

RACER'S BABY TALBOT IS REVIVED



Talbot was given by the factory to racing driver Philippe Étancelin in lieu of money owed



T23 has had just five owners since 1938



Car's flowing lines are typical of the era

"I love the Talbot Lago. It's just a gorgeous piece of art and history in which I can drive all around town"

An historic 1938 Talbot Lago has just broken cover after a full restoration by Wisconsin specialist Bennett Coachworks. The 4-litre T23 Lago Baby was first owned by French racer Philippe Étancelin, who was given it by the factory.

After just one year, 'Phi-Phi' – the oldest driver ever to score world championship points, having taken fifth in the 1950 Italian Grand Prix aged nearly 54 – sold the car. Purchased by Georges Leroy, the

Talbot spent the war hidden from the Nazis behind a wall in a barn.

The Leroy family kept the car until '63 when it was sold to new owners in Milwaukee, USA. It was used occasionally until being put into storage, where it remained until 2010. Then, though running, it was deemed to be in need of a major overhaul and was sent away for the work to be undertaken.

At this point the then-owner sold the car to his nephew Joe Glorioso,

who became only its fifth keeper. Glorioso promptly moved it to Bob Bennett for a "sympathetic" restoration. "I love the car," he says. "It's a gorgeous piece of art and history that I can drive around town."

The Talbot Lago T23 was the range that supplanted the remnants of the Sunbeam-Talbot-Darracq concern when that was taken over by Venice-born engineer Tony Lago in 1935. Initially his cars used the same underpinnings as the

previous models, but were powered by Walter Becchia's 3- or 4-litre straight-sixes – a 2.7-litre option was introduced later – and usually had a Wilson pre-selector gearbox. There were myriad chassis lengths, resulting in the cars' nicknames: Baby, Minor, Major and Master.

Launched in '36, the Baby used the 2950mm wheelbase, and came in a variety of shapes. With a steel body and 4-litre motor producing 105bhp, it could top 90mph.

Transatlantic Lotus Elan



This '67 Lotus Elan S3 SE BRM is believed to be the only left-hand-drive example of just eight or 10 cars converted to full BRM spec by Mike Spence in Maidenhead. Recently discovered in the USA, it's now about to undergo a complete restoration.

Lotus factory archivist Andy Graham has confirmed that the car's first owner, a Mr John Kruse, ordered the Elan as a personal export in June 1967, but it's unknown whether the car was registered here prior to being exported to the USA.

A subsequent owner is known to have been Terry Bennett, a Lotus race mechanic in Westchester, NY, while the BRM was sold to its previous owner in '82, having had some success in Autocross events.

The new keeper, Peter Hartnett, is keen to get in touch with Kruse or Bennett as well as anyone with information about the car's history. E-mail him at: texh47@yahoo.com



Rebuilt Jaguar will be in factory colours



Nice paint, but body poor underneath

Restoration blues for E-type

This 1963 Jaguar E-type is owned by Alister Thompson and still wears its original and distinctive registration number of 280 T00.

The car was first owned by a Mr B Massey of Ingatstone in Essex, having been supplied by Pollards of Chelmsford. Originally silver-blue with a dark blue interior, the car was repainted red in '83 and is believed to have been off the road ever since. There are significant gaps in the Jaguar's history, though – especially the first 20 years.

It is currently undergoing a complete rebuild, which will return it to the factory colour scheme. The first photo shows the car today, midway through its renovation, while on the right it can be seen as acquired by Thompson: "It was in a very sorry state underneath the shiny paint!" E-mail him at athompson@fandcreit.com if you have any history.