big Boot
- ♦ 1955 Model 11C Commerciale LHD

Paul's own two-tone MG Magnette sits in his workshop with a precision made wiring harness for all to see under the bon-



wiring looms made to order  
all makes and models - 1920s onwards

braided wire or pvc, with cotton over-  
braiding or original harness tape

custom modification to your specification

braided HT and battery leads

(03) 9870 0583  
[contact@vinwire.com.au](mailto:contact@vinwire.com.au)

# vintage wiring harness

po box 2288 ringwood north victoria 3134 | [www.vinwire.com.au](http://www.vinwire.com.au)



In the world of advertising – the world in which your editor exists – we keep an eye out for 'new' advertisements that are merely the reworking of a successful advertisement for another product, often in another continent.

Imagine my surprise to discover that Audi in Australia in 2001 had stolen Citroën's advertising idea from the French market in the mid-'80s.

Citroën's BX GTi 16valve was the first 16valve car to be launched by a French maker and not surprisingly Citroën were pretty proud of the fact. How they got away with it – right under the noses of the Peugeot family, I cannot imagine.

The car was launched with this advertisement, depicting 16 bottles of Tabasco sauce, each with the lid blowing off. With a simple headline, it certainly got the message across in really straightforward way.

Interestingly, there is no depiction of the car in question. A bold move, although it could be argued that by the time the 16valve BX was launched the shape of the car was sufficiently well-known in France to make its depiction superfluous.

The question is, of course, is whether the 16 bottles of Tabasco sauce in the magazine advertisement for the BX GTi 16valve are better than the mere two depicted

in Australian Audi advert.

The Audi ad is far more conventional. The picture of the car is the dominant feature. However, the 'specialness' of the model in question is not conveyed to the reader as instantaneously as that

## TABASCO: RIGHT SAUCY

in the Citroën advertisement.

At the end of it, that matters not. Audi have clearly stolen the idea from Citroën.

Leigh F Miles



Biturbo.

The new Audi S4.

Audi  
Vorsprung durch Technik



The M2 segment is one that many of the big names in the European market would like to dominate. It is a segment in which a marque must express personality, but without shocking a rather

as the appeal of conventional saloons continues to dwindle – but this is a well known phenomenon.

At the beginning of the X7 project in 2003, the product managers were still undecided

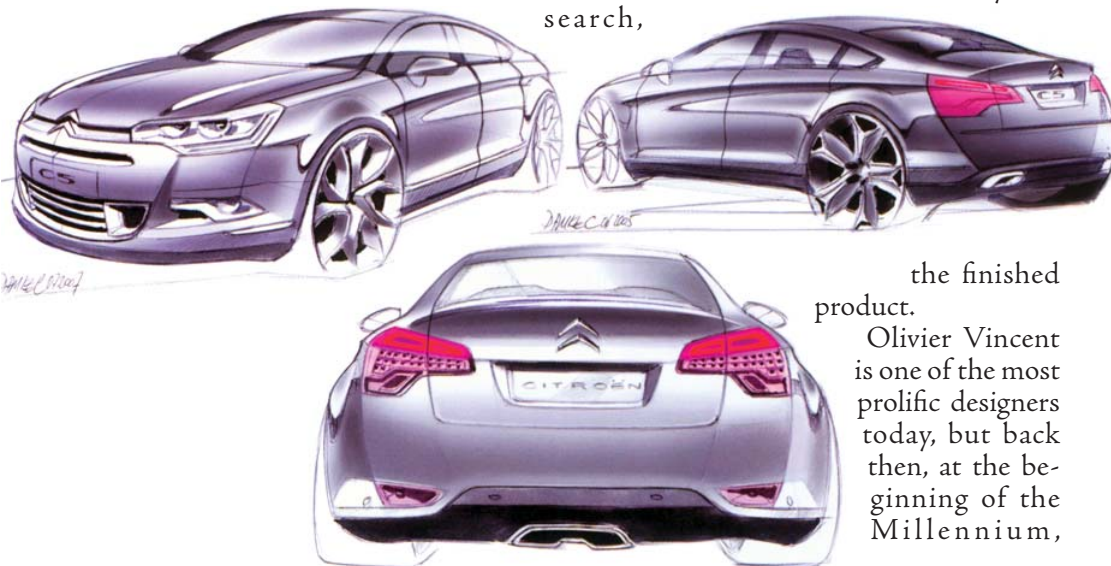
between a boot and a hatchback. Only one thing was certain, that

the new car had to be more inspired in design than the existing C5. A group of about ten designers began producing the first sketches, and very soon, only half of these were still in the running. From the very start, the design management had decreed that both versions of the car – salon and station wagon – were to be developed together, and that the interior and exterior would be conceived in parallel, to ensure coherence and consistency in

## C5: DESIGN FOCUS

conservative clientele, and this is what made the design of the new Citroën C5 so challenging.

When the project for the replacement of the C5 began, Citroën's Centre de Création, headed by Jean-Pierre Ploué since December 1999, was still in the process of being significantly restructured. The renewal of the C5 posed the marque with the typical mid-range dilemma. This important segment for the European market is the subject of constant research,



the finished product.

Olivier Vincent is one of the most prolific designers today, but back then, at the beginning of the Millennium,

Citroën thought it needed more options than those offered by its own designers, and it used the services of outside studios systematically. Citroën therefore called upon Bertone and Makkina. The Italian coachbuilder has enjoyed a privileged relationship with Citroën since 1970, and produced a number of very interesting designs for the X7 project, all distinguished by a strongly arched beltline.

However, the overall treatment was deemed too rigid to fit in with Citroën's design language.

The London-based Makkina studio was founded by Michel Ani, who worked at the Volkswagen centre in Catalonia at the same time as Jean-Pierre Ploué. Makkina proposed a bold design defined by a strong-willed face and an unusual solution for the rear screen.

In June 2003, the three proposals produced by Bertone, Makkina and Citroën were translated into 1:4 scale models. Bertone's model, however, was too distant from the spirit of the

brand, while the proposal by Makkina lost its impact in the translation to three dimensions. In the end, the mock-up by Olivier Vincent was the most convincing of the three, especially in the graphic treatment of the rear, with a cleverly resolved continuity between lights and screen.

A number of new drawings were then produced by Thomas Röhm and Domagoj Dukec introducing elements such as the interrupted rear quarterlight, the curved beltline and the sculpted flank without, however, refuting the original theme of Olivier Vincent, whereas the general idea for the volume moved towards a spacious cabin with a very cab-forward configuration.

The first full-size model was produced at Vélizy, where Citroën's design operations were still conducted pending the construction of the ADN facility in October 2004. The cars were sent to the brand's private circuit at La Ferté-Vidame, to evaluate





the volumes in a real-world context. Doubts still remained about the glasshouse: extending the cabin forward had made a front quarterlight necessary with, as a result, two A-pillars, posing the question of which of

## C5: DESIGN FOCUS

these should be painted.

In August 2004, the design was stabilising into what seemed to be its definitive guise, with bold traits like a concave rear screen, sculpted flanks and boomerang light clusters. It was now time for clinic testing to validate these choices with a non-professional public. Against all expectations, the reaction of the test public called the architectural decisions taken into question: the car looked too heavy for the segment, it was perceived as a model belonging to a higher category, overstepping a psychological threshold that could have been a dissuasive factor for a proportion of the clientele.

Top to bottom: The 1:4 scale models produced during the design process for the C5. Makina [2003], Citroën [2003] and Bertone's [2003]. Following the 2004 review further models were produced of designs by Citroën and Pininfarina.

The designers went back to the drawing board in the summer of 2004, reducing the front overhang, abandoning the forward extension of the cabin and discarding the tailgate – something they themselves had actually wanted to do for some time. Nonetheless, Citroën management decided to call in Pininfarina, to seek





confirmation of its choices and reassurance that there was not another direction available. However, the proposals offered by the coachbuilder were not convincing enough, and were too Baroque and too far removed

eration station wagon. A very fluid looking solution for the daylight opening was chosen, rejecting proposals with 'add-on' rear quarterlights that created an impression of a separate module.

The project for the interior style, which was completed simultaneously with the exterior,

initially explored four different directions proposed by Bertrand Rapatel, Cathal Loughnane, Leighanne Earley and Andreas Stump. The Rapatel proposal was selected as it offered a perception of premium quality in, for example, details like the treatment of the instruments, with references to watchmaking, and for clearly capturing the character of the future C5 in the choice of colour and trim, with contrasting effects created using darker and lighter elements. Christophe Pialat also worked extensively on defining the wheel boss, adding a decisive extra touch that testifies to the maturity of Citroën design. ✂

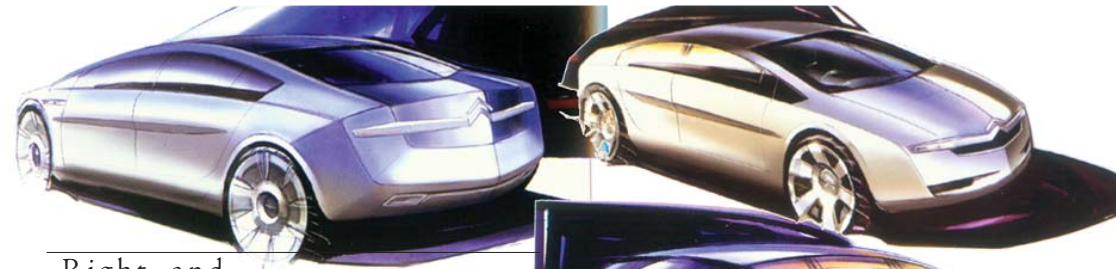
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## C5: DESIGN FOCUS

from the spirit of the brand. A mock-up by Pininfarina was compared with the model by Citroën, but it was rejected immediately.

So the design by Domagoj Dukec was further finessed, to give it, above all, a less aggressive front end. In March 2005, the team went back to La Ferté-Vidame, where a small studio was now up and running, allowing the designers to modify the design – softening a corner or straightening a line – in situ. During this latter stage, it was a more realistic resin model that was sent to La Ferté for evaluation.

The 'break' version was developed in parallel with the saloon, and the designers were initially offered a variety of themes to work on, from the more dynamic to ones expressing the space inside. A more dynamic direction was chosen, as it better complemented the three box configuration of the saloon version and broke away from the excessively utilitarian appearance of the previous gen-



Right and above: Some of the proposals developed by Stile Bertone at the start of the project.



Left and below: Two of the drawings by Makina, the British studio founded by Michel Ani.



Left and below: some of the drawings produced by Olivier Vincent at the Citroën style centre.





## C5: DESIGN FOCUS





Those of you who read 'Front Drive' assiduously may remember that in a recent 'Fleet Follies' [the one before last, I think] I mentioned that I was giving serious consideration to buying a 'new' [well, new-ish]

Mazda 3, Ford Focus] or a little larger [think C5, Renault Laguna, Mazda 6, Ford Mondeo] or larger still [Skoda Superb et al].

Before my friend Sue Bryant made her purchase decision we looked at number of the smaller cars listed – she eventually selected a 'run out' C4 diesel.

I have to confess that one of the most difficult things these days appears to be actually obtaining a test drive, for anything longer than 15 minutes, in the company of the salesman. Having said that, I must say that Skoda were more than happy for Sue

and I to disappear in a Superb for an hour or so, on our own.

Ford however proved rather more fraught. Having dropped in and looked over the Ford Mondeo Titanium, I indicated I would return at a convenient time to take

the car for a test drive.

A couple of weeks later, on a Friday afternoon I was driving past the dealership in my CX and thought to drop in for that test drive.

It seemed that as I did not

## C5: CCOCA DRIVE

car. As the vehicle will replace my V6 Xantia I have been looking, or attempting so to do, at cars of a similar size.

This actually appears to be impossible – these days vehicles tend to be a little smaller [think Citroën's C4, Renault Megane,



Opposite: Zagame's C5 parked next to Susanne Smith's C4 on the Club's recent run to Point Nepean. This page: The interior of the Renault Laguna [top] and the C5 [below]. The French cars certainly exhibit the most stylish interiors of the group.



have my potential trade-in [the Xantia] with me 'it was not convenient' for me to take the Mondeo for a test. Not convenient? For whom? This was not the view solely of the salesman. The sales manager confirmed that it

available on some other vehicles on my short list. It does claim 'voice control' on items such as the air conditioning. However, you seem to need to shout at it... I swear the driver of the car next door would know you were getting hot and bothered.

To prevent the test drive issues experienced at Ford, I actually booked a test drive of the Renault Laguna. I confirmed that I wanted the car for an hour, or so, and would collect the car at 1:30pm the following Saturday.

Duly arrived... 'If you take the car out today, will you make a decision today?', asked the salesman. 'No', I replied. Buying a \$50,000 car is not the purchase of a heart-beat. Suddenly, the car I had booked to drive had been booked by someone else for 1:30pm.

was 'not convenient'.

I have subsequently taken a 15minute test drive [in the company of a salesman] of a Mondeo, at a different dealer. I must say that at \$44,990 drive away it does appear to be good value for money. Unfortunately, the seat base adjusts only for height, not for angle and as a result the Ford has been ditched, for my needs. And remember, it is after all merely a Ford. It does also lack a good deal of refinements that are

'Fine, ring me when it comes back and I will return', I indicated. That was three weeks ago and I am still waiting for the call. I do have to confess to taking a 15minute drive of a Laguna, in the company of the salesman at a prior time.

So, I was extremely pleased when Adrian Zagame of Zagame Citroën suggested that I could have a C5 for the weekend. I accept that this is not the 'norm', but I do hope that Zagame do understand that no one makes a \$50,000 decision on the basis of a 15, or even a 30minute drive.

I accept the comparison may be unfair – a real test of the C5 against test drives of shorter duration in a number of the competitive set, but it does give me points of comparison.

Zagame lent me a C5 V6 Exclusive. I must admit that I

would have preferred a 2litre, as that would make this comparison with other 2litre [or so] cars a little fairer. But, with the exception of the engine, the trim level of the V6 is the same as that of the 2litre Exclusive.

Let me start by saying I love the C5. Of the competitive set, it is by far the most attractive car. The Skoda is frumpy in comparison – and clearly the least attractive. Any car brochure which tells you that the grille is one of the car's design highlights... well the car must clearly be lacking in design quality. Dumpy and excruciatingly dull. Its look is not helped by the fact that it does have the greatest amount of rear leg room of the set. The result is a long, flat roof: but even that could be forgiven if the front looked anything more special. The front of the C5 has a slightly aggressive

## C5: CCOCA DRIVE





look. It is interesting to read that Jean-Pierre Ploué and his team worked to reduce the aggressive appearance of some of the early designs created for the C5.

The Mondeo, in Titanium at least, is just too glitzy. There is

done, that of the Mazda is most 'restrained'. That polite talk for 'cheap'. It really does feel special enough for a car selling for in excess of \$50,000. Its roots as a Camry-alternative at the entry level clearly show.

## C5: CCOCA DRIVE

way too much chrome [or plastic chrome] at the front. My father would suggest that it reminded him of a rat with a gold tooth. The appearance of glitz in the Mondeo is further enhanced by the steering wheel and dashboard. Glossy metal effect panels are in abundance. I hate to think of the reflections that will occur in Australian summer. This can only be 'enhanced' by the standard-fit sunroof. Sunglasses will be compulsory.

If the dash of the Ford is over-

Elegance trim with wood-effect inserts in the dash and doors. Both French cars have interiors that look the part of \$50,000 plus investments.

The interior of the C5 is highlighted with satin chrome inserts, but sophisticated. There are a lot of buttons on the fixed hub of the steering wheel, and it did take some time for me to get used to these. However, by the end of the weekend I was playing light-fingered exercises to change the radio and dashboard displays

along with setting the cruise control and speed limiter.

Love the speed limiter! Although it is an odd feeling. You press the pedal to the metal and [provided you are not heading downhill, when gravity overtakes limiter] the car will go no faster than the chosen velocity. Well not quite: if you do give the loud pedal a fair old nudge, the car will over-ride the limiter. This ensures that should you need some speed to get out a difficult situation, the right level of 'go' is available. The Mondeo approaches speed control in a different way – its cruise control will modify your speed to ensure you do not creep up on the car in front. If they slow down, so do you. Clever, I must say. I did not have the chance to see how it worked when I went out, but the idea is smart. The Laguna also boasts a speed limiter. Neither Mazda nor Skoda offers more

than a regular cruise control.

The C5, Skoda and Mazda 6 offer the choice of light [variously cream, ivory and olive] and dark [black, dark gray... you get the picture], while Ford and Renault offer a single choice. Ford's is effectively black and Renault's beige. Interestingly in cars of this class neither Ford nor Skoda offer full leather as standard. The Skoda adds leather as option. Ford offers nothing but the standard fit part leather, part alcantara trim, highlighted with white stitching. There's that rat with a gold tooth come back to haunt us.

The ride in the C5 is brilliant. Now, I know the local press hacks are not enamoured of the C5's dynamics. But they do need to remember not everyone wants a car with rock-hard Germanic suspension. The C5 has a brilliant loping gait, more akin to my CX than either my Xantia or





my previously owned C5 Series I. One could argue that this is to an extent related to the wheelbase of the cars.

The new C5's wheelbase is 2,815mm – 65mm longer than the Series I car [2,750mm]. The

second.

Even the massive [4,838mm overall length Skoda Superb] makes do with a wheelbase of just 2,761mm. The new C5 is just under 4.8metres overall.

The new six-speed automatic gearbox in the C5 is a delight. Smooth-shifting and well aligned

to Australian speed limits. Owners of Series I cars tell me the auto-box wants to change gears at 60kph. The result is that the 'box is perpetually 'hunting' for the right gear in around town traffic. There is no such issue with the new Japanese-sourced gearbox.

I must admit that there are times when my Xantia produces less than smooth changes [to be fair, it has covered almost 180,000km], and the 2litre diesel version of the Laguna managed

to display some hideous changes in my short test drive. This may sound churlish, but comparing the shifting of the Xantia, Laguna, C5 and my elderly BX 16TRS... well the C5 [in 2.7litre V6 form] is clearly the winner. Unfortunately, I have to say that the BX comes a very creditable second. In October of 2008 I did drive a 2litre diesel C5 automatic in the UK for a week. The changes in that car were also generally smooth and well-timed.

Both it and the Laguna did seem to be caught-out when leaving an intersection with a degree of brio, however. There was no sign of this in the V6.

The C5 is quiet. My remarkably deaf father was able to hear the turn indicator clicking. Not because the indicator is loud, but because the laminated side windows of the C5 help ensure

it is remarkably isolated from exterior noise.

One of the other shortcomings of the Skoda was the amount of noise transmitted to the cabin. Wind noise is muted as is the engine noise in the 1.8litre petrol Skoda. But, the amount of road noise transmitted to the cabin was disconcerting. On the rough surfaced parts of the Monash Freeway in Melbourne, Sue and I agreed that the Xantia was quieter than the Superb. I must confess to not taking the C5 on the same piece of road, but I am in no doubt that it would be the quietest of my test group.

Grumbles? Of course there are grumbles. From inside the belt-line of the C5 is very high. No higher than the Mondeo, but certainly higher than the Xantia. Of course this is current fashion and certainly the glasshouse of C5

## C5: CCOCA DRIVE

Series I is a mere 10mm longer than the Xantia. All three are shamed by the CX, which even in non-Prestige form is a massive 2,845mm.

As an aside; despite the additional wheelbase the rear seat leg room in the Xantia is not shamed by the new, larger car.

Of course there is more to the ride than the wheelbase. Of the four cars, I will express a preference for the CX, overall. But the new C5 does come a very close





is far larger than vehicles such as the Chrysler C300.

The view through the rear view mirror is appalling. The rear window appears to be large, but from inside, via the rear view mirror the visibility seems limited.

## C5: CCOCA DRIVE

So does that of the Laguna and Mondeo. The Skoda's rear view is the best of the new selection. But, remember, it is dreadfully frumpy.

The B-pillar is quite thick. I guess the degree of issue that presents depends on how close you are to the steering wheel. Unfortunately, being tall, for me it did mean that every time I looked over my right shoulder my view was obstructed by the B-pillar. In the Xantia the B-pillar is effectively right by the side of my head, but in the C5 it was behind me. This does make the pillar seem thicker, even if it is not.

The Exclusive comes with an in-dash six-disc CD player and excellent sound quality. However, there is no standard iPod connectivity, which these days is very low-tech. The Mondeo offers two ways to connect an iPod. The Superb offers both an iPod connection and the ability to play music from an SD card. Only the French [yes, the Renault is similarly devoid of connectivity] seem to fail to understand that the iPod has become an essential part of life.

Similarly, Bluetooth connection is an option on both French cars, and the Skoda. Mondeo and Mazda both include this as standard. In the UK at least, the 2010 top of the range Laguna does come with Bluetooth as standard.

The centre console conceals the single front cup holder. One cup holder? Yep, just one. And that one ensures you will not put anything else into the centre console. It does fold away, but it does seem a design oversight in such an otherwise well designed interior. The rest of the dashboard is littered with handy, albeit small, places to put things, which does compensate to some extent.

The door-side armrests [in the front at least] are too far forward on the door. And, in common with the CX the rear doors are quite short.

You will love the ride, the gearchange and the silence. – and probably the style. The last-minute cup holder and the low-tech audio are some of the less endearing features of the C5.

Leigh F Miles

The car tested was supplied by Zagame Citroën in Brighton, Victoria. At the time of writing this 2.7litre Exclusive, with sunroof, Bluetooth connectivity and hi-fi upgrade options is available for \$68,800.

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The Paris-Madrid road race of 1903 was a wonderfully disgraceful affair. Three hundred cars set out, conferring death and dismemberment along the dust-choked roads south. Six of the drivers

car designer, heir to a factory estate in Alsace. Among the spectators, probably, was three-year-old Hélène Delangle, destined to become one of his crack drivers. She would have been among the villagers of Aunay-sous-Auneau who thronged to see Louis Renault descending a nearby hill

at 140kph.

City-to-city road racing was now over. However, the dawn of motoring was still one of those dawns in which it was bliss to be alive. That same decade ushered in the Gabriel horn: 'Everywhere you are greeted by the clear sweet note of the finest motor horn in the world.' Or there was the Autoclear, 'the horn with the three-mile note, yet mellow and inoffensive in tone'. What better way of alerting the sleepy cattle drover three miles ahead? The dust clouds raised by cars were still asphyxiating, but macadam was slowly bringing relief. Controlling a car became simpler, no longer a question [as a pioneer motorist complained] of doing two things with the left hand, four things with the right, and sometimes all of these things at once. But with improved design was rekindled the passion for speed; road racing might be illegal but the solo 'speed merchants' were getting away with it. That early Lanchester which 'sang like a six-inch shell across the Sussex Downs' contained [in the back

seat] Rudyard Kipling, a bit of a road-hog who had the nerve to proclaim that the car had at last brought a major blood sport to Britain. His fellow poet and road-hog, John Masefield, also exulted as he traversed the Downs at furious speed, his Overland emitting 'soul-animating strains' [doubtless from a Gabriel horn]. And the man who wrote to the motoring press urging drivers not to stop after an accident if they had a lady on board was Bernard Shaw.

Speed worship began to infect hard-headed urban councils, as one town after another [and not just in Britain] began holding Grand Prix round-the-houses races, or even round-the-houses-and-into-the-trees races. And what sort of landowner would refuse to play host to a concours d'élégance at which owners of magnificent chariots – Lagonda, Delage, Rolls Royce – could admire each other's turnout? And truly magnificent some of these thoroughbreds were; Roland Barthes thought cars 'almost the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals, the supreme creation of an era' [which might have been better said of the splendid ocean liners of the day]. In the highest class came the Bugatti Royale, a car for rajahs and emperors [though the last Habsburg emperor went into exile in a Gräf und Stift, the Austrian Rolls, the same model in which the Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated at Sarajevo]. But

the Bugatti that made the name of Hélène Delangle, by then calling herself Hellé Nice, was the sports model, a lean, rakish and most elegant racer which made a noise often compared to that of tearing calico, or a mainsail splitting in a gale. That was only one reason why young men coveted it.

Hélène Delangle, a postmaster's daughter, was a sprightly blue-eyed blonde who left the stifling environment of Aunay for a more exciting life in Paris. She had an ear-to-ear gamine grin and a good figure, and photographed well. It was inevitable that she should take to the stage and she appeared in ballet, revue, circus and striptease, as well as giving private performances. A fetching

## THE BUGATTI QUEEN

were killed outright and nearly twice as many gravely injured. The hospitals were stuffed with mangled sightseers. By the time the surviving drivers reached Bordeaux the race was called off, and in Madrid the garlanded welcome arches were quietly dismantled. One of the drivers taking part was Ettore Bugatti, the young Italian





photograph shows her, naked, holding aloft a fluttering dove, though it is not clear whether she was one of those dove dancers who summoned up a trained flock to take protective stations. Money flowed in. For reasons unknown,

## THE BUGATTI QUEEN

she adopted the name Hellé Nice. Her looks, and the ballet training that she seems to have picked up along the way, landed her a spot in a chorus line, which paid for her first car, a Citroën that she bought in 1920 and nicknamed Maisie. Fast women attracted fast cars, and vice versa; Hellé mingled, easily and promiscuously, with the rich, well-born motor-racing set. In 1927 she was at the Montlhéry race track, that glorified 'Wall of Death' near Paris, where Henri

de Courcelles, a war-time fighter pilot of high distinction, was the first of her lovers to be killed at the wheel. A ski accident two years later ended her dancing career, but at once she switched to racing. There had been plenty

of mettlesome, even feminine-looking women drivers before

Hellé began making headlines. In 'The Bugatti Queen', Miranda Seymour informs us that Violette Morris, an athlete and racing driver, had her heavy breasts removed because they interfered with her driving a Donnet.

In 1929 Hellé, driving an Omega-Six, won the Grand Prix Féminin at Montlhéry, becoming 'the fastest woman in the world' by lapping the steep-sided bowl at 198kph. Her preparation for the race had been less than ideal:

'A green-eyed boy, a friend of one of the costume makers at the casino, had stayed the night. A mixture of morphine, champagne and sex had left her wanting to crawl into a coal hole when she woke up.' The morphine sounds ominous, but it was presumably to alleviate the ski injury. In an instant she found herself famous. No hangover could prevent 'the charming Casino de Paris dancer' from milking the victor's applause to the limit, with time off to prick the blisters raised on her hands by the hot hammering of the steering wheel. Her prowess in the Omega brought an invitation from Ettore Bugatti to join his dwindling

stable of women drivers. She was summoned to the Bugatti estate at Molsheim, 'which all French Bugatti drivers looked on as their Camelot', but significantly was not invited to stay under the family roof or even to dine there, being put up in the firm's hostellerie, 'Le Pur Sang' [the Bugatti slogan]. Ettore probably knew an adventuress when he saw one. He had a son, Jean, whom he expected to inherit the business and who had already been caught up in her circle.

Hellé Nice was not tied exclusively to Bugatti. In 1930 she undertook an extraordinary barnstorming tour of America's

Opposite and below: Hellé Nice at the wheel of her Type 35 Bugatti, on December 19, 1929 having completed a record run at Montlhéry at 197kph.





dirt-tracks, velodromes, wooden bowls and other killing grounds. Mainly she drove America's approximation to the Bugatti, a Miller, sometimes a Duesenberg, playing up to the crowd brilliantly and relishing her motorcycle

an insane feat. An errant scarf had already strangled Isadora Duncan in her Amilcar on the Promenade des Anglais at Nice.

Then it was back to driving for Bugatti, or Alfa Romeo, or any other firm that showed interest in a driver ready to do handstands on the bonnets of its victorious

cars. For her own conveyance she bought an opulent Hispano-Suiza; hideously expensive to run. But money flowed in. She endorsed Lucky Strike cigarettes and Esso; and if the cash flow faltered she was never short of rich friends. 'The list of lovers,'

Seymour writes, 'aristocratic and otherwise, who became involved with Hellé Nice during the 1930s is almost as long as the list of races in which she took part. Fortunately for us,' she adds, 'she had the helpful habit of marking their names with an X in her new black address book.' The index divides them into 'lovers' and 'brief affairs/ close friends'. In the former category, besides Henri de Courcelles, are Count Bruno d'Harcourt, killed racing at Casablanca, and Philippe Rothschild, the vineyard owner; in the latter are Jean Bugatti, killed in one of his own cars, a Spanish count and a Romanian prince.

In 1936 – a black year for Hellé Nice and motor racing in general – she was co-driver in the Monte Carlo Rally, starting from Tallinn with 'a headlong rush along the glassy roads of Estonia, black ice all the way...

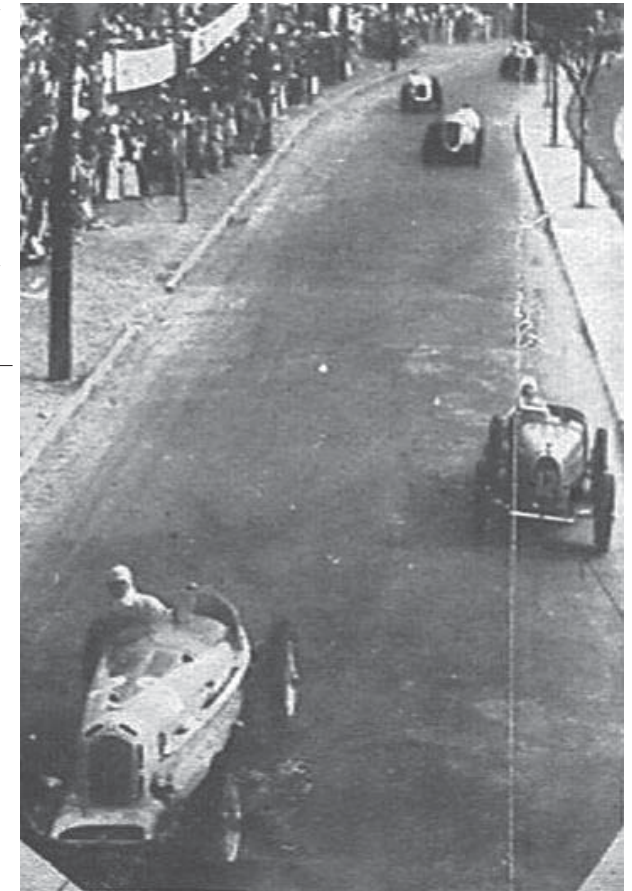
the women drove as if possessed.' Summer found her in Brazil, taking the wheel of an Alfa Romeo Monza in the ill-organised São Paulo Grand Prix. Rounding a corner at 150kph she was faced with a bale on the track and a policeman trying to remove it: 'A body flew up cartwheeling through a cloud of dust. The car jerked, spun and flung another body up, high over the screaming crowd, before it smashed into the jostling line of spectators... They went down like reeds to a scythe.'

## THE BUGATTI QUEEN

escorts. The fans knew her as Hellish Nice. In homage to a driver whose car had dived over the edge of one of these tracks, she drove up to the spot, ripped off her scarf and tossed it down like a wreath. This went down well with the crowd, but it was



Left: The start of the 1936 Rio de Janeiro Grand Prix. Note the tram tracks on the start straight. The two streamlined Alfa Romeos that look a bit like 8C-35s are in fact Ferrari entered 2900A stripped sports cars to be raced by Pintacuda and Marioni. Next to them are the 'Monzas' of Hellé Nice and de Teffé. The arrow points at the race winner, Vittorio Coppoli  
Right: Hellé Nice's blue Alfa Romeo 'Monza' in front of eventual winner, Italian Vittorio Coppoli in the Bugatti #12





Hellé was laid out with the dead but recovered after three days in a coma. Acquitted of responsibility for the disaster, she received generous compensation. 'I killed a poor man with my head, and his death saved my life. I broke

She was much impressed by the powerful cars – Mercedes and Auto-Union – coming out of Nazi Germany and tried to get taken on as a works driver for Adler. One of her new 'brief affairs' was with a womanising SS officer who looked like Bertie Wooster: a bad move. What she did in France

his skull,' she said. That same year eight spectators were killed by a swerving Riley in the Irish Tourist Trophy Race. Another casualty was a descendant of Charles II, the young Duke of Grafton, burned to death in his Bugatti at the Limerick Grand Prix.

The São Paulo crash did not quench Hellé's racing ambitions.

during the German occupation is a mystery, as Seymour is the first to admit. 'I have never been in any trouble, civil or military,' Hellé protested after the war. 'Her collaboration,' Seymour suggests, 'if she was guilty of it, might only have taken the pragmatic form of being on good terms with the occupiers.' She no longer had

the Hispano-Suiza, unlike Sacha Guity, who hung on to his throughout the war, and much good it did him. Ettore Bugatti hid his Bugatti Royale in his castle at Ermenonville. Hellé's funds were running out, but in 1943 she left Paris with her most durable lover to settle into a newly built villa of 'some considerable splendour' at Nice. Could it have been an expropriated Jewish home? How close was she to that Nazi Wooster and his ilk? Seymour voices the obvious suspicions, but is reluctant to press them.

It was left to a fellow Bugatti driver, and a dashing famous one, to destroy her reputation. In 1949 the Monegasque Louis Chiron spied her at a ball in Monte Carlo where that year's

Rally drivers were being fêted. In a loud voice he denounced her as a Gestapo agent: 'Votre place n'est pas ici, vous.' Hellé was too shocked to react: this was not one of those situations that could be met with a broad grin and a handstand. It was hardly worth suing him in the Monaco courts, since he was a hero in the principality and had powerful influence there, and French law did not apply. If he ever withdrew his charge he seems not to have done so publicly. Hellé did not retire immediately from racing, but her story now was one of betrayal, impoverishment and obscurity.

Seymour makes clear at the outset that much of the background to her story, in the absence of hard facts, is speculative. She

Opposite [left to right] Fangio, Giuseppe 'Nino' Farina and Louis Chiron in 1959 [copyright Cahier]. Chiron died in 1979

Below: A selection of the memorabilia discovered by Miranda Seymour, that inspired her to write 'The Bugatti Queen'..

## THE BUGATTI QUEEN





was lucky enough, or persevering enough, to locate caches of Hellé's photographs and cuttings, and to get access to letters, but the book is a 'quest' rather than a biography. In New Jersey she was able to sit in the car in which

against the best male drivers of the era.

So what was Hellé Nice really like – an overgrown tomboy or a femme fatale? As a jolly sports girl she would have given John Betjeman a few – perhaps welcome – surprises. If it is hard to see her as a bit of a Mata Hari – and

one would rather not – it is even harder to believe that she was a keen stamp collector, holding on to her albums to the end. In Britain she was never a household name. A visit to Brooklands in 1921 had taught her that women drivers were not wanted there. No doubt she could have handled one of those big green Bentleys with aplomb [Ettore Bugatti said the Bentley was 'the fastest lorry in the world']. But, household name or not, Hellé Nice makes an ideal gamy centrepiece for Seymour's spirited evocation of the sporting 1930s, a raffish and blood-blotted scene perhaps, but at least a change from seeing the decade automatically and unglamourously linked with Auden, Isherwood and Spender. Motor racing held all too many of us in its grip. I was sufficiently hooked to look in at the 24-hour race at Le Mans and the rather seedier, spectator-unfriendly event on the Newtonards circuit in Northern Ireland. Both visits were disillusioning. Brooklands boasted 'The Right Crowd and No Crowding', but many a race meeting was

more like the one featured in *Vile Bodies*, where the wrong crowd overrun the hotels of a greedy and banner-infested town, its buildings barricaded as if against an enemy. What of the dashing drivers? 'There were Speed Kings of all nationalities, unimposing men mostly with small moustaches and apprehensive eyes; they were reading the forecasts in the morning papers and eating what might [and in some cases did] prove to be their last meal on earth.' I should have liked to hear Waugh on the Monte Carlo Rally competitors, whom occasionally I saw checking into their luxury hotels. The newspapers hailed as heroes these exhibitionists who [like Hellé and her partner in Estonia] drove 'as if possessed' over ice, black or white, 'running out of road' all over Europe, sometimes crashing on top of each other, even ditching within a mile of starting; and all this while local tradesmen in their vans negotiated wintry roads without spreading mayhem. The organisers always protested that this was a rally, not a race. Perhaps the organisers of the Paris-Madrid race should have billed it as a rally.

How would Hellé Nice and the Bugatti crowd have relished the motor-racing scene today? Though they were used to speeding under and through mazes of advertising, they did not cover every centimetre of their persons and their cars with brand-names. Also their cars looked like cars and not smoothing irons. It is

odd that today's strange vehicles should bear a close resemblance to those seen by a scornful poet at London's Rotten Row a couple of generations earlier:

Cars flat as fish and fleet as birds,  
Low-bodied and high-speeded,  
Go on their belly like the Snake  
And eat the dust as he did.

Flat as fish? Could G.K. Chesterton unknowingly have been enjoying a vision of the future?

This article is based predominantly on a review of Miranda Seymour's book 'The Bugatti Queen', written by E.S. Turner in 'The London Review of Books'. 'The Bugatti Queen' was published by Random House in 2004.

E.S. Turner wrote his first article for the Dundee Courier in 1927. He contributed to *Punch* for 53 years, and wrote more than eighty pieces for the London Review. He died on 6 July 2006, at the age of 96.

E t t o r e  
Bugatti congratulating  
'The Bugatti Queen' on  
yet another  
success.



## THE BUGATTI QUEEN

Hellé beat the world record in 1929. 'I didn't expect the Bugatti to be so pretty; I hadn't, until I drove one, fast, understood the exquisite, adrenalin-filled rush it would bring, a feeling of exhilaration, of excited, dangerous joy. Few experiences could match the intense happiness of racing in a car like this. Where, and in whose car, she experienced this epiphany does not emerge.

When Hélène Delangle died in 1984, in a tiny unheated apartment in Nice, the event passed unremarked. The theatrical charity that had supported her in her final years placed a small obituary notice in *Le Figaro*. Her landlord, keen to rent the premises, cleared out her belongings, giving away two boxes filled with old clippings, letters and photographs. And that was that.

It was a sad end to a brilliant life. Few of the neighbours had any idea that the frail old woman with no teeth had once set speed record after speed record driving for Bugatti in the 1930s. She was the world's undisputed female champion, and a top competitor



Well, just back from the great trip Brian and Esther Wade organised, 21 Tractions; what a marvellous sight and with the arrival of another three at Birdwood, even better. It was the greatest concen-

## SPARE NEWS

tration of Tractions I have ever seen in this country. Well done Brian and Esther and thanks once again. If you heard about the driveshaft mishap that occurred with Brian's car, let me stress that those shafts were not modified by our current driveshaft man but were the first set modified by the firm in Melbourne that we started with. I have since remembered that they were left a little oversize where the inner seal ran and I had them machined down a little, obviously removing most of the weld. They did a better job of them after that as Andrew Begel-hole's car is fitted with shafts from the same company and has done considerable work since their installation with no problem.

The big news at the moment however is tyres, our intrepid travelling president, Ted Cross while in Arras spoke to and formed a relationship with Longstone Tyres in the U.K. Ted passed the information onto me and after speaking to them myself we are bringing in Michelin tyres from them freight free. Their current

price for a 165x400 is £144.00, divide that by our current exchange rate and you will see it works out around \$270.00 at the moment. The best part about this arrangement is that they typically are on your doorstep in five days. All sizes are available but we believe they will only send

Michelin freight free. Ted and I discussed how the Club can do the best for it's members with this deal and decided to pass these tyres onto the members at cost. Which is a terrific saving for all.

The way this operates is the tyres are ordered through me. I then send an order to Longstone, they deliver to your private address. Then I send you an account and I must stress that payment is expected immediately upon receiving the invoice. We are bringing in tyres and tubes two at a time, the personal delivery eliminates all internal postage and extra cost and handling. We have always struggled with tyres but this is a wonderful solution and I hope it will continue to run well into the future.

Parts have been moving quite well and we are still trying to keep up stocks and always looking for improvements in our supply. Next month I am going to bring more news on ID engine and transmission conversions, so until then keep on Citroëning.

Rob Little



## FOR SALE

1 9 5 3

2 C V



1953 Ripple Bonnet for sale, chassis no 8530078, registered in WA [1 CRY 966] till Dec. Present mileage 43,441. The car has been restored by previous owners. It is in excellent condition. It has new: brakes including all rubber lines and hand brake cables, clutch and clutch cable, carbi, master cylinder, wheel bearings, drive shaft cross joints, battery, engine mounts, points/condenser, coil, plugs and leads, fuel line, heater tubes. The wheels have been balanced and the gear box overhauled. The work was carried out by 2cviking and David Gries. I have German roof fabric ready for fabrication. \$18,000. A '53 ripple in this condition is rare. Contact: Carl Perrin, [08] 9386 3268 or 04 1247 2527 or by email kaycarl@eftel.net.au

## SLOUGH 1955 2CV

What a rare opportunity. This sort of car is very rare to find anywhere – let alone in Australia. A Slough-built, 1955

2CV. Well looked after and in very good condition. No rust. VIN 8551024. Rego RNB401. Registered till 10/7/2010. Based in Point Cook, Melbourne. Asking \$10,500 ONO. Contact Henk Radelaar, [M] 0434 537 655, [W] 03 9665 7516 or email : hradelaar@gmail.com

[33/04]

## 1997 SERIES 2 XM



Less than 150,000k. Immaculate condition inside and out [slight bumper corner scrapes]. Leather interior, factory sunroof. Cam belt done recently, 4 new tyres, regularly and thoroughly maintained by Citro Motors. Vic Rego until March, SFB 690 \$13,500 Contact: Tony Layh, 04 1857 3108 or tonylayh@netspace.net.au

[33/04]

## WANTED

## SET OF ID WHEELS

Set of Citroën ID early series 165 x 400 wheels ie: the ones with the enlarged central boss. Please contact; Chris Long, phone 04 1254 0232 or email: chris.long@internode.on.net

## DS WEDDING CAR

Darren Brink is seeking a DS or ID for his wedding in Warragul. Date in 10 April, 2010. Contact Darren on 04 1706 8703

[33/05]





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