



A Chapter of POCA

# news

www.PanteraClubNorCal.com

Volume 49

Issue 5

May 2021

## PRESIDENT

Mark Bailey  
(669) 333-2544  
MarkPantera73@gmail.com

## VICE PRESIDENT

John Tomlin  
(408) 221-3926  
JohnLTomlin@aol.com

## SECRETARY

Mike Drew  
(707) 628-3317  
MikeLDrew@aol.com

## TREASURER

Larry Finch  
(559) 281-3497  
FresnoFinches@aol.com

## CLUB STORE

Irene Smith  
(209) 419-1366  
IGSmith50@icloud.com

## LIBRARIAN

Forest Goodhart  
(831) 724-3763  
ForestG@att.net

## MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Brent Stewart  
(408) 768-0649  
Brent.Stewart@yahoo.com

## EVENTS COORDINATOR

Lou Brizzolara  
(415) 203-4018  
LBrizzolara@ahmassoc.com

## MOTORSPORTS COORDINATOR

Bob Benson  
(408) 209-7677  
RCBSons1@aol.com

## RAFFLE CHAIRMAN

Erik Kolstoe  
(650) 743-2528  
EKolstoe@gmail.com

## WEBMASTER

Denny Morse  
(408) 922-9336  
Denman@gmail.com

## Minutes of Meeting 29 April, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. That bears repeating. *The meeting was called to order!* Yes, after more than a year, Covid restrictions have finally been relaxed to the point where indoor dining is once again possible, and the PCNC board wasted no time immediately setting up a monthly meeting. 25



people were present, which is a great start! We also had three Panteras in the parking lot (along with a Lamborghini, which deserves an honorable mention). Mark Bailey was absent because Linda was recovering from surgery at home, John Tomlin and Bob Benson were missing for reasons unknown, while Larry Finch, Lou Brizzolera, Irene Smith and Denny Morse were missing because they were all too far away (with Denny winning the prize as he was in Antarctica!). So, former president Forest Goodhart did yeoman's work and stood in for the missing president.

**New Members/Guests:** We were pleased to welcome **Ron and Tara Aquilina**, from the Sierra foothills town of Volcano. Ron is Greg Taylor's nephew, and they are looking for a Pantera. They are specifically looking for a chrome-bumper car with tasteful upgrades. He has always admired them and now is working to get further educated before committing to a purchase.

**Changes To Last Month's Newsletter:** The article on the BCR rally misidentified Matt Kelleher's MGB-GT as a 6-cylinder model, but in fact it's a much more common (but no less fun!) four-cylinder car.

Also, the article on the Pantera funny car for sale mistakenly referred to the seller as Mohr Imports, when in fact it is Dodi Auto Sales, a very different type of business indeed.

**Club Store Report:** Irene's report could basically be distilled down to two words, "We're poor", although that is quite misleading. The club had geared up for the 2020 POCA Fun Rally and turned most of the store's liquid assets into inventory. The Fun rally was cancelled, and the inventory remains. The good news is that we are all ready for the next opportunity to get together, and hopefully transform that inventory back into liquidity! Irene did express a desire for us to get an online retail mechanism up and running, but in the short term we should probably resurrect the idea that Bill Santos pioneered, of having a very detailed one-page flyer in the POCA newsletter, so at least POCA members would know what's available for purchase.

**Club Treasury Report:** Even though we have a stated desire to spend down our treasury, the past year of lockdown has resulted in continuing income from POCA dues rebates, with no opportunity to spend it, and as a result we are financially stronger than ever. There was discussion of perhaps using some of our treasury balance to offset the cost of club events, and perhaps do something special in conjunction with the Monterey weekend. There was also discussion about perhaps generating 50th Anniversary merchandise (hats or T-shirts) to be given free to each PCNC member and associate member. Lori Drew proposed having another pizza party, as that proved to be a very popular event last time. If anybody has a specific idea of something that would be nice to do to benefit the membership, please let Mark know.

**Club Membership Report:** Club membership is holding relatively steady at right around 140 households. We have had 4-5 new members this year, while losing a similar number as people sell their cars or otherwise move on.

**Club Motorsports Report:** There will be a 105db day on Wednesday, June 9th, hosted by the Nor-Cal Shelby Club. It is a rare day indeed when a Pantera is able to run at Laguna Seca, so hopefully we will see some PCNC participation there. For info, go to [www.norcal-saac.org](http://www.norcal-saac.org).

**Club Website Report:** Our new club website project has completely stalled out, like everything else in the world, due to Covid complications, but our existing website continues to soldier on, hosting the newsletter and other critical information.

**Club Library Report:** The contents of the library are still in the Goodhart's garage, and available for checkout at any time. There is supposed to be listing of the library's current inventory on the PCNC website, but that seems to have disappeared for some reason? The librarian and webmaster need to get together to resolve that....

### **Past Events:**

**Breakfast Club Rallies:** Although there have been no formal PCNC events for the past year and a half, quite a few club members have been participating in the monthly Breakfast Club Rallies, which have been documented in the past few newsletters. Tom Leonard briefly discussed them, including a recent one where all the PCNC members peeled off and recovered to his home where he hosted a terrific luncheon with sandwiches provided by Kathy.

Ron Southern has participated each month. He brought his Pantera to the first three events of the year, but for the most recent one, he decided to bring his 'reliable' Audi TT, which promptly broke down and barely made it home from the starting line! (New coil packs and spark plugs eventually fixed it). He's learned his lesson and has committed to driving his Pantera from now on.

### **Upcoming Events:**

**PCNC Pizza Party — 17 July:** Although this was not finalized until after the meeting, and thus not actually discussed there, it bears mentioning here anyway. In an effort to celebrate a return to normalcy and also chip away at our bank balance, PCNC will again host a free pizza party on Saturday, 17 July at Giovanni's Pizzeria. Watch for a flyer and all the info in next month's newsletter.

**Monterey Weekend — 9-15 August:** Some events were prematurely cancelled but most will be taking place, including Concorso Italiano, the Pebble Beach concours, the vintage races etc. The POCA president approached Mark Bailey and asked if perhaps PCNC would be interested in hosting an event in Monterey in the days following the traditional Monterey weekend. POCA has been financially clobbered by fees and penalties for canceling two Fun Rallies, and is in no mood to financially commit to staging an event in the hopes that people might attend, but they are hoping that we would be able to do so in their stead. Mark has run with the idea and is trying to organize a small-scale multi-day rally that would run for a few days starting on the Monday after the formal week ends. Watch this space for more information next month!

**Ironstone Concours Weekend — 24-26 September:** The Ironstone weekend is on once again! We will print a flyer in an upcoming newsletter, but in the meantime, the Murphys Suites is the PCNC event hotel. Call now to make your reservations, as they always fill up. You can always cancel up to 24 hours prior to the weekend with no penalties. The rooms are \$208 per night.

**PCNC Christmas Party — 4 December:** Because our hotel in San Mateo (the Hilton Garden Inn) wasn't ready to commit because of uncertainty about Covid restrictions, Dennis and Liz Valdez have instead made arrangements to hold the party at the Hilton Garden Inn in Sunnyvale. There will be an information flyer in the newsletter later in the year.

**2021 POCA Fun Rally:** The POCA Board has managed to slide the event 12 months to the

right, and it will be held at the same location and same relative time as originally planned for both the 2019 and 2020 Fun Rallies. Check the POCA newsletter for all the info.

### **Club Business:**

**Officer Elections:** Due to Covid, as well as a general lack of awareness, PCNC didn't have officer elections last year, but we are committed to once again holding elections later this year for the 2022 term. If you are interested in serving as either president, treasurer, secretary or membership coordinator, please contact Mark Bailey.

### **Buy/Sell/Swap:**

**Austin Healey Block + Parts:** Tom Leonard has somehow inherited a bare engine block for an Austin Healey, and two large boxes filled with associated engine parts. He wants it all to go to a good home, which is defined as any home that he doesn't live in! If you foresee a need for something like this, please contact him at TLeonard1928@gmail.com.

**Stickers For All:** PCNC member Mark Charlton, of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada (a northeastern suburb of Northern California) runs a sign business, and on the side he produces all sorts of stickers, including various period-correct decals for vintage race cars, etc. He is also a serious De Tomaso guy, owning a Mangusta, two Panteras and a Longchamp! He sent a batch of various De Tomaso stickers to be given away to everyone who attended the next meeting. They were laid out and snapped up in no time at all!



### **News, Clues and Rumors:**

**Jet-powered R/C Car:** Greg Taylor showed off his latest project, a fairly large radio controlled car that, conventionally powered by an electric motor, can go over 100 mph. He decided to convert it to turbine power, using a jet engine for an R/C airplane, which spins at 140,000 rpm! The project is almost complete, but he has yet to figure out how to control it safely. It will likely travel at something approaching a billion miles per hour, and keeping it pointed in the proper direction will likely prove quite challenging, if not impossible.

This is what happens when people have been locked down for a year....



**Lamborghini Urraco:** Greg and Diane came to the meeting behind the wheel of the '75 Urraco that he and Bud Millard almost accidentally bought together a couple of years ago in the central valley. It was a somewhat-running car at the time, best described as a jewel in the rough,



but they have invested quite a bit of time and energy to bring it fully up to snuff. Their plan is to show it and drive it for a year or so, and then sell it on, hopefully for a profit.

One item that this car was missing was its five original wheels—it was running on cheap hot-rod wheels. They managed to buy a set of four in southern California, which is a bit of a miracle considering they only built 791 examples. (It's quite possible that these were the original wheels from this car?). Finding a fifth wheel for the spare was going to be a challenge, but one turned up on Ebay, in Denmark of all places. Fortunately, Mike Drew knows a Pantera owner there who is a major, internationally renowned Lamborghini collector and concours judge, and he was able to effect introductions. This fellow wound up driving for hours, way out into the forest, where a guy living in a tiny cabin had this perfectly nice single wheel for sale. A deal was done, the Pantera owner shipped it over here, and today it nestles under the hood of the car!

**Barn Find Pantera:** A former PCNC member named Dave Rasmussen, from Santa Cruz, had a '71 Pantera and was active in the club in the late 1980s. He and the car both disappeared from view by the early 1990s. The car sat for 30 years in a cluttered garage with the engine removed and dismantled. Dave was apparently a bit of a hoarder and finally the city insisted that his property be cleaned up and items disposed of, including a number of derelict cars. Fortunately the Pantera had been stored indoors. It was purchased by an enterprising fellow who brought it back to his workshop at the Monterey airport.



He was initially thinking of fixing it up and getting it running. Forest Goodhart went to look at it and help him with a few things; the window didn't work and the presumption was that the gear had broken. In fact, the gear was an aftermarket brass one, but the grease had turned to stone. It had wood screws holding the armrests on, and a number of other kluges. Within a short amount of time the new owner decided the project would be too daunting, and he offered it up on Bring a Trailer. It was purchased by a fellow in the Czech Republic who obviously had no idea what he was doing, as he paid \$60,000 for it, probably double what it was worth in its current state! It will be interesting to see if he is able to actually get the car back on the road....



**Joe Perruci's Pantera Sold:** Forest Goodhart helped Glenda Perruci sell her late husband Joe's 1974 Pantera GT5 conversion. It had been offered for sale for quite some time, with a very reasonable asking price. The eventual buyer expressed great personal interest in the car, telling all sorts of stories about his intentions for it. He showed up with a duffel bag full of cash (!) and hauled it away. A short time later, he issued a video on Youtube where he told lots of lies about the car, claiming long-time ownership. It turns out he was nothing but a flipper, and he was trying to sell it for nearly double what he paid for it! It's unknown if the car sold or not....

**MGB Karma:** Matt Kelleher wasn't at the meeting but he relayed an incredible story about his new-to-him MGB-GT. He purchased it from a fellow who had owned it for a few years, and restored it, and it was just freshly back on the road. He was contacted by the son of the previous, previous owner. It turns out that the fellow had to sell the car because the son had been in a motorcycle accident, and his dad needed the money to pay his medical bills. He has since completely healed up, and achieved financial liquidity, and wanted to repay his father for his kindness, by finding and buying his dad's old car back and giving it to him as a surprise.

Naturally, Matt was quite touched by this sentiment, and instantly agreed to sell it to him for exactly what he had paid for it a few months previously. The car has since been reunited with the gentleman, and presumably he was pleased and surprised at the gesture!

**Pantera In The Movies:** Brett Santos was watching an old James Coburn movie called *The Honkers* on TV, and suddenly was shocked to see one of the characters, an American Indian woman no less, driving a red pushbutton Pantera! The movie was shot in New Mexico in 1971 and the car was brand new at the time; the character was purportedly very wealthy and independent, so the Pantera was perfect casting! You might be able to catch it on Turner Classic Movies.



**Raffle Results:** Ron Southern found and donated a small-scale Hot Wheels Pantera, still in the original packaging. Erik and Brett passed the hat for the first time this year, with the following results:

Craftsman 3/8 inch socket set – Garth Rodericks  
Craftsman 1/4 inch socket set – Jennifer (Kolstoe)  
Pantera hat – Ron Aquilina  
De Tomaso and Ghia patches – Brett Santos  
Terry towels – Forest Goodhart  
Mequigars quick detailer – Brent Stewart  
Work gloves – Diane Silven  
Flashlight – Steve Dalcino  
Hot Wheels Pantera – Ron Aquilina  
Flexible inspection mirror kit – Paul Fahndrick  
Wash sponge – Ron Southern  
USB power adapter – Diane Silven, Ron Southern

The meeting adjourned to the parking lot at 8:37, where everyone admired the Urraco. Although truly a two-seater car, for European tax purposes an almost imaginary set of rear seats were installed. Improbably, Diane got into the back as Greg and Bud sat in front and the three of them drove off together!

# Membership News

## New Members for May:

We are pleased to welcome **Ted Dobos** to the club. Ted has previously been a Sunbeam Tiger owner, and now is looking for a Pantera that has been tastefully modified to once again fulfill his need for speed. Ideally he would like to buy a 'known' car from the POCA community.

## May Membership Anniversaries:

We congratulate the following people for the indicated years of continuous membership in the Pantera Club of Northern California:

**Bob Crowell:** 30 years

**Garth and Leslie Rodericks:** 18 years

**Terry Griggs:** 16 years

**Gary Spratling:** 14 years

**Brent and Bev Stewart:** 13 years

**Jeff Files:** 5 years

**Katherine Gerloff:** 18 years

**Scott and Susie Carpenter:** 17 years

**Dan and Annie Lem:** 14 years

**Dennis and Carol Wilson:** 14 years

**Richard and Tamara Spratling:** 10 years

**Jim and Nicole Gearing:** 2 years



# Hunting For A Unicorn

## The De Tomaso Cortina GT

Story and Photos by Alejo Perez Monsalvo

There's an aura of mystery around certain projects that came out of the De Tomaso factory, maybe because of the low or one-off production of certain cars, or simply due to a general lack of information.

Amongst the cars that little is known about are the Mk I Ford Cortinas that De Tomaso modified in Modena. Faded black-and-white pictures may

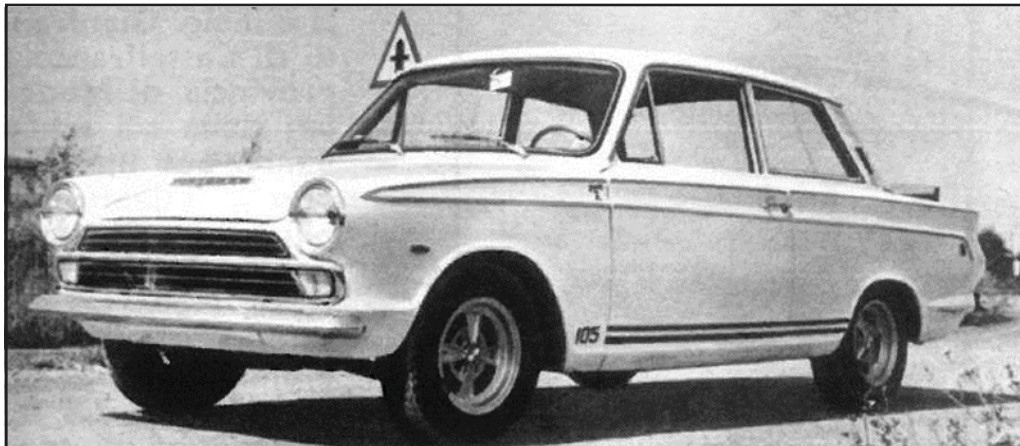
come to your mind when you read this, and the memory of the De Tomaso logo and number "105" stamped on the back of a white Cortina GT.

Not lot has been said and written about those cars. And very little of that information is actually supported by evidence. What is known is that they existed, they are very rare, and

that recently one of them was offered for sale in the UK. But...was it really a De Tomaso? Two members of the De Tomaso Drivers Club of Great Britain took this very seriously and decided to find out the truth. This is the story of a car-hunt.

A couple of months ago, a member of the Club brought to the attention of the

others, a sale advert for a 1965 four-door "Mark I Ford Cortina GT-De Tomaso". The news made me shake. Was this possible? Finally, a Unicorn was showing up? The advert told a story about this car being an early Cortina-De Tomaso sold in Italy, where it remained for just one year before spending the next 47 years garaged in the South of France. It



*This is one of only a handful of period press photos of the Cortina-De Tomaso 105*



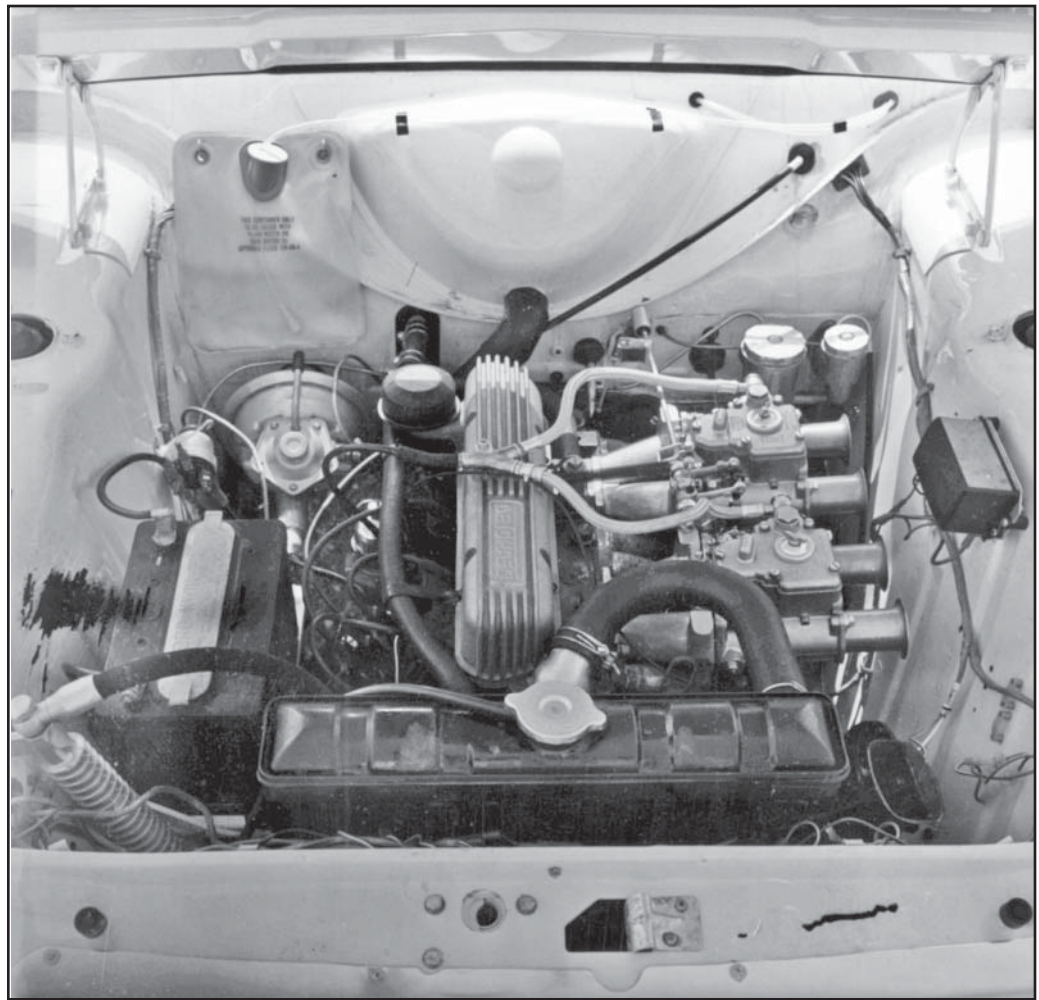
*This nondescript four-door was advertised for sale as being a genuine, ultra-rare De Tomaso-built special edition*



also described that it is believed that around six De Tomaso Cortina GTs were built, and only two of them were four-doors.

The description went on to describe the unique features of these cars (the bespoke Campagnolo wheels, the bespoke De Tomaso Steering wheel, special seats, the engine block bored to 1600cc with a special cam and valve cover, etc). The story sounded consistent with the little information that we've seen on some web forums, despite some missing little cosmetic details.

The car had previously been sold at a small Auction House by its first British owner. The condition of the car seemed to be excellent. This could be an ultra-rare Ford



*The original De Tomaso Cortina GT used an engine that outwardly appears identical to that used in the Vallelunga, which was being produced at the same time*



*The De Tomaso Cortina GT used these unique Campagnolo wheels. Note the use of the early De Tomaso wheel center emblem, which had the Argentinean flag laid out horizontally instead of vertically behind the De Tomaso crest*

Cortina-De Tomaso.

But let's go one step at a time... what was a Ford Cortina-De Tomaso?

As I said above, very little is known about these rare cars. There are some period pictures going around on the internet, yes. Some stories and data can be found on different car forums, yes.

The pictures are real. But evidence supporting those internet stories is scarce. And when I say scarce, I mean "nothing". It's not even clear if they were modified in 1965 or 1966, or how many were made.

As an avid De Tomaso researcher that spent several years of my life (and a lot of money) collecting information, original documents, pictures, factory production data, etc., at the start of this hunt I could only say that these cars existed.

Full stop. Not much more could be proven.

Someone wrote in a forum that “only 8 were produced” to be later challenged by someone else who contested “they were only 5”. And I can say they were 3, or 9, or 13, and no one will be able to deny it with the little information available. There is no known production registry.

Something similar happens with the technical specifications. Not everything can be proven with pictures. And there are not many, anyway. There were only seven existing period pictures known to exist, but another two appeared in the last few months.

After contact with another re-

searcher I got three more, of a two-door version racing in Spain in 1967-1968.



*Note the De Tomaso cloisonné logo, which was bent to match the contour of the hood and then crudely secured with four screws*



*The identity of this original car was established by a hand-painted De Tomaso logo, along with the number '105', whose meaning has never been really understood*

Amongst these pictures some elements were clearly visible: the rare Campagnolo wheels, the Les Leston steering wheel, the De Tomaso valve cover, the front emblem, and the De Tomaso livery with the “105” identification. But there is no irrefutable evidence that the engine was brought from 1500cc to 1600cc, or that the camshaft was designed by De Tomaso. In fact, I couldn’t find any document nor period press clipping describing that the engine was exactly the same as the Vallelunga. Those are both very common statements on car forums.

There were also a few Mark II Cortinas modified by De Tomaso in 1967, and the data available about them is also poor, although there is a period Road Test and some more detail in period magazines.

Richard Pogson made the first contact with the seller. During that first phone call, there were some inconsistencies that raised some alarms in his head. He contacted someone in Germany who previously had interest in this car, and his story was about the seller being vague on the description of the carburetors that were actually fitted in the car, the engine not being consistent with a 105 GT (but as I said, who

actually knows those engines in detail?), and other comments that put some questions on the sale as a whole.

At that point, I had a few days to try to put together all the available information about 105 GTs (evidence, stories, gossip, whatever I could find) and made some prints comparing period pictures with the ones of the advert. After sharing impressions about the car with Richard, I arranged for a viewing.

After three and a half hours of drive, I arrived at a semi-rural location in Gloucestershire, where the car was stored, sharing a shed with some very interesting race cars and classics. Once an impeccable blue cover was removed, I was standing in front of a shiny example of



*Among the interior features unique to the De Tomaso models were the British Les Leston steering wheel, and the Italian Brev Lanz seats*

a four-door Cortina GT Mark I, showing some De Tomaso features. The car looked great, a straight shell in excellent condition. The pictures didn't do justice

to the condition of the car.

I took the prints with me, in order to have an open dialogue with the owner. Honestly, by comparing the pictures, a lot

of questions arose, mostly about things that looked period, but I had doubts they really were. After a first check of the car and Q&A with the owner, the results were not encouraging.

Many elements may look "period" or "matching" to the untrained eye, but the steering wheel wasn't a Les Leston model, nor even made of wood, and the De Tomaso emblem was of an early 1970s model, fixed with glue. The wheels were Campagnolo but not the right ones, and the emblems on the caps were stickers instead of real center caps. The hood emblem wasn't period (nor screwed on), the De Tomaso valve cover was missing, there was no De Tomaso livery nor rear emblem, the chassis ID plate was for a French market car....

In summary, apart from the Italian seats, nothing was making this car different from any other normal Cortina GT. And a Cortina GT that was made



*The VIN tag showed that this was a French-market car*

for the French market! On top of that, only some French papers were available (from 2008 onwards) and no link to any Italian origin. To make it even worse, these documents stated that the car was first rolled out in May 1963!

The result of the viewing was nothing but disappointing. I took as many pictures as possible of the engine bay and everything under the hood, and details of the interior. A lot of research was yet to be done. I had the feeling the unusual “Brev Lantz” Italian seats could be telling us something, as they looked exactly like the ones of the period pictures. Or was it that I didn’t want to accept that nine out of ten signs were telling us that this wasn’t a real De Tomaso car?

So, Richard and I started to think how we could corroborate or rule out the story.

First thing would be to understand why the car had a French ID plate, and to interpret the numbers on it (they are not at all similar to the UK ID plates for Cortinas). If we weren’t able to put the car in Italy at the start of the ownership line, it would be difficult to understand how De Tomaso could have modified it. Also, some of the articles/



*The sale car was in a large, tidy garage with a number of other interesting classic cars*

blogs/ads mention that these cars were purchased through private dealers, not directly from Ford.

So, finding the original shipping route would be important. However, it was also important to challenge those assumptions as we didn’t have any proof that the cars were sold that way. And

that’s where the difficulty stands for this car: there is no evidence at all that the data on blogs and articles is correct, and also who knows if they would equally apply for a two- or four-door car. Or even worse: there is no reference at all that De Tomaso modified a four-door GT. No evidence. Just “blog/forum gossip”.

While investigating this, we focused on the different “De Tomaso elements” of the car. Richard found the exact Les Leston steering wheel that matches the period pictures of the 105, and I tried to identify the wheels.

I found no reference to the Campagnolo wheels on the 105, and it almost seemed like they only existed for that car (very unlikely), but after hours of browsing I found that the car for sale was fitted with Campagnolo Elektron wheels. This was a very rare model that was used by De Tomaso for at least two prototypes in 1969 and 1970. That was encouraging. We found out where those wheels were originally stamped with the date of manufacture, and told the owner to remove the wheels and check them. After a few hours of excitement, we received a disappointing response: “December 1973”. Another setback.

While Richard was questioning people who were previously interested in the car, and browsing everything online related to the different times it was put



*The wheels were intriguing. Although not the same as those on the known De Tomaso Cortinas, they were a rare Campagnolo Elektron (magnesium) design that De Tomaso had used on other cars. However, these wheels were date-stamped as having been manufactured in 1973....*



*The engine bay is nicely detailed, but the valve cover is incorrect. Instead of the beautiful cast De Tomaso cover as used on the Vallengunga, this is a generic aftermarket cast cover with an ordinary De Tomaso sticker glued to it!*

up for sale during the past years, I was in contact with a self-described “Ford freak” with contacts at Ford Heritage.

The plan was to find access to factory records with regards to the original shipping details of the chassis. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the retired former Ford workers who run Ford Heritage weren’t able to do much. We also tried getting into dedicated Ford Cortina forums on the internet and Cortina Clubs Groups on Facebook. Through these channels, we found out that the ID Plate was exclusive for the French market. But also that there should be a British plate as well in the engine bay.

And there wasn’t one, nor were there drillings where it was supposed to be. Another enigma.

The next aspect to investigate was the “first rolling date”, stated as May 1963. According to the stories available online, De Tomaso modified Mk I Cortinas in 1965 or 1966 (depending on the source). Should the car prove to

be a 1963 model, that would be the end of our research.

After checking details with Ford Cortina experts online, we discovered that the front signal lights and the front grill are from a late 1964 model, and some interior elements (dashboard, Aeroflow ducts) are consistent with a 1965 model! This was all very confusing, as the car didn’t seem to be repaired at a scale that would justify the replacement of those parts. And who would upgrade a 1963 model to a 1965? It would be cheaper to sell the car and buy a new one. Yet another enigma....

Our mood was inevitably going towards “this is a scam” but every now and then we found enigmas or data that would suggest that there was still some hope. But not because we were finding facts matching the legend—to the contrary: because we were finding more inconsistencies making nonsense.

One of the things we did was to become members of a Ford Cortina Mk

I Facebook Group. This community was a key to understanding some features of the French ID plate, and on how to understand the production dates were for each modification that was introduced to the original Mk I.

While making questions about the strange Italian seats, a member answered: “Those are consistent with a De Tomaso 105. I know because I had one...”

And the bomb dropped straight on our heads....

I immediately wrote to this guy through the Facebook Messenger chat. After exchanging a few texts, our excitement plummeted: he was a previous owner of the same car we were looking at! But the guy seemed to be a Cortina eminence, so he must have done some research before paying a premium for another Cortina in his garage.

I asked about that, and his answer started building up as a revelation: he explained that his family has long con-

nections with Ford, especially modifying Cortinas in Australia. He owned more than 150 Ford Cortinas through his life, and even raced them. According to his story, the car was an early 1963 shell (this is consistent with the French papers) that was sent to De Tomaso in 1965 together with a two-door version, for the De Tomaso “Cortina Programme”. The car was an old shell, completed with some post-period (Aero-flow) parts. He also mentioned that he went to Italy to meet the original owner.



*The steering wheel is period-correct, and likely Italian, unlike the English wheel in the photos of the original car. The emblem is well-patinated, suggesting that it is original to this car*

All this came as a shock to us. Right when we were convinced that someone started a scam about this car years ago, we were discovering that there was another angle that could link this car to De Tomaso. But then, the guy started asking us strange questions, and then he completely blocked me. He cut all communications.

We started to check his statements about Ford and his family. Although certain things were matching, we couldn't make the connection between Australia, Ford UK and Italy. Trying to

be creative, we imagined it could have been possible that Ford sent a mixed-unfinished car to De Tomaso, as it was going to be modified anyway. Also, that as it wasn't a two-door it could have been used as a “prototype” or a Guinea Pig for the others. But again, apart from the seats, there was nothing there connecting the dots.

As we said at the beginning of this article, apart from the pictures of the white two-door Cortina-De Tomaso standing on a rural Italian road, there are only pictures of another one racing

in Spain. Those are differences, but it could still be possible that it was always the same car? The hood could have been replaced for a lighter one (without the emblem), the plate changed when imported to Spain. And the bumpers, just removed for racing, as many others do!

The idea that all this Cortina-De Tomaso stuff was just a big story while there was only *one* car started developing inside my head.

As all this was being developed, I made contact with people in Spain who were familiar with the white two-door that raced the 6 Hours of Barcelona in 1967 and 1968. We checked the licence plate and confirmed that it was destroyed many years ago. But I finally had access to the person who imported that car into Spain. And it wasn't just an ordinary import deal. This guy was a personal friend of Alejandro De Tomaso. Now in his late 80s, he took the time to describe to me the whole operation. And it was a very tasty story.

He travelled to Modena in 1966 to make a deal for a handful of Vallelungas. But once there, Alejandro shows him two (yes, *two*) two-door white Cortina-De Tomasos, which he bought. One of them was for his personal use, but the second one was for sale. And that is the one that



*The De Tomaso emblem is bent to fit the hood, but secured to the car via conventional means instead of using screws in each corner, as the early De Tomaso cars usually did*

in Spain. The only differences between those two cars are that the one in Italy has a De Tomaso emblem screwed to the hood (the Spanish car shows no emblem), the Italian car has a “PROVA MO 157” plate while the Spanish one has a standard Spanish plate, and the Italian one has all its bumpers, unlike the one racing

was later imported to Spain, raced there and was destroyed in Spain as well. He never saw any others nor did De Tomaso offer him more. He later imported two Mk II Cortina-De Tomasos, and those are better documented as they were on display at a car show.

When I asked him about the possibility of De Tomaso modifying a four-door Cortina GT, he said that it would be very unlikely that a saloon car would have been modified instead of a more sporty two-door. But it was just his view. He saw what he saw, and that was it.

So? Is the car a Cortina GT-De Tomaso? Have we reached a “verdict” about the car in question? No. Not yet.

This story certainly made us learn a lot about these cars, and between what I just wrote and some more data we are still collecting, I believe we will be able to tell more about the Cortina-De Tomasos than anyone else before. And some myths and inconsistencies will be ruled out forever. But we need more time.

Facts against facts, we found yet no connection between the car for sale and the “De Tomaso Cortina Programme”, if that “Programme” ever existed as such. Maybe “Programme” is a big word for

what that production really was. But no connection found.

In 1966, De Tomaso was still a very small manufacturer. His ties with Ford were developing compared to what was to come for the Mangusta, and later the Pantera, but they were already in business.

It was possible that Alejandro De Tomaso was trying to impress Ford, beating the Lotus Cortina by tuning a Ford Cortina himself. It made sense in that context that he was driving one of those cars himself. It was also possible that this idea started with some big spark, but that it lost momentum (Alejandro was famous for that behaviour) after he couldn’t sell the Vallelunga project to Ford (or any other). Or simply because he didn’t have the production capacity.

It is a fact that the Ford Cortina Mark II came out in 1967, making it useless to keep upgrading Mark Is any longer, hence the short “production period” of the Mk Is and start of the (also short production) of the Mark IIs.

It was also possible that after someone was made aware of the upgrades provided by De Tomaso, this someone brought in his personal four-door GT to be “tuned” as well, and that it came out of the factory with some but not all of

the features of the real 105.

Was it possible that Ford sold the Cortina Gts directly to De Tomaso instead of to private dealers? Yes. Was it also possible in this environment that Ford sent them a couple of unfinished shells, and amongst them some spare 1963 half completed with 1964-1965 features? Yes, it was possible.

There are a number of permutations of what can be “possible” in terms of explaining how this four-door Cortina GT could have become a De Tomaso-modified car. But it needs to be proven. And we are far from that. And apart from our will for it to be true, all signs are (so far) pointing in the opposite direction.

But it is also “possible” that this is a 1963 shell, completed in 1965, sold to the French market. And that some years after that, some smart guy glued a non-period emblem to the steering wheel, another to the hood, fit it with some non-period Campagnolo wheels, put some Weber carburetors on the engine, and exploited the blurry Cortina-De Tomaso story to sell a bloody Ford Cortina for twice its value.

Why is that possible? Because unless we prove it wrong, it worked—we bought it!

To be continued...



*Whether this car is a genuinely rare De Tomaso special edition, or simply an elaborate hoax, is yet to be determined. At this point, the only thing we can state definitively is that we now own it!*



Brent Stewart  
1239 Valley Quail Circle  
San Jose, CA 95120



## NEXT CLUB MEETING

**Thursday, May 27th, 2021  
7:30 P.M.**

**HOLDER'S COUNTRY INN  
998 S. De Anza Blvd, San Jose**

---

---

## UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

June 12 ----- Breakfast Club Rally

July 17 ----- PCNC Pizza Party at Giovanni's Pizzeria (Lou Brizzolara)

**REMINDER — NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE BY 15th OF EACH MONTH**