

Maserati Club of Australia

Member
e-Newsletter
October 2022



Hi Everybody,

As I write this, I am sitting in beautiful Marysville staying at Garden Cottages. Whilst here I am exploring some of the wonderful roads that we may be able to use for a future drive day. I am about to look at the road up to Lake Mountain as I have never been on it, and I know it is used for an annual tarmac rally.

Spring Drive Day to Sorrento

Speaking of drive days, our recent club trip to Hotel Sorrento was fabulous. We had to stop taking entries early when we reached 30 participants - this being the maximum number the Hotel could cater for. Thank you to everybody for supporting the club so well for this event.

Two of our members, David and Belinda Henry, planned the drive through some marvellous and interesting roads. They put a huge effort into preparing and running this drive, so we owe them a lot of gratitude.

My wife, Rach and I decided we would take our almost classic Ferrari 550 (which she affectionately calls LaNonna) for a drive as we hadn't had it out for months. Being an Italian car, and I had just had it serviced, I wanted to seize the opportunity to drive it whilst everything was working all at the same time.

We all arrived at the Baxter Hotel for our 9.30am start. The cars looked brilliant in the early morning sunshine. The five Maserati's dominated the parking lot and the sound waves. We also had 3 x Porsches, 2 x Mercedes, a bright orange McLaren, BMW M3, an Alpine, Chrysler 300, our LaNonna and David Henry's stunning Mk2 Jag. The drive was to take us via Arthurs Seat, Flinders, Point Nepean and ended in Sorrento for lunch.



LaNonna has a drinking problem. She only drinks the good stuff and \$120 barely half fills her!

The run from Arthurs Seat down to the bottom, turning around and driving spiritedly back to the top was a gem. It is this that has inspired me to take a look at Lake Mountain for a similar activity.



A short rest halfway down Arthurs Seat

The drive also wound us through the middle of the Flinders golf course which was very scenic. We had a “deer in the headlights” moment when we thought we were the target in a golf ball skirmish, but on 2nd look saw thankfully they were only actually putting into their tiny hole, not teeing off at us.

During the drive we had to answer a number of questions relating to the route, un-jumble words, and even get out of our cars to discover information. Along with the many panoramic viewing spots en route, we were all very entertained.

We arrived at Sorrento via a short drive to the historic Point Nepean Quarantine Station and parked on the lawn at the Men's Shed, which was just across from the hotel. I don't know where you could find better ocean views to park for lunch. With all of our exotic cars on the lawn, we took time to grab some stunning footage. To perfect the picture we styled the background with the five gorgeous Maserati's.

The Hotel Sorrento had only just reopened after a few weeks of renovation and the service and the food was exceptional. We had our own private room and very long dining table in a magnificently renovated 1800's building. The way they have combined the modern renovations with the sandstone to retain the historic originality of the building is very clever. It is certainly a venue for us to revisit.



The best car park view in Victoria

Beautifully restored Men's Shed in Sorrento is actually the old rescue Helicopter hangar.



All week prior to the drive the weather Gods had been threatening to ruin the day. But in the end they stayed away and we had perfect weather, brilliant roads, great entertainment along the way and topped it off with a very nice lunch.



Its difficult to decide which is the best view, Port Phillip Bay or the five Maseri's

I didn't even use a drone for this shot



Everybody is wondering why Jeff brought a Chrysler?



At lunch we presented the winners of the navigation, Robert and Gabrielle Van Essen, with their choice of a local red or white.

The Beable's were a close second

Every time the Beables compete, they win something!

This time they won the best photo of the day. It wasn't even on the drive, it was in their own driveway, which looks so amazing that we should make it part of our next drive day.



Jim Stephen's very rare 1967 Prince Skyline GT

Many of you will know Jim as our long serving and committed Club Secretary. Those who have done our track days will have seen him in his oil skin raincoat marshalling all of the cars in every weather condition along Phillip Island and Sandown pit lanes. But what you may not know is that Jim has a collection of rare classic cars, including the super interesting Prince Skyline GT. This car is the grand-daddy of the now revered Nissan GTR range. The Prince is where this whole line of the iconic Japanese models began. The Prince itself dominated on the Japanese race tracks and as it grew into the Nissan Skyline and Nissan GTR we all know this model took over as the fastest and most complete Japanese competition cars of all time.

Jim explains where this all started....

I was first aware of the Prince Skyline GT when they were released in Australia in the mid 60's, as being a relatively high performance car in their day. Growing up in Ballarat there were a group of guys to whom I looked up to, being quite a bit older but owning some nice cars. A Cortina GT, Mini Cooper S, XRGT Falcon, and one guy had a Prince Skyline GT.

In 2005 I saw one advertised in South Australia, and decided to go and have a look. It had been a race car most of its life and was now in serious need of attention. One thing led to another and I purchased the car and started having it restored so I could drive it on Club Plates.

After much investigation and help from The Prince Club guys, I learnt that this car had a long and successful history of Racing in Victoria, Western Australia and then South Australia. I soon realised this was not achievable to turn this into a usable road car, such was its history. I had it restored trying to preserve much of its racing heritage. I subsequently sold this car in 2020 back to the Guy who Raced it for much of its life in Victoria who is restoring it back to full Racing Mode.



Looking like a stretched Datsun 1600, but hides a powerful 6 with triple webers

Having got involved and helped by a number of members of the Prince GT club in Melbourne, I was then made aware of a restored car in Mildura, for sale and purchased this in 2016, much more suitable to drive on the road.

Prince started producing vehicles in 1951 and produced a lot of small Trucks and a 1500cc 4 cylinder car launched in 1952. In 1964 Prince decided they wanted to go Racing and produced a GT. They added 8 inches to the engine bay to accommodate the 6 cylinder 2000cc engine they had already built for their larger Gloria sedan. They then got Webber Carburetors to design carburetors for them, and Weber produced the 40 DCOE carb specifically for the Prince GT.



A close ratio 5 speed gearbox, Disc brake front end, and an LSD were part of the GTB specs.. The later Prince GT's had an option of a 99 Litre long range fuel tank with a large fast fill opening on the top. The Tank was placed directly over the rear wheels to aid traction.

Prince were subsequently bought out by The Nissan Datsun group and they have of course retained the Skyline name in their stable since.



This car of mine is a 1967 Prince Skyline GTB and amongst the last of those produced by Prince. It is a matching numbers car and retains its 2000cc six cylinder engine with triple webers. It also has the close ratio 5 speed gearbox, 99 Litre fuel tank, LSD and Disc front brakes. Parts are a real problem in many cases, some are available from a couple of companies in Japan. A very active Prince Group mainly based in Melbourne, but with owners distributed through most states in Australia, have had a number of parts for the cars made of recent years. They do a group buy to get sufficient numbers to warrant manufacture. There are a few GT's in New Zealand also, although most of the Prince Cars that went to NZ were the larger Gloria Sedan. There are also quite a few in Japan.

Some of the group buys have included having windscreens manufactured here in Australia, many rubber components like radiator hoses, suspension shackle bushes, engine bearings etc.

Since purchasing the car I have had the weber carbies rebuilt and overhauled, a new exhaust with OEM muffler, the gearbox rebuilt, plus a number of other bits and pieces. I have not had to touch the engine as it was rebuilt prior to purchase with supervision by the Prince Guys in Melbourne.

There are just over 40 known and complete GT's in Australia, with a number of others under restoration. They are now highly sought after here and in Japan.



Maserati Matchbox Car

When I was a kid growing up in the 60's and early 70's it was obviously decades before the electronic age. My childhood passion was collecting tiny Lesney diecast matchbox cars. I can remember saving up my pocket money for weeks and the anticipation of going down to the local newsagent to buy the next small car that I had my heart set on. Today I still have over 100 of these cars that I have retained for 50 years. Although I confess I haven't looked at them in two decades. I mention this because my all time favourite matchbox car was the Lesney No.32 Maserati Bora



Who can remember this car? I paid 50cents for this brand new car in 1973. I see a mint one for sale today is \$125. That is a 250x increase in value in 49 years! Surely this retained value would be the envy of every Maserati owner.

Maserati Xmas Lunch - Saturday 10th December

With December nearly here, planning for this year's Christmas Lunch is well underway. With the success of last year's lunch, we have decided to return to the Flowerdale Hotel for a BBQ on the Lawn.

For those of us who don't want to drink and drive, the Hotel also has accommodation available for the Saturday night, but as this is quite limited (and our President has probably already made his booking) you may wish to make your booking early if you don't want to miss out.

As an added feature of the weekend, we are also looking at an optional scenic drive to Flowerdale, possibly via Kinglake. We will provide everyone with more information once our planning is complete.

Make sure you put the date in your calendar. We will be emailing out booking information with a link to the Club website shortly.



Can we get more Maserati's than Wolesley's to the Flowerdale Hotel in December?

I would like to thank Jim Stephen for his contribution to this newsletter

Steve Coad
Club President