



smoke in the wires

November '25

From the President

Paul Reese (pbca1president@gmail.com)

Hello All!

I entered a 1959 Armstrong Siddeley Star Sapphire in the recent South Alabama British Car Festival. It generated a lot of interest [*winning Best of Show-Ed.*] and has some unique features to me and maybe others, so I thought I'd share some information about it.

I hadn't ever heard of Armstrong Siddeleys and in February happened upon one for sale online through a consignment dealer in Andover, Mass. During the negotiations, the owner chose instead to trade the car. That deal fell through and I was able to purchase the car in July. I've been unable to obtain any particular history of the car.



The Armstrong Siddeley (photo courtesy Paul Reese)

Armstrong Siddeley Company Limited was formed in 1919 through the merger of Armstrong Whitworth & Company and Siddeley-Deasy Motor Car Company. Sir W. G. Armstrong started as an engineer and eventually became essentially an industrial magnate. His company built armaments, ships, locomotives, aircraft and Armstrong Whitworth cars. John D. Siddeley started as a draughtsman for a bicycle

company, then became a sales manager for Dunlop and in 1902, Siddeley founded Siddeley Autocar Company. He was knighted in 1932 and was later granted the title of Baron Kenilworth. Armstrong Siddeley ceased automobile production in 1960 when it was absorbed into Rolls Royce. The Armstrong Siddeley Owners Club bought the remaining spares and still maintains a parts store. It is located in Shrewsbury, north-west of Birmingham [*England, not Alabama-Ed.*].

From 1959 to 1960, 980 Star Sapphires were made, 77 of which were long base limousine versions. The car cost £2,646 new, approximately \$103,000 now. (A Jaguar Mark IX was £2,163). Upon joining the Armstrong Siddeley Owners Club, I learned that according to the build sheets, 25 were left-hand drive; eight went to the States, six to Canada, three to the Middle East and eight to Europe.

The car has a 3990cc engine with hemispherical combustion chambers and overhead valves with a 7.5:1 compression ratio. It has a Borg Warner automatic transmission, Girling hydraulics with vacuum assist, front disc brakes, power steering, and this car has Stromberg carburetors. Later cars had Zeniths. It is rated at 165BHP and advertised top speed is 104 mph. It is 16' 2" long and weighs about 3,900 lbs.

Front features include the sphinx bonnet ornament. The mascot was apparently adopted when a car reviewer referred to one of the early models as reminding him of a sphinx. The fender-mounted turn signals are the same as those on a Jaguar XK120. And the vents below the headlights are similarly "Jaguarish." And while many cars have V-shaped grills, these seem to be the most "V-ish."

Under the bonnet, the large air filters transverse the valve cover and are referred to as "air quieters" in the parts manual. The spark plugs are in

(story continues next page)

President's Column, continued

the valve cover center and very deeply recessed. At the top right is a glass container for the washer fluid. (Trivia: In England, fixed-windshield cars were required to have washers in 1934; in the US they were not mandated until 1968).



Under the (long) bonnet (photo courtesy Paul Reese)

On the left of the steering column, you may be able to make out the light on the tip of the turn signal indicator. It blinks when selecting a turn. At the dash lower left is an unmarked button for the washer fluid. The three unmarked red lights to the left of the speedometer indicate high beams on, ignition on, and "choke control," which indicates if the choke is on. The gear lever is operated by pushing the selector forward, rather than pulling in as seems to be the standard in the US. Reverse is all the way to the right, rather than next to Park as again seems to be the custom in the US. And to the right is Intermediate Hold. Moving the lever enables the driver to select any speed between 20 and 65 MPH at which the transmission will change from Intermediate to Top gear.

Pulling out the fog light switch turns on one of the fog lights so you can see the curb; turning and pulling a second time turns on the other "passing" fog light. The gas tank holds 16 gal-

lons, including two gallons in reserve. I now know that when the gas gauge gets to 1/16 remaining, you are going to need the Reserve switch. For anti-theft, one has to know to turn the key and then hit the starter switch. The Radiomobile radio has three bands, MED (medium wave—MW or AM), MCS (essentially short-wave), and an unlabeled band that is probably longwave. The radio's MW band goes from 200 to 500 KHZ which used to work for AM stations but the AM frequencies were changed to 530 to 1600 kHz. So it does not pick up any stations. The radio lights up and makes static, so there's that.



Interior controls (photo courtesy Paul Reese)

Not pictured are the manual sunroof, separate heater controls for the back seat, rear demister, and a full tool and spare parts kit in the boot. Lastly I've located two other owners in the States; both have project cars and one is RHD. There is a LHD for sale in Hungary. Hopefully someday I will make it to one of the owners' club events in England.

Thanks for letting me share some information about the car. I hope everyone has a happy and blessed Thanksgiving, and happy motoring.

Cheers,

Paul Reese, President, PBCA

Activities Calendar

November 11, 2025

Pensacola Beach Veteran’s Day Parade

Assemble at the Quietwater parking lot, across the street from the Elks Lodge, by 11:00 a.m. A complimentary cookout will be available. The cars will be lined up at 1:15 for a 2:00 start.

November 17, 2025

Monthly Club Meeting

Ace's Hangar Southern Grill & Bar, 3966 Avalon Boulevard, Milton, Florida 32583; eat at 6:00, meet at 7:00.

November 21, 2025

Monthly Tech Session

Manske Garage, 10:30-ish.

December 13, 2025

PBCA Christmas Party

Ace’s Hangar, socialize from 5:30 to 6:30, dinner at 6:30, followed by a “Dirty Santa” game. Cost is \$20 per person. If you want to participate in “Dirty Santa,” please bring a gift with a value of \$20 or less.

December 19, 2025

Monthly Tech Session

Manske Garage, 10:30-ish.

November 2025

SU	MO	TUE	WE	TH	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 VET DAY PARADE	12	13	14	15
16	17 CLUB MEETING	18	19	20	21 TECH SESSN.	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 2025

SU	MO	TUE	WE	TH	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
						XMAS PARTY
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
					TECH SESSN.	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Club Resource Directory

With help from many of you, our SABCC/PBCA Resource Directory has been updated. It lists vendors, shops, and other resources both local and outside the region. A copy was sent to everyone on the club email list, but if you for some reason did not receive it, please [contact Ed](#). We have also added it to the [club website](#).

Brits on the Bay 2026

The 2026 edition of the PBCA car show will be held **April 18, 2026** in Seville Square in downtown Pensacola. The pre-show dinner will be April 17 at the nearby Museum of Commerce. Show registration and sponsorship forms are now available on the [club website](#).

smoke in the wires

is a publication of the Panhandle British Car Association and is published monthly for the benefit of PBCA members. Permission to use this material by other British car club publications is granted provided credit is given to **smoke in the wires**.



Address comments or submissions to **Michael King**, Editor, at smokeinthewires@gmail.com.

Membership in PBCA is open to anyone with an interest in classic or modern British cars, and dues are only \$20 per year. To join, visit www.pbca1.com.



The MG Car Clubs from Ottawa and Toronto invite you to

MG103Fest.

Join us for a weekend of fun and camaraderie in scenic Gananoque.

Gananoque is located in the Thousand Islands near the US border.

This weekend gathering of MGs is open to all enthusiasts.

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Tailgate Pizza Party

Group Scenic Tour

MG Car Show

Pub & Trivia Night

tinyurl.com/mg103fest

AUGUST 14-16, 2026



GANANOQUE

PBCA Club Officers

President	Paul Reese
Vice President	Paul Salm
VP/ Activities	Tim Witzigreuter
Secretary	Monica Bachmann
Treasurer	Karen Ianniello
Technical Director	George Bruno
Membership	Tim Garrold
Webmaster	Mike Japp
Communications	Michael King
Public Relations	Tom Schmitz
Parliamentarian	Taber Tompkins
Show Chair	Fred Veenschoten

Tight Connections

Club and Member News

SABCC British Car Festival

The South Alabama British Car Club held its 35th annual British Car Festival (BCF) on October 18, and PBCA members once again did very well. PBCA president **Paul Reese** took home top honors with his 1959 Armstrong Siddeley Star Sapphire, and **Fred Veenschoten** was honored for his commitment to classic car restoration with the Wilson Preservation Award.

PBCA members also did well in the class trophy voting. Those winners were:

- “Bugeye” Sprites, First Place: **Tom Schmitz**, 1959 Austin-Healey Bugeye Sprite
- Jaguar Classic Saloons, Second Place: **Joe Stephens**, 1985 Jaguar XJ6
- Jaguar Modern Sports, Third Place: **Tom Schmitz**, 2012 Jaguar XKR
- MG Pre-War and T-Series, Third Place: **Bob Manske**, 1955 MGTF 1500
- MGB and MGC Roadsters, 1962-1974, Third Place: **Keith Sanders**, 1969 MGC Roadster
- New Millenium, First Place: **Dwyke Rushing**, 2010 Aston Martin V8 Vantage
- Lotus, Second Place: **Taber Tompkins**, 2007 Caterham 7SV
- Morgan, First Place: **Fred Veenschoten**, 1935 Morgan Sports
- Large Britannia Saloons, Pre-2000, First Place: **Paul Reese**, 1959 Armstrong Siddeley Star Sapphire
- Motorcycles, Second Place: **Bob Manske**, 2012 Triumph T-100 Bonneville

In addition to the car awards, Fred was “Top Gun” in the valve cover racing, with the fastest racer on the track, and **Bill Weeks’** valve cover was deemed “Best Looking.”

Congratulations to all our PBCA winners and participants (after all, everyone made it home)!



Top, **Fred Veenschoten** accepts the Wilson Preservation Award from BCF chair Peter Lee; bottom, Fred's 3-wheelers at the show (top photo by SABCC's Robb Ogletree, bottom by **Donna Eagleson**)

BCF Photos



Top left, **Bob Manske** waits on his motorcycle at the check-in point, while **Jack Cowsill**, driving Bob's MGTF, gets the TF's packet; middle left, **Keith Sanders' MGTC**; bottom left, **Paul Reese** accepts the Richard B. Cunningham Best of Show trophy from Peter Lee; top right, **Taber Tompkins** in his Caterham; upper middle right, **Donna Weeks** with her and **Bill's MGTF**; ; lower middle right, a fuel stop; bottom right, **Mike Japp** takes photos (top left photo by **Donna Eagleson**; bottom right by **Robb Ogletree, SABCC**; others by **Gail Sanders**)



BCF 2025 Major Award Winners



From top, **Paul Reese's** 1959 Armstrong Siddeley Star Sapphire, **Jim O'Brien's** 1998 Morgan Plus 8, **Jack and Cheryl Wade's** 1966 E-Type FHC, and **Hunter Fike's** 2006 Lotus Elise.

Auction Roundup: BCF Winners

How are the models that won the BCF doing at auction?

1960 Armstrong Siddeley (Best of Show)



Sold for £16,000 (\$21,000) at Mathewsons (UK)

In "lovely" condition, 79k miles, running well, and with only a bit of patina, this car met pre-auction estimates.

1988 Morgan Plus (Pastor's Pick)



Sold for \$49,650 on Bring a Trailer

Finished in Deep Brunswick Green over tan leather, this 23k mile car was in fine condition. Well bought.

1966 Jaguar E-Type FHC (Next Generation)



Sold for \$110,000 on Hemmings

Offering "show-quality" paint, an updated interior, a rebuilt engine with 15k miles on the clock, a 5-speed conversion and other performance upgrades, this fine car brought top money – which it deserved.

2006 Lotus Sport Elise (Kids Choice)



Sold for \$49,000 on Bring a Trailer

One of only 50 Sport Elises delivered to the US in 2006, this 11K-mile Saffron Yellow over black and yellow car had no issues.

October Tech Session

story and photos by *Tim Witzigreuter*

This month's "Tech Day" at the Manske garage was attended by many. Work was done on **Jack and Sarah Cowsill's** TR6 and **Bob and Risa Manske's** TF. I got two lift-a-dot studs mounted in the rear of the cockpit of my MGB to secure the straps of my half-tonneau. **Paul Reese** and others worked on the trebuchet for the Autojumble Valve Cover Launch [*with mixed success, at least at first-Ed.*].



Top, some attendees worked, while others ate; bottom, that's Jack in the navy blue shirt, his TR6 at the lift, and his transmission on the floor

While on a test drive, **Doug Basiger's** TR6 experienced a flat rear passenger tyre as it pulled in-

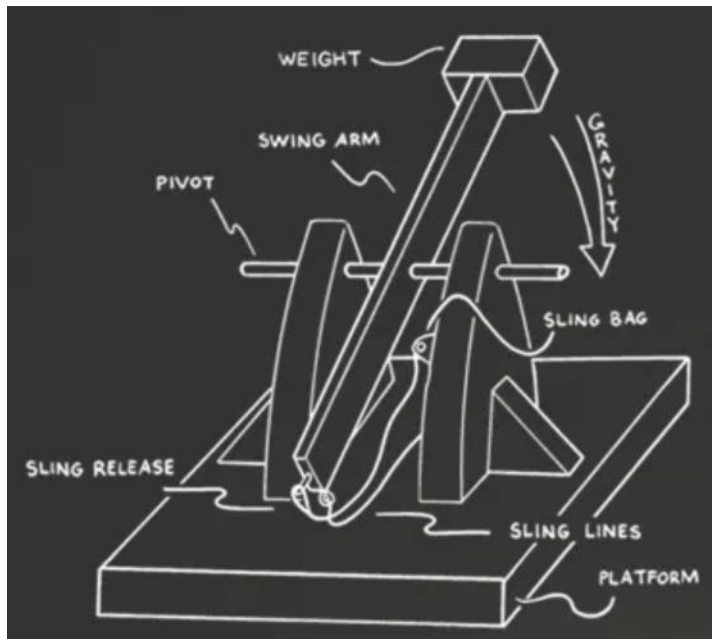
to the driveway at the garage. We were able to get the car into the garage and remove the flat tire. Jack and his friend Aaron took Doug and his tire home since he had no spare. The tube was found to be leaking air at the base of the valve. Looking at the positive aspect, at least it



Not long after this photo was taken, several owners chose to relocate their cars to get them out of the line of trebuchet "fire," including Ed. (white Jaguar XJR)

happened at the garage instead of on the highway on the way home!

We all, as usual enjoyed doughnuts, coffee, **Monica Bachmann's** baked pig shots, laughter and camaraderie.



In case you're wondering, here are the essential component of a trebuchet (Wired.com)

Gulf Coast Autojumble

Forty-three members and friends of PBCA and SABCC attended the Gulf Coast Autojumble, held Nov. 2 at **Tom Schmitz's** "Garagemahut" in Elberta, Ala. **Tim Witzigreuter** reports that "lots of parts, magazines, and other things [were] being sold for many different marques and years by six or seven folks." The event also featured a valve cover launch event, as chronicled on the next page by **Jack Cowsill**.

Herein we present a few photos for those who were unable to attend as well as those who wish to relive the day.



Above, and top right, shopping the wares; upper middle right, **Tom Schmitz** visits with, from left, SABCC members **Dave** and **Pat Couling** and **Kathy McNamara**; lower middle right, **Donna Eagleson** with **Noel's** daughter **Leslie**; bottom right, **Fred Veenschoten's** Morgan and **Tim Witzigreuter's** MGB (lower middle photo by **Paul Reese**, bottom right photo by **Tim Witzigreuter**, others by **Donna Eagleson**)

World Record Valve Cover Launch

story by *Jack Cowsill*

In an incredible engineering feat, the world record distance record for a British valve cover launched by a trebuchet was established at 28' 2." It occurred during the annual British Autojumble 2 Nov at **Tom Schmitz's** Hut. It was witnessed by a crowd in the tens. Gasps of "woah!," "is that going to hit my truck?," and "is there any more ranch dip?" were heard.

This accomplishment effectively ends the search for valve covers going to where no valve cover



The trebuchet in action (photo courtesy *Jack Cowsill*)

has gone before, And it eclipses all previous episodes of British valve covers racing, floating, diving, and flying.

This all came about during discussions about how to launch a valve cover into space. Sadly, it became a conflict when it was learned that there was a SpaceX launch scheduled during the 2 Nov Autojumble. Undeterred, **Eddie Toenes** and **Bob Willsie** conceived of an engine lift trebuchet. Subsequently, much time was invested into how to spell and say trebuchet, and wiping ourselves off after **Bob Manske's** pronunciation attempts.

An initial prototype was developed and demonstrated during a club tech event. Many potatoes were impacted into what is now known as the Manske Milton Potato Farm LLC.

An operational version was developed and the trebuchet was erected at the World Famous Hut in Elberta Ala. Tensions were high due to multiple inadvertently mashed potatoes during test events. **John Stephens** graciously provided a MGA starter as an additional counter weight. The first launch with a valve cover turned out to be the record-breaking result.

A special thanks to all that assisted with the design and development, especially **Taber Tompkins** for bringing donuts.

And to Bob Manske who "donated" multiple pieces to the trebuchet. Also to Tom Schmitz



Our "sponsor," without whom this glorious achievement would not have been possible.

for allowing the use of his newly-designated Hut Launch Pad #1." And finally to our sponsor, 3M Duct Tape.

Wiring Diagrams

Tech, Tools, and Tips

A Quick Guide to Automotive Elastomers

story by Rodney McDonald, SABCC

The owner of a vintage car will, at some point their ownership, have to replace rubber items on their car. Whether it's aging due to heat or light exposure or by material breakdown from normal service, nearly all rubber compounds have a finite service life.

While this guide is not a comprehensive one, it should help you understand the intended service for these materials (called "elastomers" in the trade) by their common or their trade-marked names.

BUNA or **NITRILE** has a useful service temperature range of -65°F to $+250^{\circ}\text{F}$. It is useful for alcohols, petroleum oils and gasoline. It is not good for acids or ketones.

NEOPRENE is not normally found in services where oils and gasolines would be used. It can be used for weather seals and similar trim. It has a useful service temperature range of 0°F to $+175^{\circ}\text{F}$.

BUTYL has similar characteristics as Neoprene, but it does well in services where it is exposed to ultraviolet light and ozone. Its service temperature range is -30°F to $+300^{\circ}\text{F}$.

VITON can be thought of as an elastomer version of Teflon. It is a "fluoronated elastomer" and works well in gasoline, oils, other hydrocarbons and solvents. Viton is expensive, but is usually a "once and done" product. Its operating temperature range is -40°F to $+450^{\circ}\text{F}$.

HYPALON is a member of the polyethylene family and it is good with sunlight exposure

and resist weathering. It can be used with petroleum products. It has a useful temperature range of -30°F to $+250^{\circ}\text{F}$.

SILICONES are useful in hot oil service and can be found in many engine gaskets. It can be used in temperatures as high as $+600^{\circ}\text{F}$ intermittently, but its normal useful range is -100°F to $+450^{\circ}\text{F}$.

So, what if you find some unknown black rubber material in your hoard of miscellaneous garage goodies that you really can't identify but can't bring yourself to throw away? There is a way to determine what family of elastomers it may belong to by using a copper wire and a butane torch.

Copper pyrolysis is a simple test to see what you might have on hand. Heat your copper wire with your torch until it glows. Take the glowing wire and touch the rubber in question. Allow it to melt a bit of it on the copper wire. Avoid inhaling any vapors that might be created. Take the goo-coated wire and heat it with your torch until it burns on its own. The resulting flame color will help determine what the rubber in question could be:

- Green flame: Likely Neoprene or Hypalon
- Orange flame: Likely EPDM (ethylene propylene diene monomer, a type of synthetic rubber that is commonly used across many industries)
- No flame: Likely Viton or silicone

Classifieds

1974 Jensen Healey



Two cars that I turned into one with spare parts. Structural metal work, including new floor pans, completed by BMC Restorations in Kiln, MS. Includes hard top, Dellorto manifold, new aftermarket seats, and installed, complete AC system. Needs light bodywork and paint; ran when restoration began but not operated in over ten years. \$5,000 invested, asking best offer.

Cortland Musgrave

504-559-4960

heytony9999@hotmail.com

1962 Bentley S2 Rolls-Royce Engine

[The 1962 Bentley used a V8 engine with a displacement of 6231cc (380ci), developing 185 hp and 339 lb.-ft. of torque-Ed.]

Bill Everett

251-510-8999

1961 Triumph TR4



This TR4 underwent a comprehensive restoration and modernization by the late **David Roloson**, a dedicated club member. The frame-off restoration was completed over four years, from 2011 to 2015. Below are the details:

- Rebuilt 2,138cc inline-four (from 1965 TR4A)
- 4 Speed (from 1965 TR4A)
- Front disk brakes (Toyota 4-piston calipers on TR6 Brackets)
- 10 1/2 Inch drilled and slotted brake rotors
- Stainless steel brake lines
- All suspension pieces are new
- All glass is new
- Lights are LED or Halogen
- Battery relocated to trunk with cutoff switch
- Custom paint is 1993 Porsche mint green and Boulevard Black base/clear coat – 3 coats color & 3 coats clear
- Custom interior by River Rags Coden, AL



The TR4 is now available for purchase at \$16,000.

Miller Roloson

(615)-332-1787

1951 Jaguar XK 120 FHC

The time has come for me to try to sell my 1951 Jaguar XK 150 FHC. It was fully restored 1988 – 2005 and was in storage from 1990 – 2005. I purchased it in 2009 (see full story in July 2024 *Spark & Spanner*). It has been repowered with a 5-liter (302 ci) Ford V8 engine and has a 5-speed manual transmission. I have added air conditioning (heat and cool), disc brakes on front, 60-spoke chrome knockoff wire wheel with hubs, bushings, seals and bearings. It has black leather seats. The car is in great shape and ready for a new home. Asking **\$100,000**; highly negotiable!

Bill Cashion

704-500-4843



Car Hauler Trailer

16 foot Dual Axle Steel Trailer with Electric Winch. Measures 74 inches wide (inside measurement). Includes 4 tire hold down straps. Electric Mile Marker 8000 lb. winch and battery are included. Also includes one spare tire. \$2600 or best offer.

Monica Bachmann

(850) 217-1765 (call or text)



Wire Nut

Michael King, Editor, "Smoke in the Wires"

~~We've Always Done It This Way~~

Do you know who invented the digital camera? Or who built the first prototype quartz watch? If you didn't guess "Kodak" and "the Swiss watch industry," you'd be incorrect.

That's right – an engineer at Kodak, named Steven Sasson, invented the digital camera in 1975. And the Swiss, the world leaders in watchmaking, had an early lead in quartz watch technology. However, Kodak was doing very well with film and the Swiss built the world's finest mechanical watches, so others would take these innovations and run with them.

When I joined SABCC in 2009, its British Car Festival (BCF) was held at the Fairhope beach, north of the pier. The show did well to attract 80 or 90 cars, and net income was modest. Now, the BCF registers about 150 cars each year, and its proceeds allow the club to host the annual John Twist seminar and other activities throughout the year.

Some of the changes were forced on the club. The City of Fairhope changed its policies, which required a move from the beach. After a few years at its next home on the state college campus, construction of an amphitheater meant moving to Fairhope Methodist. However, this proved serendipitous, as the church, with its large, shaded parking areas, dining hall, restrooms, and other amenities, is an outstanding



Steven Sasson with his invention (Kodak.com)

show site.

Other changes have been intentional, and have served to make the BCF better each year. Developing three sponsorship levels has increased income. Pushing pre-registration has eliminated lines on Saturday morning, and allowed the club to better lay out the field. Valve cover racing was reintroduced to great acclaim, and this year's new digital timing system (thanks, Bob Zabzdyr) means no more disputes. Don Pritchett's Kids' Choice award is so popular that children now come looking for him to vote for their favorite cars, just as they did the year(s) before, and Peter Lee involves youth with the Next Generation voting.

As registrar for the BCF, and PBCA's Brits on the Bay, I am pleased that both clubs have allowed me to introduce new ideas along the way. I use an Excel spreadsheet to capture entrants' information, and that allows me to produce a printed windscreen card for each vehicle; laminating these protects them from the elements. I have also automated the results report with that spreadsheet, meaning that I can produce a full list of first, second, and third place winners in all the classes within about 30 minutes of the votes being counted. This year, we had the both the SABCC and PBCA results ready before 3:00.

But other members have introduced new and innovative ideas. I mentioned the Twist seminar; that resulted from SABCC President Ben Cummings reaching out to John to see about setting up an opportunity while he makes his annual winter pilgrimage to the Gulf beaches. **Noel Eagleson** introduced the "Autojumble" idea about eight or nine years ago; it's now one of SABCC and PBCA's most popular events.

So, the next time someone suggests something new, be careful about saying "we've always done it this way." Kodak declared bankruptcy in 2012, brought down by a technology it invented.

PANHANDLE BRITISH CAR ASSOCIATION

2025 "Brits on the Bay" All British Car Show

PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR SPONSORS

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Prof. Emma G. Plum

Root's Rod Shop

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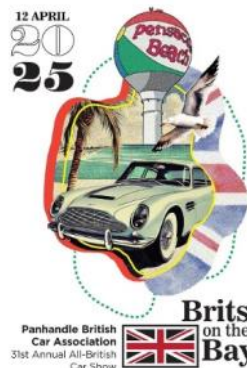
Security Engineering

The Paint Mart

Tim and Cindy Witzigreuter

Victor's Gym/Max Fit Nutrition

Willow Studios



Just one more thing, please . . .



Just another (albeit very nice) Bugeye up for auction, right? Not exactly. This car, *listed on Bring a Trailer*, is a \$100k Bugeye. That's right, "a refurbishment commissioned in the late 2000s cost more than \$100k and was conducted by The Motorway of Fort Collins, Colorado." Among its many upgrades, the car has a supercharged 1275 and a five-speed. The acronym "GLWTA" (good luck with the auction) is particularly apt.

