



VANTAGE

Summer Fall 2010



Pro Atlantic Cars at Westwood's Hairpin 1976 (Tom Johnston photo)

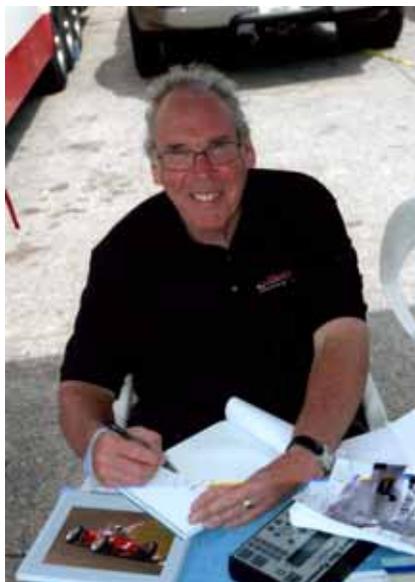


Big changes in the format of Vantage starting with this issue!

Now that Stan Guy has reinvented the VRCBC website (www.vrcbc.ca) so effectively, the respective management boards (Tom and Stan) of the two organs have met and decided who will publish what.

Simply put; the website will publish time sensitive material such as race results, meeting notices, classified ads and the like, while Vantage will continue to produce its range of trivia and opinion concerning the history of motor sport and the industry in Canada and abroad. Mike Tate will continue with his interesting 'Tate A Tate' column and I will continue with my completely useless motor sport trivia items. Joining our crew this issue is Robin Fairservice former co-editor of the SCCBC Pit Pass (those guys have no clue what a Jowett automobile is anyway).

Also new for this issue is this column: Geezer Central which will be a place for my opinions on our sport. The column is so named because of the popular Geezer Central facility at the BCHMR each year and because—well—because I am.



Ross de St. Croix photo

Your Editor at Work

You can contact me at tomjohnston@shaw.ca or by phone at 604 922 2722 Thanks for reading Tom Johnston

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BCHMR Thoughts

Well the 2010 BCHMR is in the history books. The bottom line has yet to be announced by our treasurer Bruce Jamieson but I don't think there is any doubt that we lost money. The major problem was a disappointing number of entries, especially from the US (but Canadian entries continue to grow). The weather was perfect resulting in a record setting gate.

Here are my thoughts on what we should do for future events.

- Stick with the date. It is becoming a tradition and the good weather brings in a big gate. The gate is becoming a significant source of revenue.
- Without harming our relationship with SOVREN work on ways to increase Canadian entries.
- Accept the fact that we will likely have fewer US entrants in the future due to exchange rates, anti-terrorism and other cross-border issues.
- Get event write-ups in Canadian magazines.
- Keep it fun as it always has been.

President's Message

Well, looking back on my comments in the last Vantage, I see that some of my predictions have come true - unfortunately, the most significant is that our American friends have not come out of the recession as quickly as we all hoped. That fact plus the challenges arising from being the third SOVREN points race of three successive race weekends – particularly since the first two races had several accidents - meant that many of our regulars did not enter the British Columbia Historic Motor Races (BCHMR) in July. Despite the fact that the Canadian contingent was the best ever, those good ole American dollars did not flow north as expected, and so, since the costs were still there, we unfortunately have taken a chunk out of our reserves.

But that was the only thing that did not work out with the BCHMR. Absolutely everything else was exceptional, including the weather. The VRCBC organization supported by SCCBC, CACC, META and the volunteers was excellent. Alan Donaldson's registration team was on top of everything, Keith Robinson pitted everyone with great skill, and the races ran on time throughout the weekend.

Vince Howlett and his able group of announcers kept everyone very well informed about the cars and racers, often telling tales some of us might prefer be forgotten..... The wonderful program produced by Patrick Stewart will be a cherished keepsake as will all of the regalia marketed by Bruce Jamieson and his team. The Car Corral and Parade organized by Wes Stinson provided some wonderful photo ops.

The formal banquet

coordinated by Leigh Anderson was a great success, and the entertainment provided by Red Greenflag and Don Cherrybomb, strongly supported by a certain very tolerant, Swedish redhead named Greta is unlikely to be forgotten by anyone who was there. I know I won't!

Gio Colleta and Ed Clements brought back great memories of Westwood's Clubhouse parties, with their fabulous Mike Burgers and great smiles. I was glad neither one of them expired from the heat! Tom Johnston's Geezer Central was the constant meeting spot for all the past racers and VIP's who came along. Taisto Heinonen and George Chapman, two of Canada's former rally and race champions, and both members of the Motorsports Hall of Fame, honoured us with their presence.

Mayor James Atebe added to the profile of the event with his presence on Saturday, and his words in support of the importance of the BC Historic Motor Races, and of Mission Raceway in general, to the District of Mission.

Many folks supported Tony Morris Junior and the Children's Charity by contributing to the VIP rides. And we also thank Tony for looking after our Westwood Group entrants.

But the highlight for me was Sunday's Opening Ceremonies. After following the Pipe Band to the start finish line and hearing Bruce Banman's powerful renditions of the national anthems, the Harvard roared in low over the treetops, chilling all of us. But especially affected was Al Ores, who told us later that his immediate impulse was to look for a place to hide, being instantly reminded of his experiences as a



child in wartime Europe.

Event Chairman Ian Wood and everyone else who contributed to the weekend deserve to feel very proud. I have never received so many congratulations and thank yous from so many people about the racing, grid arrangements, food, regalia, and on and on. I accepted those thanks on behalf of everyone involved.

Our many friends in the press provided us with excellent coverage both before and after the BCHMR. I think we have more photos of the event than ever. Be sure to check our website for all the links. Thanks to all.

The BCHMR was followed up by a solid showing at the Children's Charity Grand Prix in August. The BCHMR and the CCGP realized my other prediction; that we would have the most competitive racing ever. Never have so many cars had such close performance.

There is only one more race to go on October 10th, followed by the Gala on November 20th. Then we are into planning for 2011. It has been a great year so far.



British Columbia
HISTORIC
MOTOR
RACES

July 16/18, 2010
"The Canadian Motor Sport Experience"

Photo Feature



Paul Bonner

Event Chairman Ian Wood, VRCBC President Jim Latham and SCCBC President Keith Robinson cut the ribbon to open the event



Paul Bonner

World War Two Harvard Aircraft Fly Over to remind us of the airport racing roots of our sport



Paul Bonner

Pipes at Opening Ceremony



Gerry Frechette

Closed Wheel Pre Grid



Gerry Frechette

Tidy Lineup



Gerry Frechette

Formula Vee (briefly) Leads the Pack



Gerry Frechette

That's Better



Gerry Frechette

Player's/GM Motorsport Camaro



Gerry Frechette

Those Pesky Volvos



Gerry Frechette



Gerry Frechette



Gerry Frechette

Another Volvo



Gerry Frechette

You Have to Love Those Minis



Gerry Frechette

Exhibition Class



Gerry Frechette

Just Like the Westwood Days



Gerry Frechette

Very Pretty Alfa

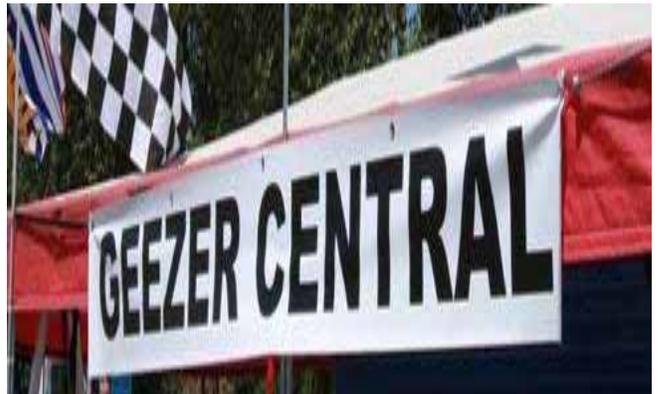


Gerry Frechette

It is a TVR



Gerry Frechette



Gerry Frechette

Dr. Claire Wilson - the father of Westwood



Wilson Buckler-MG Special, 1958 (SCCBC Archives)

Courtesy of the Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society

Dr. Claire Chester Wilson MD, Chief of Surgery at Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster, was vice president and then president of the Sports Car Club of British Columbia (SCCBC) during the period of time (1958-1959) that the club developed the legendary road racing circuit Westwood. Wilson provided leadership at a critical time for the sport in the Vancouver area and could be said to be the father of Westwood. Dr. Wilson was also a racer and special builder and an active participant in all other affairs of the sport.

Claire Wilson was born in 1913 in Calgary, Alberta where he received his elementary and secondary education but went to Winnipeg, Manitoba for his medical training. After graduation from medical school, he moved to Vancouver where he interned at Vancouver General

Hospital and met his wife to be, a nurse named Edith. During World War Two Wilson was on loan to the Royal Navy, and he served in the Indian Ocean, Burma and Mediterranean theatres of war.

Claire's motorsport career began with a 1929 Indian motorcycle while he was still in the Prairies. After the war he acquired another Indian, this time with a side-car, followed by a Chevrolet then



Dr. Claire Wilson - 1958

a Chrysler and finally his first sports car, an Austin A90 Atlantic.

Organized sports car racing in the Western Canada began at Abbotsford Airport in 1950, run by the group that would eventually become the SCCBC. Wilson's name turns up in the results of the SCCBC race at Abbotsford, October 10, 1954 where he finished 10th in the features Le Mans race driving an Austin Healey. Apparently, the Healey didn't have enough power, so its four cylinder motor was replaced by Jaguar six (purchased from another motorsport pioneer Jim Rattenbury). A series of other sports cars followed, including a Jaguar



Jag Healey

engined AC Aceca. By the late 1950s, Wilson had constructed a very potent special based on a British Buckler chassis employing MG running gear and a Mistral glass fibre body. Wilson had a complete machine shop in his New Westminster home, and he knew how to use it.

When Westwood opened, Wilson purchased a memorable car, a Lotus 17 1500cc Climax, sports racing car, state of the art at the time. Surprisingly, Wilson rarely raced the car himself but made it available to several other SCCBC drivers at the time. The most notable drive in the car's history was when the famous Belgian sports car racer Olivier Gendebien visited Westwood in May of 1960 and set a new outright circuit record during a four lap demonstration.



Doc Wilson with Jag Engine



Wilson and Buckler MG



Wilson *right* Westwood opens

Footnote

The Wilson Lotus 17 still exists today and is owned and cared for by VRCBC member Robin Marshall. After a recent restoration the car appeared at the 2009 VRCBC HMR to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first race at Westwood.

This particular 17 is quite famous amongst Lotus fans as it is the sole remaining 17 that retains the sliding strut suspension as originally built (one of Colin Chapman's less successful efforts) and is the only one to have raced in period with the 1460cc Climax FWB engine.



Wilson Lotus 17 at 2009 HMR at Mission

Robin Fairservice on Jowett Automobiles



Robin Fairservice

Tiller Steered 1913 model

Jowett cars are not common in BC, but some 412 Jowett Javelin sedans were sold in Canada, and quite a number of Jowett Jupiters found a home over this side of the Atlantic. Now there are two Jupiter's in the Vancouver area and my 1950 Javelin in Prince George. Many people have never heard of this company, and of course it is not known that the Jowett company had a motor sport history.

Benjamin and William Jowett were born and lived in Bradford, Yorkshire, England, and they founded the Jowett Motor Manufacturing Company in 1901. Their initial aim was to develop a quieter engine without the vibrations that afflicted most engines at that time. Their first engine was a water cooled 55° V-twin that met their objectives. This engine

was put into existing cars as, replacement for 6 hp De Dion and 6.5 hp Aster engines and also sold as a stationary engine.

Finally in 1906 their first prototype car was made and registered for road use. Its development was delayed because they had contracted to build some prototype motor cycles for Angus Scott. It wasn't until 1910 that their first production car was made and sold. Their early cars were steered using a tiller, although other manufacturers had given up this method of steering. The engine in this car was a water cooled flat twin four stroke with an RAC rating of 6.5 hp. Jowetts had decided to concentrate on the manufacture of light cars, that weren't just smaller versions of large cars, and were definitely not cyclecars.

After the First World War, the company's name was changed to Jowett Cars Ltd., but the company continued to manufacture cars with their 907 cc flat twin engine. The cars were manufactured with short and long chassis to suit two or four seat bodies. Convertibles were offered and the short chassis two seat convertibles were a little bit sporting. An owners club was formed in 1923 and the present Jowett Owners Club is the successor to this club making it the oldest one make owners car club in the world. Long distance trials were popular then as a means of proving the reliability of cars. Jowetts entered a 336 mile London to Holyhead event in May 1921 which was completed without problems. The company also entered cars in the popular Six Day Scottish trial for many years.

In 1926 the company accepted a challenge to provide two cars to make a crossing of Central Africa. No vehicles had crossed before, and the two 7 hp long chassis cars completed the crossing of 3,800 miles in 60 days, of which eleven were rest days. The overall fuel consumption was better than 30 mpg! A car also lapped the Brooklands track for 12 hours in 1928 to set a new class record of 54.64 mph. A number of motorists competed in Hill Climbs to good effect. During the 1930s the cars got heavier

and there were fewer entries into sporting events.

Towards the end of the Second World War, Jowetts hired a designer from the MG Car Company, Gerald Palmer to design a completely new family sedan car. This was the Javelin which went into production in 1948 with a new flat four push rod OHV engine. In January 1949 several Javelins were entered in the Monte Carlo Rally and they finished first and third in the 1100 to 1500 cc class. Following this success Javelins were entered in the Belgian Spa 24 hour race for touring and sports cars. A Javelin driven by Tom Wisdom and Anthony Hume finished ahead of all of the two litre and four litre touring cars!

In 1950, the Jupiter sports car version of the Javelin had been announced so a car was entered in the Le Mans 24 hour Sports Car Race. Driven by Tom Wisdom and Tommy Wise that car won the 1500 cc class, averaging 75.8 mph, and broke the class distance record that had been held by Aston Martin since 1935.

Again a Jupiter won the 1500 cc Class at the 1951 Le Mans as well as in the Tourist Trophy race at Dunrod in Northern Ireland. Jupiters



Le Mans Class Winner

Robin Fairservice



1953 Jowett Jupiter

Robin Fairservice

were successful in the 1951 Monte Carlo rallying winning their class and a joint sixth place. The International Lisbon Rally saw an outright victory for a Jupiter and in the RAC Tourist Trophy race at Dunrod a Jupiter won its class. A Jupiter won the Queens Catharine Montour Cup for 1500 cc cars at Watkins Glen

In 1952 a Scandinavian Rally was won by a Javelin, and the Ladies Cup in the RAC Rally was one by a Javelin, a Jupiter was sixth in the Tulip International Rally and a Jupiter won the International Lisbon Rally in Portugal. A Jupiter also won the 1500cc class at Le Mans in 1952 making it the class winner for three consecutive years. In addition many private owners competed in Jupiters and Javelins in national and international events, including in the USA. There was a National Fuel Economy Run in the UK over 828 miles and a Javelin

finished as Best Car Overall with a fuel consumption of 67.8 mpg.

The factory continued to enter Javelins and Jupiters in competitions in 1953, but at the end of that year car production ceased. In the RAC Rally a Javelin finished first in class and Jupiters were first and third in the 1500 cc Governor's Cup race at Phoenix, Arizona. The last sporting fling was a new Jupiter R4 which appeared at the 1953 London Motor Show but only three were ever made. This had a revised engine and chassis with a glass fibre body. Private owners continued to compete in rally and race events in Europe and North America for some years, and there are people still racing Jupiters in Historic races in the USA and New Zealand. In 1953, a factory Jupiter was capable of 115 mph, but probably the fastest Jowett car was a special built in 1949 by Arthur Wylie in Australia.

Mike Tate's 'Tate á Tate'

Let's Butcher the British Brands or at least sell them off to foreign investors! . . . *Why not?*



Cecil Kimber's Octagon The Mark of the MG Brand

The total insanity of British Leyland in the mid sixties and subsequently is hard to comprehend! What were those gin soaked expense account wallas doing? Playing God, or perhaps the Devil more likely, with sacred British brands like M.G. and Austin Healey to name but two?

The legacy they had at their finger tips was manifold and the very backbone of the British Motor Corporation ~ British Leyland as it subsequently became known. Even if it took forty odd years to become a dying edifice the automobile brand cancer started in the sixties and *if*

you can follow the bouncing ball this is the way it went:

The MG marque was in continuous use, barring the years of the Second World War, for 56 years after its inception in 1924. Production of predominantly fun and at times competitive two-seater sports cars was concentrated at the factory in Abingdon, 10 miles south of Oxford. The British Motor Corporation (BMC) competition department was also based at the Abingdon plant and produced many winning rally and race cars. In the autumn of 1980, however, the Abingdon factory was closed

and MGB production ceased.

It should never have ceased . . . Never! Revival and brand resuscitation is more difficult than continuation and it beleaguers a brand which often ends up in the hands of folks who have as much understanding of the marques as I have of quantum physics! Umm . . . let me see now . . . wave particle duality you say . . . one can measure the position alone of a moving free particle creating an eigenstate of position with a wave-function that is very large dirac delta at a particular position x and zero everywhere else. Well hell you know what I mean!

But wait . . . Let's go on with the story.

Between 1982 and 1991,



MG TCs doing what they did to win the hearts of post war America ~ RACE!

the MG marque/badge *was In fact 'revived'* ~ *doesn't it sound like a product in the E.R. already!* ~ Mainly the revival involved sportier versions of some of Austin/Rover's saloon productions. After an interval of barely one year, the MG marque was **revived again**, this time by production of the MG RV8, essentially an updated MGB Roadster using the Rover V8 engine ~ originally an Oldsmobile design. This MG was only produced in small volumes however. I don't know for the life of me how you make a profit from low production numbers on a mass production line unless of course you price yourself out of the market!

The "real" revival, as history calls it, came in the summer of 1995, when the high volume MGF was launched. This was an instant hit with buyers, and sold in volumes which had been unthinkable on affordable two-seaters since the 1970s. *Duh!* Yes, volume plus good product equals success! *Time for the money sharks to bite!*

Now keep watching the bouncing ball very carefully. . . The MG marque passed, along with the Rover brand to the MG/Rover group in May 2000, now essentially a



Austin Healy 4000 Prototyope

Tom Johnston collection

BMW brand! BMW split up the MG/Rover marques which saw the return of MG badges on sportier Rover cars yet again ~ *not MGs at all though!* ~ Brand confusion you betcha!!) and a revised MG F model, known as the MG TF (*Sorry, but that's more than just a little confusing as there was one of those in the fifties!*) launched in 2002. What have we been smoking folks?

All production ceased in April 2005 when MG/Rover went into what in the U.S. is known as *chapter eleven*. The assets of MG/Rover were bought by a Chinese carmaker called Nanjing Automobile in July 2005 who themselves were bought by SAIC in December 2007. Did you follow all that? Dizzy yet? There will be a test!

Well there's more!

In 2007 production of the MG TF roadster and MG 7 a large sports saloon (derived from the previous Rover 75 MG ZT model) started in China. Assembly of MG TFs for the European market, from Chinese built kits, would you believe, was started by NAC MG at Longbridge; we are full circle and back at the old BMC factory in August 2008. Quite the trip!

Call me politically incorrect ~ *I wish you would* ~ but the Chinese have about as much love of the MG brand as the Americans have of Fidel Castro! When will the madness end? Lotus is in Malaysia, Jaguar in India, Rolls Royce and Bentley are in Germany along with the rights to the brands Riley and Triumph.



Mike Tate

A Classic Racing Healy

So what of the noble Austin Healey brand?

Could there have been an Austin Healey 4000 to follow the deliciously brutish A.H. 3000? Well believe it or not there was! But . . . yes you've guessed it, in 1967 it was crushed even as an embryo, as was the entire brand by the same fat, foolish folks that killed the direct lineage of MG. What a *'wunch of bankers!'* We don't need Healey any more they cried and so saying killed the child stone dead. Pure infanticide!

The Austin Healey 4000 was more than just an embryo.

There were three prototypes built in 1967, albeit none seen in public or in running condition and another has since been recreated. Because of impending US safety regulations ~ *which were not in the end enacted* ~ requiring a minimum distance between the centre of the steering wheel and the side of the car ~ the car was cut in half and a six inch fillet was inserted from front to back!

The A.H. 4000 was to be powered by ~ *get this* ~ a Rolls Royce 3909 cc engine originally designed for military use! (This motor was

also used in the stately Vanden Plas 4 litre R). This gave a healthy estimated 240 bhp, 60% more than the Healey 3000! Surely it would have been an exciting vehicle on the roads. Rack and pinion steering was another part of the improved design package. Ah well, it was not to be!

Today name *Austin* is once again owned by Nanjing Automobile who bought the assets of the MG/Rover Group from bankruptcy in 2005. After Donald Healey sold his original business, the Healey brand was registered to a new firm Healey Automotive Consultants which the Healey family sold to HFI Automotive in 2005. Healey Automotive Consultants are a British concern with a decent lineage to the late Donald Healey ~ who must be turning in his grave!

Follow the bouncing ball again!

In June 2007, Nanjing and Healey Automobile Consultants and HFI Automotive signed a collaborative agreement that aims to recreate the Austin Healey and Healey marques alongside NAC's MG. No timeline has been given as to when the Healey and Austin Healey brands will return, although MG will be back on the market in China and the UK by the year's end so they say!

I'll believe it when I see it!

I think we have lost so much with the advent of free wheeling globalisation and free flowing financial



Gerry Frechette

VRCBC Member Ivan Lessner's Austin Healy BN6

opportunism in terms of brand pureness that 'We will never have that recipe again!' As the song goes (Right Ian?) I could be proved wrong and all could be peaches and cream in the future but I doubt it!

Call me narrow minded and a bigot why don't you but the sadly the world has lost its national flavours!

I don't want to go to France and see a Japanese owned winery with Geishas treading the grapes and singing 'Gentile Alouette', I want to see French folks doing that. I don't want to go to Japan and see Frenchmen, smoking un-tipped Galois Disc Bleu, planting rice in the paddies with their toes, I want to see Japanese folks doing that and wearing those great sun saving plates for hats too!

I don't like brands flying all over the world to strange homes that might not tip their hat to history and I don't like narrow minded British industrialists who couldn't give a hoot for their fine heritage and the investment in their brand strategies! Thanks for giving it all away you jerks! Money

is only a part of the value equation and if you want to make it then believe in the future of your brands. . . And if you don't believe that, I have a Cuban Cigar I would like to sell you! Now there's a brand that just won't quit despite those esteemed Senators Messrs Helms and Burton!

That's my comfort zone and I like it that way, how about you?

Mike Tate



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Tom's Photo Page

**Winners of the Canadian Driving Championship
1962 to 1977**



Francis Bradley - 1962



Denis Coad - 1963



Ludwig Heimrath - 1964



Bob McLean - 1965



George Chapman - 1966



Ross de St. Croix - 1967



Horst Kroll - 1968



Jacques Couture - 1971



Brian Robertson - 1972



Bill Brack-1973, '74 & '75



Eppie Wietzes - 1969 & '70



Gilles Villeneuve - 1976 & '77



First Canadian at Indy



Billy Foster of Victoria, BC at Indy in 1965

The Indianapolis 500 may not be the spectacle that it once was but it is still a pretty big deal in the world of motor sport.

It was the only race that my mother knew of when I was a kid (she sometimes called it the Minneapolis 500) but she knew it was a race and a big one.

As a Canadian and in

particular a Western Canadian, I grew up knowing that Billy Foster of Victoria was the first Canadian to race at Indy. In fact he is in a number of halls of fame (Victoria Auto Racing and Canadian Motorsport) based at least partly on this belief. The only problem is that it is not true.

Pete Henderson of Fernie, BC raced there in 1916. Well to be picky the 1916 race was only 300 miles but Henderson came back in 1919 and did the whole 500 miles. Henderson also won a AAA championship race in Chicago in 1917 becoming the first Canadian to win what we now call an Indy Car race.



Pete Henderson of Fernie, BC at Indy in 1916 Eddie Rickenbacker Maxwell Team

About the Vintage Racing Club of BC

The purpose of the Club is to restore, race and exchange information concerning vintage sports and racing automobiles. The Club was established in 1976 by a group of Vancouver based friends as a means of sharing with others their enthusiasm for racing and appreciation of the incredible vintage racing machines of

bygone days. The Vintage Racing Club supports the philosophy of racing competition that encourages participation, sportsmanship and display of the vehicle in its natural state on the track. There are no prizes or trophies, merely the great enjoyment of a well prepared vintage racing machine at speed.



Not cars but a neat photo



Photo Caption Contest -- What is the brand of the car#45 front left?



There was no winner of the Spring 2010 Photo Caption Contest, once again there were not even any entries. If we don't start getting some action I will just keep all of the prizes.
editor Tom

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