



PETERSEN
INSIDE ONE OF THE WORLD'S
GREAT MOTOR MUSEUMS

FERRARI P4
CONSTRUCTING
A WORK OF ART



New Zealand Classic Car



*im*pressive THE REVOLUTIONARY HILLMAN IMP



MAZDA RX-2
ROTARY PERFECTION

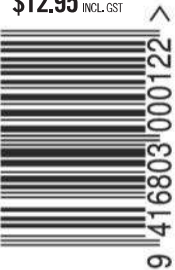


TOYOTA LAND CRUISER
PIONEERING PROWESS



THE LOST WORLD — HITTING PAY DIRT IN DARGAVILLE

ISSUE 387
MAY/JUN. 2023
classiccar.co.nz
\$12.95 INCL. GST





HERON RELEASED BACK INTO THE WILD

By Patrick Harlow

Tom Wichman grew up just like any other boy would in Hamilton. As a pre-schooler, his dad drove him around in a car that Tom has no memories of but, as his father talked about it often, he remembered the name. It was a Heron MJ1. When he was old enough to recognise cars, the Heron was long gone, but it was clear that his father was still keen on the car.

The Heron was a sports car manufactured in limited numbers in Rotorua in the mid '80s. What makes it unique is that, despite its small production run, it is the country's most prolific mass-produced car. If that was not enough, Heron is one of very few companies that mass-produced monocoque fibreglass sports cars anywhere in the world. It was not a kit

car; people who bought it were given the keys and most were driven straight out of the factory by their new owners.

One day, Tom's brother, Taylor, found a Heron for sale on the internet. It was their dad's old car. The family decided to buy it for Dad as a surprise present for his 50th birthday. Towards the end of the auction, only two people were bidding, and Tom found out the competing bidder had a Heron and lived just south of Hamilton. Tom won the auction, and his dad got his Heron MJ1. However, his interest piqued, Tom arranged to call in on the other bidder. The other bidder's car was in a sad state. The owner had started to pull it apart to do it up. It was now a non-runner sitting forlornly with about 16 boxes of parts gathered around it.

Tom offered to buy it. The owner declined, but took his number anyway. Shortly after, Tom received the call he had been hoping for, and, at 24 years of age, he became the owner of his own Heron. Tom estimated that it would take about nine months to get the car mobile again. The previous owner, with experience on his side, thought that Tom was dreaming, but when Tom got it home, it became a father-son project. Apart from the wiring, which was completely replaced by Tom's dad, all the parts were there.

The car was on the restoration register so it did not have to be certified. Two weeks after getting the car home, it was back on the road with a WOF and registration. Six years have now passed; the car has proven to be reliable and an attention-getting daily driver.

The greatest moment Tom had with the car was when its designer and creator, Ross Baker, hopped in the passenger seat and Tom took him for a ride. The way Tom felt, it might have been Enzo Ferrari in the passenger seat. ■



NEXT MONTH

#388

ON SALE 19 JUNE



The legendary GT40

Building a car from scratch requires patience, skill, and hard work. In our next issue, we feature a near-perfect tribute to the legendary Ford GT40, a car that has captured the hearts of car enthusiasts for many generations. Having won the prestigious Le Mans race four times in a row, from 1966, when Bruce McLaren and Chris Amon triumphed, to 1969, the GT40 is widely regarded as one of the most iconic and influential American cars ever made.

This sleek and aerodynamic design made the car a symbol of power, speed, and style, and it has been the subject of countless tribute builds over the years — but few have been as impressive as Brian Stuart's sublime example.



Home away from home

The LT is VW's forgotten and usually overlooked gem, but when owners Greg and Fran discovered this van on arriving in London with an extended family of varying ages in tow, it seemed the perfect choice for converting into a suitable camper. Now back in New Zealand, the camper is used regularly and has been the preferred mode of transport and accommodation for many a family holiday. It has covered a great deal of the country, providing a home away from home for short trips, impromptu overnights, and longer excursions, gracing many beautiful locations.

TO PURCHASE BACK ISSUES ONLINE, GO TO:

