

# THE OCTAGON

Newsletter of the M.G. Owners Club & the Peninsula T Register  
The Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club



MGOC Octagon  
If undeliverable please return to:  
7230 Silver Lode Lane  
San Jose, CA 95120

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One of John Bertolotti's beautiful Pierce Arrows

# August 2010

Photo by Ken Gittings

## About *The Octagon* and MGOC...

The M.G. Owners Club, formed in 1957, is the Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club, formed in England in 1930. The Peninsula T Register was formed in 1973 and is now an informal sub-group of the MGOC. We receive a copy of the MGCC's *Safety Fast*, available to members on loan from the corresponding secretary. The Club is also associated with the North American MGB Register, the North American MGA Register, and the New England MG T Register. The MGOC holds a business meeting on the second Thursday of each month at an event known as the "Natter and Noggin" in the style of English clubs. *The Octagon*, our newsletter, is published monthly by the M.G. Owners Club. Opinions expressed in *The Octagon* are not necessarily those of the MGOC, its members, or Board of Directors.

### DIRECTORY OF MGOC OFFICERS FOR 2010

**President:** Sam Gearhart, 510-530-2267, [swg3@comcast.net](mailto:swg3@comcast.net)

**Vice President:** George Steneberg, 510-525-9125, [j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)

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**Captain of Fun (Activities Director):** Randy Grossman, 510-483-3171, [r.m.grossman@comcast.net](mailto:r.m.grossman@comcast.net)

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**Photographer:** Jeremy Palgon, 510-378-1821, [alistaircookie@gmail.com](mailto:alistaircookie@gmail.com)

### CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

Feel free to call these members, who have volunteered to help with purchase, repair, and restoration of various MG models.

**MGB 1962-74:** Marty Ray, 831-475-6204, [martyray@cruzio.com](mailto:martyray@cruzio.com)

**MGB 1974-1980:** Ed Adams, 510-483-6821

**MGB V8 Conversion:** Tony Bates, 408-666-6174, [Tony@BatesFamily.net](mailto:Tony@BatesFamily.net)

**MGC:** Kent Leech, 925-253-9757, [kent@kentleech.com](mailto:kent@kentleech.com)

**MG Midget:** Craig Kuenzinger, 925-934-3130, [mrcraigk@aol.com](mailto:mrcraigk@aol.com)

**MGA/Coupe/Twin Cam 1955-62:** George Steneberg, 510-525-9125

**Z-Magnette Saloon:** Eric Baker, 510-531-7032, [mgpb36@yahoo.com](mailto:mgpb36@yahoo.com)

**T-types:** George Steneberg, 510-525-9125, [j2george@pacbell.net](mailto:j2george@pacbell.net)

**Pre-war Midgets-Magnas-Magnettes:** George Steneberg, 510-525-9125

**PA/PB Midget 1934-36:** Eric Baker, 510-531-7032, [mgpb36@yahoo.com](mailto:mgpb36@yahoo.com)

**S.U. Carburettors:** Marty Ray, 831-475-6204, [martyray@cruzio.com](mailto:martyray@cruzio.com)

## Club Meeting Natter & Noggin

August 12, 7 pm

The Englander Sports Pub & Restaurant

101 Parrott Street, San Leandro

<http://www.englishpub.com/>

(510) 357-3571

The Englander is an enjoyable place where we have our own cozy room.  
The food is good so bring your appetites.

### Directions to The Englander:

From Northbound I-880, take the Washington Ave. exit within San Leandro and turn right on Washington St. Travel 2.2 miles until you see Parrott St. Turn right on Parrott Street. You will see The Englander on your right.

From Southbound I-880, take Davis St. exit and turn left on Davis. Travel 1.3 miles, then turn right on E. 14<sup>th</sup> St. Travel 0.3 miles, and then turn right on Parrott Street.



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**Parts for Sale:**

**MGA Parts (from a 1960 MGA 1600):** Front and rear bumpers with over-riders. Some pitting of the chrome, but in excellent shape. **Convertible top frame** with new head rail. **Seat frames** for roadster (2). **Side curtains**, one side needs new Plexiglas. **Brand new grille** (in the box), the good brass one. Contact Member Les Stuart at (408) 460-1077 or [les@stuartsj.com](mailto:les@stuartsj.com).

**MGTD/TF Parts: Factory 4-speed gearbox:** This core and shifts easily in all gears. Top-cover-off inspection shows nothing broken or otherwise damaged. Inside is nice and clean. Fits TD and TF, \$400. **Two piece hood top with hinge:** I have two sets. Both are straight and in good shape, one has surface rust that sands off easily. Your choice, \$100 each. **Hood right side:** very good shape, \$50. **TD/TF foot rest:** passenger side for under carpet. I have two, your choice, \$40 each. **TD driver side door:** no rust and wood is good, \$60. Contact Member Rod Schweiger at (650) 296-1108.

**MG Midget Rolling Chassis Body Shell.** No VIN. No Title. No engine, transmission, differential, front bumper, or windscreen. Not crashed but rough. Rubber bumper car. Make Offer. Contact Member Nick Becker at (925) 932-9778 or [becker2226@astound.net](mailto:becker2226@astound.net).

**MG TD parts: drive shaft** with u-joints, **rear end** with axles, **front and rear shocks.** I'm selling these items because I've upgraded my 1953 TD to a MGA rear end, brakes, and rear springs. \$200 for all. Contact Member Bob Luebbert at (510) 276-0365 or [r.luebbert@sbcglobal.net](mailto:r.luebbert@sbcglobal.net).

**Wanted:**

**MG TA, TB, or TC.** I would prefer a nice car, but will consider a project (even one that is apart). Contact Member Jeff at (650) 270-8850.

**Pre-1968 MGB roadster.** Long-time MG nut seeking early B roadster. My preference is one that is a preserved original or one redone to original specifications; but I will consider most any steel-dash car, depending on its price and its needs. Contact Member Don Scott at (707) 942-0546 or [don@napanet.net](mailto:don@napanet.net).

**COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN THE OCTAGON**

Direct all questions about advertising to Mike Jacobsen at 415-333-9699 or [MikesMuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:MikesMuseum@yahoo.com). 2010 rates are: monthly (yearly): full page \$25 (\$240), half page \$18 (\$175), third page \$12 (\$120), business card \$8 (\$75). All ads expire on January 1, and fees for a partial year will be pro-rated to that date. Deadline for ad materials is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month. The MGOC makes no claims as to the reputation or quality of work performed by businesses advertising in *The Octagon*.

**MGOC FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Information on the MGOC finances is available upon request from the treasurer.

**MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OCTAGON**

Your stories, photos, tips, questions, and anything MGOC-related are always welcome in *The Octagon*. Please make your contributions by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. Please email all contributions to [mgowners@gmail.com](mailto:mgowners@gmail.com) or send them to: MGOC, 7230 Silver Lode Lane, San Jose, CA 95120.

**RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC**

Have you helped recruit any new members lately? Bob Stine is in charge of new member recruitment and can send you flyers. The Club roster is available to members from Mike Jacobsen upon request.

**MGOC.ORG**

Upcoming events, MGOC history, photos, membership forms, *The Octagon*, and helpful links are posted on the Club Web site at <http://mgoc.org>.

# Forthcoming Events

**MGOC Events in bold**

Aug. 7-8 – Monterey Pre-Historic Races, Laguna Seca

Aug. 12-15 – **Monterey Motorsports Reunion**, Laguna Seca

Aug. 14 – **Airport to Africa Run**, Sonoma, Wayne Veatch

Aug. 14 – **Concours d'LeMons**, Toro Park, Monterey

Aug. 15 – **Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance**

Aug. 28 – **Annual Picnic**, Joaquin Miller Park, Oakland

Sept. 12 – **Hillsborough Concours d'Elegance**

Sept. 19 – **Danville Concours d'Elegance**

Oct. 16 – **Jimmy's Old Car Picnic**, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

Oct. 17 – **California Autumn Classic**, Morgan Hill

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## From the Editor...

Last month I pondered the nature of community. I argued that a vital community requires a group of people with a shared interest, a fair number of members who want to participate, and at least a handful of people who are willing to take action and lead. I then reasoned that the more leaders a community has, the more vital it is. And I concluded with a call to action, imploringly asking if you, the members of the MGOC, would become a bit more involved.

I am most pleased to report that many members answered the call. In fact, I was a bit overwhelmed by the response. Bud Alderson offered to plan or lead a tour. Former member, and doctor to many of our cars, J.R. Boye wrote a report on the recent tour of John Bertolotti's collection (page 10). Don Malcolm wrote up a long promised article about buying and restoring his 1949 TC (page 14).

And with submissions from regular contributors Samantha Lee and Ken Gittings, I didn't even have space for John Hunt's informative piece about modern MG's Italian connection (look for it next month). This month, Samantha explains why we sit on the left and drive on the right (page 12), and Ken's photos show the breadth and beauty of John Bertolotti's automotive collection.

I'm very grateful for all these submissions and offers to help. Who knew that a simple written column could have such an effect?

There's been a great response, but let's not stop there. We still need more help, in ways big and small.

On the small side, if you plan on attending Wayne Veatch's Airport to Africa Run (page 8), please take a moment to RSVP to him. And the Annual Picnic comes along on August 28. It's a great occasion to discuss your ideas and get more involved. I hope to see you there.

Jeremy Palgon

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**1973 MGB GT.** Nearly completed restoration. I redid the mechanicals, had body and paint done professionally. Upholstery is dark blue cloth as originally fitted. Has two nearly new six-volt batteries, correct rubber mats, and original carpeting. Has refurbished Rostyles with like-new 165-14 Dunlop radials. I have a professionally rebuilt OD gearbox, which is not installed, redone by Jerry Redmon of Napa Valley Auto Restorations. The car does need completion - some interior pieces need to be installed, and it needs some tidying. \$4,500. I'm in Napa Valley. Contact Member Don Scott at (707) 942-0546 or [don@napanet.net](mailto:don@napanet.net).

**1977 MGB roadster.** \$2000. Recent work done by Dan at Exclusive British European includes rebuilt carb. Many parts included in price, including new seat rebuild parts and new roll bar. For more information, visit <http://77mgbforsale.shutterfly.com> or contact Member Craig at [netrider117@yahoo.com](mailto:netrider117@yahoo.com).



**1953 MG TD.** \$28,000. Purchased in 1972 with a possible racing background. Completely rebuilt in early 2000 and raced since then two or more times per year at Infineon and Laguna Seca. Toured with several sport car clubs in the Wine Country. Contact Member Ferdinand at [ferdinands@att.net](mailto:ferdinands@att.net).



**1977 MGB** with 54,000 original miles, overdrive transmission, original "Sandglow" paint and autumn leaf interior. Well maintained by third owner. Price \$6,400. Contact Member Ellis at [Bovet177@gmail.com](mailto:Bovet177@gmail.com).



## Classified Ads

Ads are free to MGOC members and \$6.00 per month for non-members. Please send copy (and check **made payable to MGOC** if a non-member) to MGOC, 7230 Silver Lode Lane, San Jose, CA 95120. Members may also email ads to the editor at [mgowners@gmail.com](mailto:mgowners@gmail.com).

### Cars for Sale:

**1975 MGB.** Blaze red, runs well, no smog necessary. New: top, seats, carpet, and paint. Rebuilt aluminum head. Dual carbs. Asking \$11,900. Contact Karen at (408) 564-0334.

**1968 MGB.** \$8,500 OBO. Purchased in 1968 by my father, who is the only other owner. Original dash, gauges, grill, rims, leather top. New seats, brand new battery, newly-dipped chrome. Runs and sounds great. Original British plates in the trunk! Contact Steven at (415) 683-1248 or [stevelekart@gmail.com](mailto:stevelekart@gmail.com).



**1961 MGA Coupe,** 1600 cc engine, 5 speed gearbox. California car, completely restored by third (and present) owner in 2002, rust free, body straight, no accidents, 7,800 miles since rebuild. Original body panels, new front spoiler below bumper. All good original chrome, new rubber gaskets for body and glass. Painted "Paprika Red" (Jaguar color). New clutch slave and brake master cylinders, 2004. Pictures and further information upon request. Asking \$25,000. Contact Member Viggo Riddersholm at (650)341-9064 or [vriddersholm@yahoo.com](mailto:vriddersholm@yahoo.com), or Gordon Craig at [lismoregordon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lismoregordon@sbcglobal.net).



**1949 MG TC** British racing green, right hand drive in excellent condition. \$35,000. Contact Member Larry at (415) 999-2362.

## President's Ponderings...

### Looks to be Quite a Ride

As we all do occasionally, the members of the Board of Directors often get unsolicited mail and email from various groups and individuals. Our Corresponding Secretary, George Steneberg, often reports he's received credit card applications addressed to the Club (which he shreds). I receive various things from folks wanting us to link their service or some organization to our website, or offering some service (usually for a fee) that our members just cannot live without. There are also times, however, when I get a mailing of some sort that piques my interest, and that is exactly the case with MG80 – a worldwide celebration of the MG Car Club, which by the way, we are a member as the Northern California Centre.

It seems that on October 12, 1930, the MGCC first met at the Roebuck Inn in Stevenage, England; and accordingly, 2010 is the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MG Car Club. (Who knew?)

The MGCC has a unique plan it has put in motion to celebrate the founding: an MG ride around the world. The plan is for a huge celebration to take place on October 16 and 17, 2010. Starting in New Zealand early in the morning of October 16, the event will move westward around the globe, passing through Kimber House, Abingdon, UK, and ultimately finishing in Alaska late that evening.

Using the internet (what else) and readily available technology and resources, the MGCC asks that all clubs worldwide hold a local event on that date and upload photos or videos to a single event website that will use a geographical time line along the route established for the ride. Already, local clubs from Europe, Australia, and the UK have signed up, and they expect many others will too.

I am not going to pretend to understand all the technologies they are using and taking advantage of to pull this off. However, to me this sounds like a fun event, where over a single weekend MG clubs around the world will be celebrating MG. Imagine logging on to see other clubs holding rallies, rides, picnics, and whatnot, wherever they might be. Imagine, too, that just a few short years ago this would not have been possible.

Locally, there is a potentially minor event conflict with the California Autumn Classic that weekend in Morgan Hill, but perhaps we can use our participation in that event as our "MGOC Celebration" to share with the rest of the world. There is additional information at the [MGCC-UK website](http://www.mgcc-uk.com).

Also, don't forget that we have two of our own local events upcoming. Wayne Veatch's Airport to Africa ride on August 14 and our Annual Picnic on August 28.

I hope to see you all at an event soon as we enjoy our MGs and our club.

Regards,  
Sam Gearhart

# Monterey Peninsula Classic Car Events

For ten days in August, the Monterey Peninsula plays host to a prestigious group of automotive events. Here are some highlights:

## Monterey Pre-Historic Races at Laguna Seca, August 7-8

It all starts with the Pre-Historics. A lot of the cars that run the Historics use the Pre-Historics as a tune-up session and to learn the track. Despite widespread rumor that this event is closed to spectators, you can definitely watch. Even if the paddock ends up being totally closed off, you can still enter the Laguna Seca Recreation Area (a Monterey County Park) and watch the races from the track and grandstands.

## Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion, August 12-15

Formerly known as the Monterey Historic Races at Laguna Seca, the Monterey Motorsports Reunion is the largest event held during the renowned classic car festival in Monterey California. The Reunion is a tribute to motor racing history, historic automobiles, and the people who made them. Each year more than 400 of the finest historic race and sports cars are entered in 14 race groups that span nearly every era of motor sports history.

## Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, August 15

Once each year, on a Sunday in August, 175 of the most prized collector cars in the world roll onto what is often called the best finishing hole in golf – the famed eighteenth fairway at Pebble Beach. First conducted in 1950, the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance is often said to be the world's premier celebration of the automobile. Only the most beautiful and rare automobiles are invited to appear each year. The 2010 Concours d'Elegance will feature Alfa Romeo, Pierce Arrow, Jaguar, and will celebrate the designs of Ghia. The event will also welcome Hot Rods, particularly lakesters and Bonneville racers, back to the show field, as well as Indy Cars. Our second annual class of motorcycles will focus on classic American bikes built prior to 1960.

**Guide to Monterey Car Week:** <http://www.montereycarweek.com>

### More Information:

Laguna Seca Recreation Area:

<http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/parks/lagunaseca.html>

Monterey Motorsports Reunion:

[http://www.mazdaraceway.com/pages/2010\\_Rolex\\_Monterey\\_Motorsports\\_Reunion](http://www.mazdaraceway.com/pages/2010_Rolex_Monterey_Motorsports_Reunion)

Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance: <http://pebblebeachconcours.com>

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### Old Business

Survey Committee – Action Plan & Leadership: Some progress made on recommendations, though the Committee members have been out of town. They expect to give a more complete report next month.

### New Business

MGs by the Bay: The Livery Shopping Center is no longer hosting Saturday shows: Sundays are still available. Discussion on staying at The Livery for a Sunday show, or moving the event to a new site. Bob Stine and others will check on some sites. We need to have a new site, or a Sunday at The Livery, decided on by this fall.

Begin Detailed Discussion & Planning for NAMGAR/NAMGBR Autumn 2011 Regional: Checked with NAMGAR about inviting NAMGBR and they said that was fine. Then NAMGAR suggested an all-Register event, much like the Reno 2010 event but a Regional. After discussing pros & cons it was decided to continue with the NAMGAR & NAMGBR plan. Mike will contact NAMGBR for their participation. Sam will ask Andy Preston to check with the DoubleTree hotel for dates in October 2011.

Club Expenditures: This included charcoal and similar items for the August 28, 2010 Annual Picnic: The Club will not supply drinks because they don't usually go well. Discussion on whether to buy food items, and if so, what kind. Sam will put together a list of possible items for review at the August meeting.

Activities Director: Sam will check with Randy Grossman about continuing in his Captain of Fun role, and will solicit for a new Activities Director if needed.

**Next Meeting and Natter:** 7:00 pm on Thursday, August 12, 2010 at The Englander Sports Pub, 100 Parrott Street, San Leandro.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.

Submitted by Mike Jacobsen.



More cars in John Bertolotti's Collection

Photo by Ken Gittings

# MGOC Business Meeting Minutes

## July 8, 2010

The meeting was called to order by President Sam Gearhart at 7:22 pm. Also attending were Ken Gittings, Mike Jacobsen, George Steneberg, Bob Stine, David Wright.

The June minutes were approved with corrections after the meeting attendees read copies distributed by Sam. Corrections were the spelling of names Les Stuart and Mike Jacobsen. The June minutes had not yet been published in *The Octagon*.

Treasurer's Report: Account balances were up this month from dues since it's membership renewal time.

Registrar's Report: We now have 213 regular, 56 auxiliary, and 12 corresponding members for 281 total members. Four new members; including two Auxiliary. Lost three Regular members & two Auxiliary. Badges ordered last month were received & mailed to the members. We received an inquiry from NAMGBR for cars per class we had at MG2007. NAMGBR is considering reorganizing its show classes.

Secretary's Report: Absent.

Corresponding Secretary's Report: More unsolicited credit card applications shredded.

Regalia: No report, but a discussion about providing embroidered club logo shirts and T-shirts as new regalia. These would be similar to items we made available at MG 2007 and NAMGAR West 2009. David Wright stated he thought any new shirts should include vest pockets. Sam will ask Bob Trencheny to contact Charles N. Pete Designs about shirts to get more information for David.

The Octagon: No report; still waiting for the July issue. Editor has been busy. Discussion that *The Octagon* should be out before monthly meetings, even if there is no content.

### Past Events

South Valley Wine Tour: Good event, with about 15 cars participating, according to Sam. Ken got lost after the second stop.

Palo Alto Concours d'Elegance: Several members attended, such as Andy Preston and Randy Grossman, plus Felix Lee won an award for the Most Interesting British Car. Member Craig Kuenzinger served as a judge.

### Upcoming Events

John Bertolotti Auto Collection and Ride: July 10, 2010: As listed in the June *Octagon*. Arranged rides for former member J.R. Boye.

GoF West: Big Bear Lake, Vintage MG Club. George will be attending.

Monterey Pre-Historic Races: Laguna Seca: August 7-8, 2010. No club participation.

Annual Picnic: August 28, 2010, at Joaquin Miller Park, Craib A picnic site.



Due to surprisingly enthusiastic demand for poor design, weak engineering, and terrible vehicular decision making, the Concours d'LeMons returns August 14, 2010 at Toro Park in Monterey. This year's Honored Marques include minivans and SUVs, which take center-stage alongside our usual collection of the motley, mundane, and vehicularly ill-advised.

Brought to you by the same miscreants behind the [24 Hours of LeMons](#) and [Billetproof](#), Concours d'LeMons lowers the tone for the Monterey Weekend. Tired of paying \$150 to see 150 identical Ferraris? Concours d'LeMons costs 20 bucks and has 20 Pacers and Pintos. Bored with the same old collector-car canon? Our Warsaw Pact Class should be *shot* from a cannon.

From mint-condition shag vans to Honey Bees, Bricklins, Skodas, and Edsels, Concours d'LeMons is all about stuff that you haven't seen every damn August! The fact that we actually *know* our cars suck is just gravy. Lots of free parking means no shuttles out to East Jabib. Optional "Small-Wiener Corral" so your Maybach won't have to sit near a Yugo. Easy back-road directions to bypass Laguna's grand Cluster-F.

Lowering property values even further, Concours d'LeMons 2010 will also host Monterey Weekend's only Auto Jumble (that's "swap meet" in Limey). Got piles of pesky Porsche parts? Rusty Renault remnants? A cancerous, clapped-out Cooper? Heap up the bits at the Concours d'LeMons Auto Jumble, and make them some other poor idiot's problem.

Featuring only the finest in oddball, mundane, and truly awful offerings from the automotive world, the Concours d'LeMons also includes unprofessional, inattentive, capricious, and bribery-hungry celebrity judges. The Discovery Channel will be at the show shooting an episode of "Chasing Classic Cars" with host Wayne Carini. Come on out and we'll make you famous!

Spectator tickets are \$20 per person online or at the gate. Spectators can begin feeling superior to the entrants at 9:00 am, and enjoy that heady rush until 4:00 pm. Worst of Show and other awful awards presented at 2:30 pm. AAA tow trucks are allowed on the field until dark.

**Monterey County-Mandated Warning:** *Oddball cars are habit forming. Upon attending this event one may experience aversion to half million-dollar restorations, monogrammed martini glasses, and navy blazers with khaki pants. Don't say we didn't warn you.*

**More Information:** <http://www.concoursdlemons.com>

# The Airport to Africa Run

## Saturday, August 14

### Sonoma

Wayne Veatch invites the MGOC and the SSTS to join him for a visit to the Schellville Antique Aerodrome, also known as the [Sonoma Valley Airport](#) ("The Home of the Taildraggers"), followed by caravan run to historic [Foster's Bighorn](#) restaurant and bar in old town Rio Vista. We'll be there for the airport's monthly Open House, with many antique airplanes on display and the opportunity for "hangar talk" with their owners. Foster's Bighorn features an astounding collection of North American and African wildlife trophies, collected by hunter and taxidermist Bill Foster in the 1930s and '40s.



We will meet at the Sonoma Cheese Factory, on the north side of the town square, at 9:00 am. If you wish, you may also meet us at the airport, about one mile south of the intersection of highways 121 and 116, at 9:45 am. We will view airplanes, while airport locals and visitors view our cars, until about 11:30 am; then we'll caravan to Rio Vista.

It's about an hour and 45 minute drive to Foster's Bighorn (143 Main Street, Rio Vista) via Highway 12, Cordelia, and back roads. Lunch will commence about 1:30 pm. We have a choice of Chicken Caesar Salad (veggie option available), Chicken Breast Sandwich (with Swiss cheese and bacon - yum!), Half Order of Ribs or Bison Burger, each with a soft drink, for a fixed price of \$17.50 (including tax and tip - cash only). They have a full bar with good draft beers.

Stay in Rio Vista as long as you wish, then choose your own route home. Some of us will return to the East Bay and San Francisco by the most expedient route: 160 to 4 to 242 to 24. Others will return via Kirker Pass from 4 to Walnut Creek, which will be more interesting, avoid some freeway travel, and take about 20 minutes longer.

So that he can advise Foster's, please let Wayne know if you are coming for lunch and your menu choice, by August 9.

**Where and When:** Meet at the Sonoma Cheese Factory, located at [2 E Spain St., Sonoma](#), at 9:00 am.

**RSVP** to Wayne Veatch at 415-821-1806 or [veatchlaw@gmail.com](mailto:veatchlaw@gmail.com).

**Contact on the day of the event:** Wayne's cell phone, 415-297-1807.

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## Learn from Master MG Technician John Twist



## On the Road Again

### British Auto Restorations

Saturday and Sunday, August 7 & 8

Esteemed MG specialist John Twist is coming to On the Road Again this weekend to teach two day-long tech sessions. Known as a grandmaster of MG tuning and repair, John opened his renowned University Motors MG shop in Michigan in 1975. His technical articles have been featured in numerous publications, from MG Magazine to MGB Driver.

Now you have the chance to learn from a master. John will teach you the secrets of tuning and maintaining your MG, including such mysteries as SU carburetors and Lucas electrical systems. There will be a different curriculum each day, so come to one or both sessions. Each session will go from 9 am to 6 pm, with a break for lunch. The cost is \$100 per person (including lunch), and each session is limited to 20 people.

If you would like to improve your MG mechanical knowledge and tuning skills, contact Bill Hiland at On the Road Again today to register.

16840 Joleen Way #G4, Morgan Hill, CA 95037  
408 782 1100 - [bhiland@ontheroadagainclassics.com](mailto:bhiland@ontheroadagainclassics.com)

## Annual Picnic Saturday, August 28 Joaquin Miller Park, Oakland



Craib Meadow Picnic Area

**You are invited to join fellow MGOC members at our Annual Picnic at Joaquin Miller Park in the Oakland Hills on August 28.**

We'll enjoy the beautiful trees and scenery in the park. A short walk will take you to Lookout Point or the deck of the nearby community center where you can see the entirety of the Bay Area. You can marvel at views of everything from Hayward and San Mateo in the south to the Golden Gate and north to Marin in all of their glory. Be sure to bring cameras and binoculars. Other short walks will take you to the fountains and waterfalls built as community projects in the 1930s - and those alone are worth seeing!

We'll be in the beautiful Craib Meadow Picnic Area, so expect a day of sun or shade - whichever you prefer.

The Club will provide charcoal for grilling and barbecuing. Bring your own favorite food and beverage.

Come as early as 10:30 am and stay around a while. We'll plan on lighting the coals around noon.

There is plenty of parking just across the road, so there is simply no excuse for not joining your fellow club members and enjoying the day!

**Directions:** Take Highway 580 or 24 to 13. Exit 13 at Lincoln / Joaquin Miller Road. Go east on Joaquin Miller Road. Drive uphill a little less than a mile, then turn left onto Sanborn Drive. Enter the Joaquin Miller Park and make your way to Craib Meadow.

# Bertolotti Collection Tour

By J.R. Boye

Since your regular event reporter, Samantha Lee, was aced out of this ride (her normal seat in the Midget (TF) having been commandeered by her mom, Kimberly), your loyal editor approached me to do the write up of the MGOC tour of the Bertolotti collection on July 10.

I've known John Bertolotti for decades, but it had been a long time since I had seen his collection; and I'd never been formally shown around, so this tour was particularly appealing to me when I found out about it. But how to crash the party?

Not having an MG to my name right now (although I drive those owned by others on a daily basis), I decided it would be fun to bum a ride from members traveling in the solo configuration. Bob Stine and Ken Gittings were willing to put up with me, so my plan was complete. Bob paid for his generosity on the trip out with a broken plastic door pull (it just came off in my hand, honest!), but Ken's beautiful GT Special escaped unscathed on the trip home.

Roughly twenty MGs arrived at the Bertolotti building in Santa Clara, which gives no clue from the outside of the treasures that lie within. The layout of the facility we saw, actually only a part of the total collection, consists of two clean and well-lit warehouses joined by a central workshop area. Generally, one side houses the pre-war veterans and the other post-war sports cars. In the workshop area was a rare Turner sports racer in proper British racing green and a maroon Jaguar XK 140 being readied to go to a new owner.

The Jaguar was being sold, John explained, because he couldn't fit into it easily. As we found out, John Bertolotti is not just a collector; he is an enthusiast and a *driver*.

Yes, every car in John's "running" collection gets driven by him personally a few times a year, and he will not keep a car that can't be made to accommodate his proportions. We found out that he is incredibly forthright in his collecting philosophy, and really appreciates fully the attributes of every vehicle. As we were ushered into the "old car room" John began telling us about the cars, but we soon learned a lot about him as a collector as well:

"Pierce Arrows are the best car of their time, much better than the Rolls-Royce." He has at least eight of them on display here. "I hate cars from the classic era - no soul."

"We put modern valves in the engines and step up the rear axle ratios so they can cruise on the freeway. This one (a Pope from about 1916) can do 55 mph."

"The key to this hobby is to out-live the other collectors. Now, as I get older, some of the other younger ones are beginning to think about my cars."

"I bought this one from Phil Hill. He took me on a test drive and said,

supplier, Toulmin Motors in Hounslow (which is close to Heathrow airport). I'd book flights from the continent with a two or three hour layover to a connecting flight leaving Heathrow for the United States. Upon arrival in Heathrow, I'd jump into a black cab and head to Toulmin to pick up preordered parts and then head back to Heathrow and home. Prices, by the way, were substantially less than those of American suppliers.

I even brought a steering wheel home once. Toulmin never had the proper wrapping or packaging material; so when I got to Heathrow with a ratty looking package, a security or customs guy asked what was I carrying. I said a 1949 MG steering wheel. "Don't mind if I take a look, do you," he said. After tearing a hole in the paper wrapping and looking, all he said was "I'll be damned."

The car came with a "Bill of Sale". Unfortunately that did not establish ownership or the right to sell, and was not acceptable to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Motor Vehicles. I contacted Mr. Bagley, who said that the MOT Book had to stay in England. He sent it to me in due course, but said it had to be returned. The Pennsylvania Department of Vehicles accepted it for registration as an antique automobile and provided me with a permanent antique plate and title. They also kept the British MOT book. I never heard further from Mr. Bagley.

The restoration was completed in the spring of 1975. The original color was red, but I chose Clipper Blue. I did that based on cars I had seen at various shows in Pennsylvania and Ohio. On reflection, I should have stayed closer to original but instead, because I wanted it, I had dark blue naugahide upholstery custom made in England through Toulmin Motors. For the carpet, I chose a medium blue, and for the top, I chose white. Since then, I have purchased a complete biscuit colored leather and naugahide interior and black carpets from Moss Motors. They are still in the box.

We moved to California in 1984. Using the permanent Pennsylvania antique car license plates and Pennsylvania registration, I drove the car a bit. The "permanent" antique Pennsylvania registration would probably have presented a problem if I was stopped, but no one seemed to take notice.

I was posted to London toward the end of 1987 for about a year, and then to The Netherlands for a year and a half. Before I left, I built an 18' x 20' detached garage on our lot and put the MG in it with a Model A Ford and most of my tools. If you do not sell or rent your house, or if you keep any memberships or other ties to California when posted abroad, California claims you intended to leave and thus, as far as California is concerned, California lays a tax claim to all your pay (including any foreign assignment pay uplift). So, with everything else in storage, the detached garage locked and nailed shut, the house rented, all memberships cancelled, and both modern cars sold, we left California in 1987. We had no idea if we'd be back to the Bay Area or off to Saudi Arabia or Australia.

The MG TC has not been driven since 1987. I keep promising myself that I'll reassemble the Model A, so I can move it to get the TC out. But, at age 75, that gets less and less likely. Still, there's hope.

# Buying a 1949 MG TC Sight Unseen from England

By Don Malcolm

I have a 1949 MG TC that I restored after importing it sight unseen from England in 1972. I contemplated taking the train from London to Cornwall, but that would have taken a couple of days. At the time I was traveling a lot and did not feel I had that luxury, and the seller sounded genuine. A British accent and a very confident description went a long way. I guess used car dealers are the same the world over. I have a friend whose brother was a used car salesman. My friend says that in all other matters his brother is as honest as can be, but, when selling an automobile, even he does not trust his brother.

The seller was a man from Bude, Cornwall, UK. In describing the TC, he assured me “it was in good nick”. He described the car as having “new tyres, new top, no rust, no rot”. I’ll never forget those words.

I was living in Western Pennsylvania at the time. Mr. Bagley, the seller, assured me that I could fly to Baltimore, go to the dock, and drive the TC about 300 miles back to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Just in case, I fabricated a towing rig using a friend’s TC as a pattern. I fabricated the rig so that I could bolt it onto a TC using the hydraulic damper bolts. That turned out to be fortuitous.

My wife and I drove to Baltimore in a 1968 Ford Country Squire wagon. In the lot at the dock, the first red TC we saw was in a sorry state. My heart sank. Then I realized it was not mine and felt better. We then found ours, which was in worse condition. Driving it 300 miles was certainly not in the cards. The flat tire was the least problem. The broken steering wheel, missing wipers, the right rear fender lying on the tire because the wood was so rotten the fastening screws had pulled out due to gravity, no exhaust system, et cetera, et cetera, caused us to hook up the towing rig. The engine would not start in any case. Surprisingly, we managed to tow it back to Pittsburgh in a snow storm without difficulty. It sat in our driveway the rest of that winter, often covered with snow.

Once home, upon more detailed inspection, I found so much rust and rot that there was not even a trace of wood where it should have been at each side of the cowl. Most other wood was just a worm eaten trace of the original. In the end, I had to replace every part of the body except the fenders, bonnet, and cowl. I found a used tub in surprisingly good condition. I purchased new wood for everywhere else, patched holes, and re-chromed everything. The only parts not redone were the transmission and the differential. At one point, I considered doing nothing to the engine. But I took the head off and, looking down into the cylinders, saw two broken pistons. Thus, a complete engine rebuild ensued.

At the time, I was traveling back and forth to Europe often. I found a

‘Watch this!’ He put the car (a behemoth with artillery wheels) into a four-wheel drift on a clover leaf and scared the \*\*\*\* out of me. I thought the wheels might come apart.”

“This one (a one-of-a-kind Locomobile) I wanted for a long time, but I was out-bid by a guy who paid way too much for it. He started the restoration but didn’t have enough money left to do it to the standard it required. He got extremely discouraged and decided he was sick of the whole process, so he called me one day and said, ‘I never want to see this car again and just want it out of my life,’ and sold it to me for a fraction of what he paid. Later, a friend of mine saw this guy and his wife at the Hershey meet, dressed in dusters, caps, and goggles but no car. I felt just terrible, since I bought his car for so little. So I bought another restored Locomobile from the same era and had it sent to him on the East Coast. I told him it was his for as long as he wanted it; and just to get it back to me when he couldn’t enjoy it any longer.”

“My wife found out about a classic-era car tour that sounded interesting to her, but I told her all my cars were too old to qualify for the run. She said, ‘You’ve got all these cars and not a single one of them can do this drive?’ So I went and bought this 1934 Lincoln (one of three made). After the trip, she lost interest, and I hate the car, so here it sits; \$100,000 for one stupid drive!”

The brass-era room is clearly where John’s heart is. We only spent a few minutes on the other side. On display are four Model T custom racers – one is John’s, the others belong to two of his sons and a nephew. There are a few motorcycles, including a BSA from before the firm was called BSA (Birmingham Small Arms). The sports cars include many Porsches along with Ferraris and other marques. For British fans, there are at least three Austin-Healey Hundreds: “Only the four cylinders - the sixes don’t do anything for me.”

And then there are the MGs: Midgets (TD and TC), MGA Twin-Cam coupe, MGA 1600 ‘Deluxe’ (“There just isn’t a prettier car than the MGA”), a couple of MGBs, and some other odd ones. I forgot to ask if John has any pre-war MG Midgets or saloons stashed away. Every car we saw got driven on a regular basis.

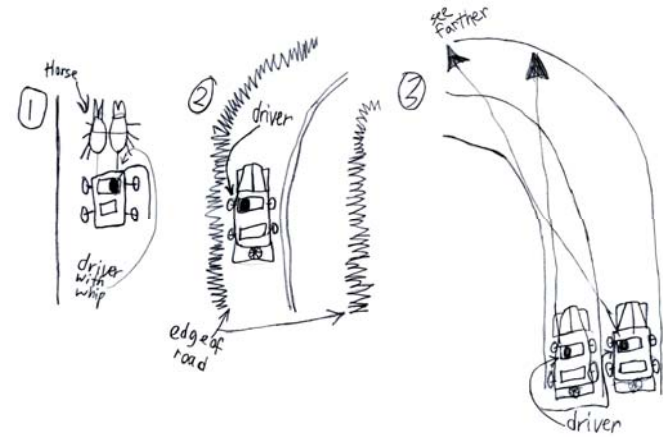
After the collection tour, we took to our cars for a trip to the lunch spot, the landmark Alice’s Restaurant on Skyline Boulevard. The day was on the hotter side, and heavy traffic on Highway 17 and an accident on Highway 9 in Saratoga managed to split the group into small patrols of twos and threes. Still I think everyone made it to the rendezvous. I got to catch up with Gene Roberts at lunch, while in the background Germany beat Uruguay to secure third place in the World Cup. Gene, now 92, was one of the original members of the MGA Club when it got started in 1978. Gene’s nephew, Jim Nylund, is now in charge of the Tyrolite Green MG and was driving with Gene riding as passenger.

So thank you MGOB for hosting a parasite like me. You know how to put on a fun event! And thanks to John Bertolotti for planning the day and letting us take in a truly fabulous display of rare vehicles.

# Why We Sit Left, Drive Right

Article and Illustration by Samantha Lee

My parents went on the skyline tour to see John Bertolotti's antique car collection in San Jose. They brought home pictures of antique cars with brass lanterns to show me. Many of his cars had 4 seats, which would have been better because Stephanie & I could come along. John told them the story of how drivers sit on the left and drive on the right. Drivers with horse carriages would sit on the right & drive on the left so they wouldn't whip their passengers and fight their enemies in the middle of the road. 2. In horseless carriages drivers no longer had a whip and sat on the left to better see the edge of the road and stay on it. 3. When cars got faster, it was safer to drive on the right side of the road because you can see farther up the middle. I hope we can do the drive again next year so I can see the antique car collection.



Samples of the Bertolotti Collection

