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BESPOKE AUTOMOBILES | CLASSIC CAR INVESTMENT | BRITISH BOATBUILDING

SPEED EDITION

THE WORLD'S BEST CAR RALLIES

If you love cars and crave adventure, there are few better ways to combine the two than by taking part in an epic road trip with a bunch of like-minded petrolheads

Words: Scott Manson

How do you see the world, without feeling like a typical tourist, and combine the thrill of fast cars and awesome parties in one trip? You need to investigate the heady world of the car rally. Put to one side the preconceptions of auto-loving bores, who gather at the end of each day to talk gear differentials and the difficulty of sourcing heritage paint hues, and instead get ready for a selection of bragging-right guaranteed ultimate drives in the company of people who love partying as much as they love the latest hypercar.

Rolex Monterey

The beautiful setting of Monterey, California, is the home of this much-loved annual historic car rally. Part of Monterey Car Week – which also includes the show-stopping Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance – the event sees around 550 historic and period-correct motors from nearly every era competing on the 2.238-mile road course. Supporting the on-track racing is a paddock that's open to everyone, Q&A sessions with legends, special exhibition laps and a marketplace of stalls showing a wide range of automobilia and products. On track, expect to see everything from pre-1940 sports cars to 1967-1984 F1 cars and some beautiful old touring cars. A must for classic car fans.

weathertechnraceway.com



SPEED



Targa Newfoundland

For true driving enthusiasts, this annual race is a dream – and one of the most enjoyable rallies on the planet. Make no mistake, it's a challenging undertaking, not least because of the logistics involved in getting your car, parts and crew out to the beautiful north Atlantic island of Newfoundland. It's open to owners of historic, classic and modern sporting vehicles, with each car competing against itself on a handicap basis, as well as against other vehicles. There's a timed Grand Touring rally, as well as the Fast Tour – a non-competitive event which allows the owners of exotic cars to drive them the way they were meant to be driven, without the stress of competition. 1,400 miles in seven days (15 – 21 September) is what you're in for, with some of the most awe-inspiring scenery in the world as your backdrop. Beautiful. »

targanfld.com



Photo credits
Targa - Curtis Walsh Media

BEHIND THE WHEEL

Chris Ward, operations manager at JD Classics, on the charm of the Mille Miglia and how to survive four days on the road



Tempus: What does the Mille Miglia mean to you?

“**Chris Ward:** It's a very special event to be part of, not only because you're getting to drive such fantastic cars past fantastic scenery, but also to experience the passion that the Italian people have for this event. It's truly amazing. I'm in awe of the passion that every single person has for the cars. Italy is, obviously, the home of Ferrari so I guess that's where a lot of it comes from. Whether you're going through a large city like Rome or a small village in the mountains, there are people, from children of five-years-old to elderly people of 90, lining the roads, waving flags, and supporting the event from the moment it starts to the moment it finishes. It's really special.

Four days of consistent driving is a tough feat for even the most enthusiastic classic car owner. What keeps you going for such long stretches on the road?

It is incredibly intense, not only for the car but for the human body as well. You can be in the car from 7.30am through to 10.30pm. I'm lucky that I've done it in our C-type, which is actually an incredibly comfortable car to drive. Although the cockpit is very short and you've got a strange seating position, I haven't got out of the car thinking 'Cor, I'm really aching'. I've got out of the car feeling quite refreshed from a physical point of view but obviously quite drained mentally because of everything that's going on.

Tell us about the gorgeous Jaguar C-type you've previously raced in the Mille Miglia.

I've been very fortunate to drive it. It was originally owned by Fangio, who was a very well-known Formula 1 world champion. It's a beautiful car to drive. At JD Classics, we have a great selection of cars, dating back through whole period that the original Mille Miglia was run, so it's not just C-types that we can cater for, we can cater for cars as early as the late '20s, early '30s, right the way through to 1957. I think whatever car you're able to drive in the Mille Miglia, it is a privilege and you'll get the best out of it and really enjoy the event.

jdclassics.com

How is JD Classics getting involved this year?

We've been a gold sponsor for the past three years and we're running 12 cars at the event this year so we are probably one of the biggest

single entries from a classic car business taking part. We're very fortunate that we're able to offer our customers a complete experience, from sourcing and preparing their car to running their car during the event, and tuition right the way through.

How do you prepare drivers for the rally?

We have a day's training prior to the event itself so participants have the opportunity to drive their car and get a real feel for it. We take them to a proving ground that simulates some of the mountain roads we have on Mille Miglia. We also give them an insight on how the event works from start to finish. Part of that is introducing those people to their service crews. They are the most important people that our drivers need to form a relationship with, because the first thing you need to do when you get back after a day driving is communicate the car's performance with your crew so they can create a job list of requirements from your feedback.

At JD Classics, I would align us with the Italians and the passion they have for motoring. We are lucky to have such a fantastic team of engineers supporting the drivers and working on the cars overnight to make sure they're ready to roll the next day.

As a Mille Miglia pro, what's your advice for drivers participating for the first time?

I would say that people need to understand the event as a whole and understand that it's not only a test of the driver but it's also a test of the car. You need to understand how the car works and be mechanically sympathetic in the way that you drive it. You're able to drive quite quickly on the Mille Miglia but the cars need to be treated as you'd be expected to be treated as a person. It's about taking your time, too, not trying to rush, and enjoying yourself.

Verve

Driven by the desire to create a rally that wasn't just for male petrolheads, two serial entrepreneurs launched a female-friendly, carbon-neutral supercar rally that's worthy of any bucket list – and described by GQ as “the closest you'll get to living your dream.” This year's event runs 1-9 September across seven European countries, starting in London and ending in Belgium. There's also a six-day London to Ibiza rally in July, which is sensibly limited to four to five hours driving every day, allowing participants more time to enjoy the nightly parties and high-end hotels that are booked for them along the way. This is not a challenge of speed or endurance – as co-founder Darshana Ubl says: “A race is a timed event. A rally is two or more cars sharing an adventure.” And if you don't feel your car quite cuts it, or you simply fancy trying something different, then Verve can rent you a stunning supercar for the duration of the event.

ververally.com



Mille Miglia

Running annually since 1927 (apart from an understandable break during World War II), this 1,000-mile race through the roads of Italy ended in 1957 after a car struck spectators. However, it was revived in 1982 as a four-day rally – and one limited to cars produced no later than 1957 – running a Brescia-Rome-Brescia round trip. Bringing together the best of tradition and elegance, it's become one of the world's most iconic road races that's as special for the spectators as it is for the drivers. Those in the know ensure that they check out the road between Rome and Siena – regarded as the most beautiful stretch of road in Italy – where you'll get the perfect view of some of the world's finest old automobiles being pushed to their limits. On that note, if you're a driver then speed limits are not terribly well-enforced. Because this is Italy – and this is the country's most famous race. 🇮🇹

1000miglia.eu

Gumball 3000

The daddy of all modern car rallies, this British-born 3,000-mile international celebrity motor rally is the brainchild of entrepreneur, designer, race car driver and former model Maximillion Cooper. Combining cars, music, fashion and entertainment, it's set the bar for high-profile car rallies since it launched in 1999. It's arguably best known for its glamorous parties and celebrity participants, often driving outrageously cool cars – David Hasselhoff in the original Knight Rider car, for example, or Lewis Hamilton in a Koenigsegg Agera HH – but it's still a test of endurance. Spending several days in a car, combined with partying all night, can be tougher than you might imagine. This year, for Gumball's 20th anniversary, this race runs from London to Tokyo (4 – 12 August) and promises to be the biggest event yet. Only 100 cars will make the journey so get your entry in now.

gumball3000.com



SPEED

THE KING OF GUMBALL

Maximillion Cooper, founder of the Gumball 3000 rally, talks fast cars, KGB security and how he ended up singing karaoke with North Korea's supreme leader

Tempus: Congratulations on the 20th anniversary of the Gumball 3000. How does its current incarnation match your initial ambitions?

“ **Maximillion Cooper:** It's gone above and beyond anything I'd imagined. I wanted to create something that combined all my passions, from motoring to music to action sports but, more than anything, it was just a way of getting a group of friends together to do something different and have an adventure. 70% of the people taking part in the first rally weren't even car people. They were just there for the parties and the social aspect. And that's something we've seen grow year-on-year.

Other rallies have launched since Gumball began, but yours is still regarded as the best of its kind. What's made it such an enduring success?

No one else plans like we do, and we try something new every year. From year two, we flew cars to the rally. Recently in London, we had 3,000 staff at the capital's event alone and one million people attended. We put on the biggest concerts and get the most exposure of any rally.

Can you reveal any special experiences you're planning for this 20-year celebration rally, running from London to Tokyo?

After 20 years, we have the perfect format nailed. A six to seven-day trip, with three to four of those 'public days' – like our city festivals. They combine a car show with a music festival and action sports demos.

This year, Tokyo will have two days of music festivals. The city has been really supportive – they're even sponsoring the Tony Hawk vert ramp demonstration, to publicise the 2020 Olympics in the city. Skateboarding is being added to the games for the first time, you see.

A few friends of Tempus took part in a Gumball a decade or so ago, and picked up some speeding tickets along the way. What sort of reputation does the rally have with local authorities these days?

We never do anything dangerous or illegal. In fact, councils close roads or sections of cities for two days for us now, which is very different to the old days. Besides, you can't really do anything illegal in these digital-first times as the whole thing is pretty much constantly streaming on Facebook Live or YouTube.

Some places have proved challenging though?

Oh, of course. We've been to 60 countries over the years, so there have been testing moments. Weirdly, given its history of racing drivers and great car manufacture, Germany has been the trickiest country to date – we were there in 2010 and 2013. They have a total ban on road rallies, but timed stage races are okay, which is odd. Oh, and they hate cars with stickers on them.



Russia, though, was another level of craziness. At one point we were crossing the border – we'd appointed former KGB staff as security and they were on the ground and circling above us in a helicopter. As we drove into St Petersburg, the drivers were genuinely scared. All the roads were closed, blacked out Mercedes cars were shadowing us – it was quite something.

Talking of crazy, is it true you sang karaoke with the late Kim Jong-il, supreme leader of North Korea?

Yes, that was the San Francisco to Beijing run. We drove to Vegas and then shipped the cars to China. The drivers got to spend 24 hours in North Korea, hosted by Kim Jong-il. We ended up watching a show in their national stadium – just 300 of us in a stadium built for 150,000 people, which was incredible. More amazing is that we spent the night doing karaoke with Kim Jong-il. I think he was particularly impressed with my version of the Sex Pistols' My Way.

The 2014 rally, which ran from Miami to Ibiza, was also memorable. We parked all the cars at Ibiza's Old Port, which was quite a sight, and Deadmau5 was DJing for us. He's a big car guy actually – this year he's taking part in a car that looks like a fish, apparently. Most importantly, I married [singer] Eve this year at the Blue Marlin beach club. So clearly this was the best ever Gumball!

There have been so many amazing cars on the grid at Gumball over the years, but which ones for you personally have stood out?

The McLaren F1 LM at the first rally, for sure, as it's only one of five ever made. Oh, and in 2015 we had the Tumbler car from the Batman movie. It got the best reaction of any car from the public – certainly more than any hypercar we've featured. In 2012 I got to drive a Shelby Cobra from New York to L.A., which was a dream realised.

Who's been your favourite celebrity participant? And who would you love to see to take part in the Gumball?

Obviously, my wife [Eve]. She took part in 2010, which is when we met. And Hugh Hefner doing the whole trip in a limo – that was pretty cool. I'd love to see Steve McQueen and Paul Newman take part, as they are definitive car guys, but you can see how that might be tricky! For the fans, I think The Rock [Dwayne Johnson] would be awesome. I'd love to make that happen.

Finally, what's next for you personally in terms of business ambition? Are you drifting into the slow lane to relax and enjoy the fruits of your success – or are things still going full throttle?

I'm always looking for the next challenge. If things get too easy then we just step it up a gear. I'm back to more of a creative director role now, rather than logistics, which is the fun part. I've just completed a fashion collection with Kappa, for example, and have worked with brands like Puma, Adidas and the Morgan Motor Company. So, life is still moving pretty quickly. »