
Penalty Shoot Out Italy (Alfa) v Germany (BMW)

by Peter
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All photos
Classic &
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It all started when I got an email from Stuart Taylor, AROC Giulia 105 Registrar, inviting me to take part in a car feature for Classic and Sportscar magazine.

The feature was their "Ultimate Showdowns" series and the cars were to be a BMW 2002 tii and an Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV (105 series), the email included the name (Russ Smith) and contact details of the journalist. I contacted Russ and we had a brief chat. He told me in basic terms what it was all about and what they wanted to achieve.

After giving it some thought (about 60 seconds!) and carefully considering the consequences of what might be, I decided that the responsibility was too great. I didn't want to be the one to let down the team. I hate penalty shoot-outs and this was Italy v Germany. I promptly declined the offer, saying to Stuart that my car wasn't driving as well as it should be etc etc...and if he could find someone else, that would be great.

A few days passed and I didn't hear any more about a replacement vehicle, so I contacted Stuart saying if he hadn't found anybody then I would be "up for it" the reply came back "Done". Oh dear, what have I let myself in for?

Now the panic sets in....

The car needs an MOT, the brakes feel a bit spongy, the gearbox feels notchy, the light switch under the bonnet isn't original, there's underseal behind the grill that looks like dirt and the 4th of September is merely a week away....

Oh dear what to do.....?

Then comes the call from Russ Smith, "Hello, is that Peter?" (I was so tempted to say sorry you've got the wrong number) Yes I said, then the conversation continued for a few moments and the next thing I know, we were going to be meeting at the South Mimms Services on September 4th at 10am..

I started by calling David Thomas Garages and booked the car in for its MOT. That would be done on the Friday 29th August giving me a couple of days to clean and prepare the car for the big day.

On Monday the 1st September, I got a call from John at the garage to say that the MOT was done along with some other bits and pieces, the car was ready for collection. I went and collected Bertie and Johns parting words were "she drives well doesn't she?" They were exactly the reassuring words I needed to hear. I drove home in the evening traffic and thoroughly enjoyed every minute of the journey, it seemed to drive so much better than when I took it to the garage (or was it the fact that I had parted with a few hundred quid, and needed justification?).



Why did I buy a Bertie...?

Well; I do about 20,000 miles a year for my business in a modern car, and I wanted something that I could take to work on a nice sunny day when I didn't need to use a car for business. Something that wouldn't raise any eyebrows when I arrived at work, yet was a bit different, something Italian, something easy to drive yet exciting, something that would take me back to my past but also get me to my future destination.

I contemplated a Ferrari 308 GT4 but that would definitely raise eyebrows. I thought maybe a Lancia Fulvia or an Alfa Spider. Then I saw a Bertie on the road and instantly decided that's what I wanted. I started by contacting the Alfa Romeo Owners Club, and in turn, the Giulia105 Register. Then came the usual hunt, I went down the normal channels of speaking to specialists, and giving them my requirements, budget etc, etc.....

My purchase was to be very specific, it had to be an immaculate example, I didn't want to do any restoration work, but was happy to do the detailing. What I wanted was a car that had been fully restored, and as far as colour was concerned it had to be Dutch Blue.

I looked at a few but nothing really jumped out at me, then I received a phone call from someone selling a car that fitted the right credentials, he got my number from one of the specialist I had been in contact with. I arranged a viewing one evening, and travelled about 150 miles to see the car. It had been restored but just needed finishing off, we talked things through, and then a deal was done.....Or so I thought. To cut a long story short it didn't happen.



London Classic Car Show 2006 - Alexandra Palace

A friend of mine asked me to go with him to the classic car show on the Saturday, at Alexandra Palace, because he wanted to buy some bits and pieces. I reluctantly agreed and off we went. My past experiences of these shows are very expensive jumble sales, with very few nice cars on show and even fewer clubs.

We had been around most of the show and as before, it was most disappointing... then I saw the AROC logo in the distance, time for investigation I thought, so off I went leaving my friend and telling him to meet me there when he was ready. As I approached the stand I noticed what looked like two Berties on it. Oh joy of joys, the theme was restored cars, and these were both beautiful examples. I then spoke to Helen Powell, who was managing the stand, and she told me the ivory car was for sale. This to me was a very pretty car, but it wasn't blue! Did I love it

or would I loathe it in the morning? Highlights of the story can be read in April 2007 (volume 41/2) club magazine

VWL251R - Now purchased and in my garage

I have spent the last year detailing the car and looking for that illusive "sunny day" to take it to work. I still have a little more work to do to bring it up to standard, which I will do. My new challenge is to one day win the National Concours. In this years concourse it won the "Highly Commended" prize, and also won the Herts & South Beds Section regional (fun) concourse.

My advice to anybody thinking of buying a Bertie is to go on and get one before the rest of the world wakes up one day and realises what fantastic value for money these cars really are.



Going back to the "shoot out"

Russ (the journalist) and I arrived at South Mimes first and we started chatting and admiring each other's cars (he had arrived in a 1982 Porsche 944). He started saying some encouraging things about my car, but I was still nervous. Then the BMW turned up. The chap honked his horn, flashed his lights and pulled up a few metres away from us. The door flew open, he jumped out, slamming the door closed, and as he walked over to us, the chrome trim fell off the bottom of his door...No I didn't laugh, lets just say my nerves disappeared for good.

The photographer arrived, and we then drove to various destinations in Hertfordshire for the photo shoot.

We all had a great time, apart from the photographer who spent most of the time in the rain, (and sometimes very heavy) in ditches, on his back and on his front, trying to get some pictures. We drove each other's cars and then were asked what we thought of them. My Mother told me never to lie, however this guy was about 6'2" and so diplomacy was adopted and although I didn't lie it could be said that I was economical with the truth.....!

Peter Timotheou.

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