

TOM MALLOY INTERVIEW: VINTAGE RACER, COLLECTOR FOLLOWS IN HIS FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

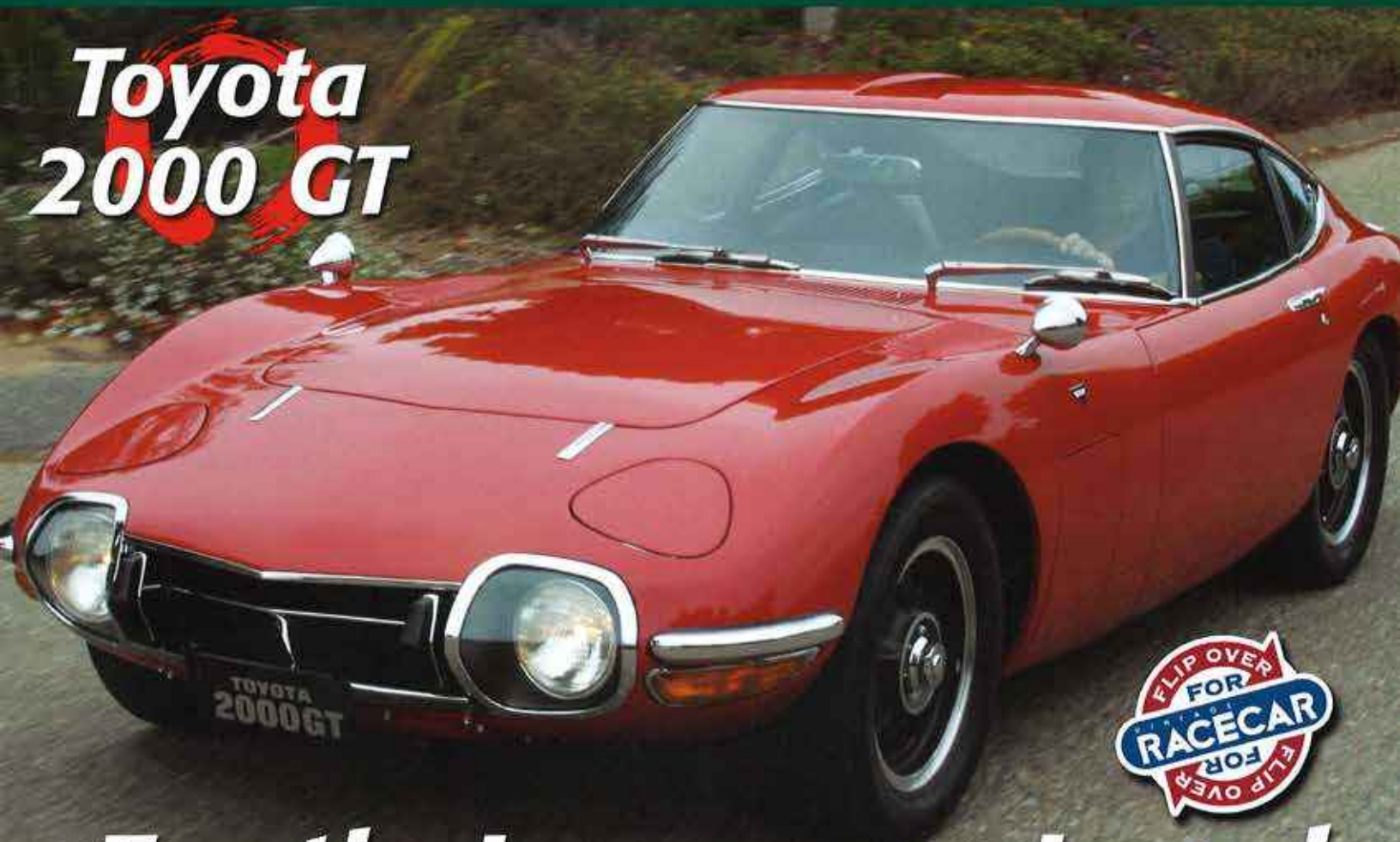
V I N T A G E

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OCTOBER 2016

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1989 Porsche Speedster





Tom Malloy

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Malloy credits his Brabham BT18 as being one of his favorite racecars and the last he’d ever part with.

Tom Malloy

Vintage Racer, Collector

VR: Let’s start off at the very beginning, can you tell me a little bit about how and when you first got infected by the car bug?

TM: Oh, that was real early. I was probably eight or nine years old. My dad had a racetrack, Carrell Speedway, and then in 1949—I was 10 years old then—he bought a sprint car from J.C. Agajanian and fixed it up as the Malloy Special and had a guy named Rex Mays drive it for a few races. Then, shortly after that, a young guy named Troy Ruttman drove it for a couple of years and really made a name for himself. Troy, being about 19 years old, in those days you’re supposed to be 21, but he’d played around with his driver’s license, and quite honestly that’s the reason he couldn’t drive for Aggie because he wasn’t old enough. But it made the Malloy Deuce, as it became known, very famous in the Midwest and around the West Coast, but particularly in the Midwest, where it won all kinds of races. So, anyway, that was my indoctrination into the car thing.

VR: How did your Dad get involved with Carrell Speedway?

TM: Dad had a construction business and he had machinery down on this big area in Gardena, California, which was very isolated at the time.

There was a racetrack there called Gardena Bowl, a clay track. It washed out in a big, heavy rainstorm. So my dad and another fellow got together and with his machinery, they rebuilt the place into a concrete version. He signed a lease with the land owner, Judge Frank R. Carrell of Gardena. That is how it became known as Carrell’s Speedway. A lot of people thought it was named after my oldest sister whose name was Carol! Anyway, they

rebuilt this racetrack and Dad got deeper and deeper into it financially and it eventually ended up where, because of all the equipment and money that my Dad spent, he ended up owning the place on leased land and ran it for a few years. Then Bill White was a promoter for a while for my dad while J.C. Agajanian promoted some races there. My dad actually was manager of the place for a while. Being young then, I don’t know all the circumstances of who and why and what, but that was basically where I was raised.

VR: So, having grown up with racecars and in that environment, at what point did you finally get your hands on your own car and what was it?

TM: Well, interestingly enough, it was quite some time after that. I had seen what my dad had put into racing both financially and emotionally, and as I got older I saw him struggle with this you know...what’s the old saying? “Racing is a great way to make a small fortune, out of a large one.” And it bites you, it consumes you.

VR: Actually, I was thinking more your first personal or street car. At what age and what car did you first drive?

TM: I was totally into cars and I couldn’t wait to turn 16 and be able to drive legally. I’d been driving, since the time I was probably eight or nine years old, down at the racetrack in an old pickup truck that belonged to Dad’s company. I could drive anywhere I wanted on that 40- or 50-acre parcel, but I didn’t drive on the street. I would drive his tractors around sometimes moving them from one job to the next even though I wasn’t old enough. Anyway, as I got older, 16, I staked out, with my



Much of Malloy's passion for cars and racing came from his father who not only owned and managed Southern California's Carrell Speedway but was an owner/entrant in many Indy 500 entries including this one for Jimmy Reece in 1954.

dad, a 1940 Ford two-door Deluxe. Neatest little car. I put a Dago axle in it and hopped up the engine. He bought it for me six months before I turned 16 and we parked it in the backyard. I'd come home from school every day and dust it, fire it up and move it forward and backward. I'd sit there and dream about driving it around and, lo and behold, when I got my driver's license there was no stopping me.

I stamped the hood with louvers and did all the stuff you did back in those hot rod days. That was my first car.

VR: Presumably then, as time went on, you developed your business, but how did cars figure into that time period or did you have to put it aside and come back to cars later in life?

TM: Yeah, that's kind of the way it was. As I mentioned before, after seeing what it did to my dad both emotionally and financially,

even though I was as consumed with it as he was, I pretty much made up my mind that I wasn't going to mess with that stuff! So I pretty much got away from it. I graduated from college, got married, started raising a family, got into the construction business working my fool head off trying to make a living, and racecars were the farthest thing from my mind. I was just trying to make a living.

VR: So, at what point did that come back into your life?

TM: I was probably in business four or five years (Trench Shoring Company, which I started in 1973 and is my business to this day) when a sewer pipe salesman came up to me and says that one of his truck drivers has a racecar, like a stock car type thing, and he's really a neat guy and would I be interested in helping him out with some tires. Well, I met the guy and he was a nice guy and we visited

and I started giving him something like \$500 a month to buy tires. His name is Larry Lord. We're friends to this day, though he races no longer. I'm guessing this would have been about 1979. I was making a few bucks by then so I helped him out for quite some time.

Then another guy who sold insurance to contractors approached me the same way. Marshal Rose was his name and he said, "Hey Tom, would you ever be interested in helping a guy out at the Long Beach Grand Prix?" I said, you're kidding me and he says, no. Business had been going along fairly good for me so, in 1986 at Long Beach, he put me in touch with Rocky Moran. I helped Rocky out probably, oh I don't know three or four years in a row and also helped him at the '87 and '88 Indy 500s. We got bumped in '87 and in '88 we had Trench Shoring Company stickers on one of the A.J. Foyt cars. Then in 1992, A.J. Foyt puts all of his stuff up for sale in a three-

day auction at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. What I ended up doing, I bought the same car that I had sponsored in 1988 plus the fuel tank that still had Trench Shoring Company's logo on it. It was pretty run down because it had been sitting out in the weather for four years. I also bought some fueling hoses, some spare engines, Foyt driving suits and stuff like that. That was my first racecar, the '86 March that I sponsored that belonged to A.J. Foyt and that Rocky drove, and we just had a great time and I'll never forget it. I have that car to this day and have driven it several times in places like Road Atlanta, Fontana, Willow Springs and different racetracks around the country. But that was really my first collector car, if you will.

VR: And buying that certainly opened the floodgates from there!

TM: Yeah, it got a little out of control. But the nice thing about it is my wife and children are all normal.

VR: They counter balance you.

TM: I've bought a lot of cars since then. I have a reason for every one of them. It might not mean anything to anybody else, but it meant something to me when the car came along.

VR: Initially, you went deep into Indy cars to start with but then you began to branch out and you bought formula cars and a host of other types. You said you buy things that are personal, how did that interest broaden over time?

TM: Well, it's difficult to use the Indy cars. You just take them out to the ovals and in most cases drive them around. Obviously, you can take the newer Indy cars that run on road courses and use them, change the setup on them and use them on road courses. I bought that Indy car, the Foyt car I told you about, and I took it out and played with it up at Willow Springs several different times and in a couple of different situations made a fool of myself. I was trying to get racy, and then I decided to join VARA, Vintage Auto Racing As-



Malloy's ownership of Ed Pink Racing Engines came in handy when he acquired this ex-Leyton House 1988 Porsche 962-C.



A longtime friend and fan of Dan Gurney, Malloy owns a number of significant Eagles including this ex-Vern Schuppan 1975 Eagle F5000 car.

sociation. My first race was down at Palm Springs in November of '96 and when they dropped that green flag, I didn't know what happened. I was so unprepared. Luckily, I behaved myself and stayed out of trouble. So then I take it to Willow Springs for another race and I'm having trouble with the car running, I've got all these people around trying to help me out with the external starter and all this stuff. I mean you need a well-rounded crew to keep one of these cars going and going properly, especially with a Cosworth engine. So, I have that car there and another '86 March with a Chevy in it and I'm not having any luck with either one of them. Can't keep them running and when I am running, I'm not running worth a damn. So, this guy comes up to me, he's a friend of a friend of

mine and he says, you're not having much fun, are you? I says, are you kidding me? If I had a for sale sign, I'd put it on this stuff right here and sell the whole pile. He says, you probably won't listen to me but you're going about this the wrong way. You need a car like that right over there and he points over and I didn't even know what it was at the time. Looking back on it, it was a Formula Ford. He says, you need a car like that. I said to myself, my kids have roller-skates bigger than that car. He says, you throw two switches and push the starter button and go.

So, it was about a week later and we're back at my shop trying to figure out what didn't work. Later, I'm driving down the freeway and I remember the guy saying, throw two switches and push the starter button and go.

So I start looking in magazines like yours and I see this car that looked like the one the guy pointed out. It turns out it's a BT18 Brabham and Mark Leonard has it for sale. So I drive down to La Jolla and buy the car from him and I take it to Willow Springs and play with it, I mean I'm having a lot of fun. I have that car to this day. Wherever I am as a vintage car racer, that BT18 Brabham is the thing that got me there. I learned how to drive, I love the car. It will probably be the last car I ever get rid of when the time comes to do that.

VR: And then the collecting really started.

TM: I raced it for about a year, year and a half or so and I wanted to step up and, lo and behold, I look in another magazine and they've got a Lola T70 Mark 3B for sale, it's going to be sold at a U.S. Customs sale in Long Beach.

I end up buying that T70, then I got a Formula 5000 and some other cars have come along since then—a 962 Porsche, Toyota GTP car—and I've been able to manage most of them as time went on and be respectable. I usually finish up toward the front and not embarrass the cars. It's always the thing that I worried about when you show up with some of the cars I own, the last thing you want to do is embarrass the car. You want to be able to get it around. I think I've done a fair job of doing that as far as not embarrassing my cars. I've had just a great time and that's kind of the way it's gone.

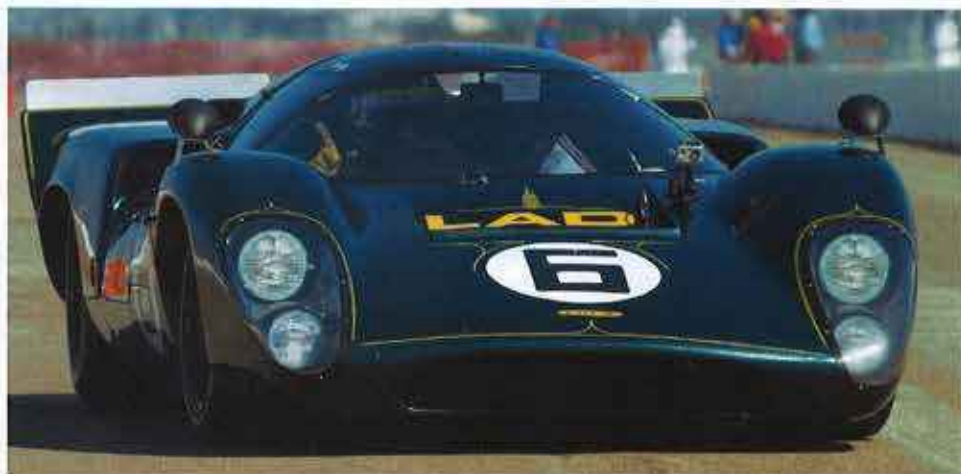
Along the way, I've supplemented my formula cars with some very special Indy cars including one of the Indy winners. I have the 1981-winning Penske PC9B that Bobby Unser drove. Turns out that was the biggest disputed win in the history of the Indianapolis 500, where Unser got the checkered flag and all the accolades the day of the win, and then they saw the replay of it and Pat Patrick protested the race and Mario was declared the winner the next day. Then 138 days later, the three-judge panel gives the win back to Penske, fines him \$40,000 so he's the winner

in perpetuity. Turns out I have the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place cars that year, Vern Schuppan drove the 3rd place car. It's quite a thing, and Bobby Unser and I have gotten to be really good friends and he's driven the car at Indianapolis two or three times at vintage events.

VR: You've been active, obviously both as a collector and as a competitor, now for plus or minus 20 years or so now. I know throughout that whole time, you've been extremely supportive of all the magazines such as ours and all the race organizations and a lot of events. You've been very generous in your support of the hobby. You obviously didn't have to do any of that. What do you think has compelled you to be so philanthropic with the hobby?

TM: Well, you know, I mean it's not bad

for business. I was in New Zealand racing, took my cars over there it was quite some time ago, and I'm walking through this paddock of this race track I've never been to before in my life and I have my uniform on and this other guy is walking the other way and he's got his racing suit on too and he looks at me and he points and as it turns out he's pointing right at me but I've never met this guy before in my life. He takes his finger and he goes right up to my chest where I have the Trench Shoring Company logo and he says, "I finally get it." Apparently he was getting magazines from the States and he saw the Trench Shoring Company ad in the vintage racing magazine. And he says, do you own that company? And I said, yes, and he said, I finally get it ... why you advertise in there (in racing magazines). So it didn't hurt the company and it was helping the racing community.



One of Malloy's earliest, and more unusual, acquisitions is this 1969 Lola T70 Mark III B he bought at a U.S. Customs auction!



One of Malloy's fastest and most sophisticated racers is this 1991 AAR Eagle-Toyota GTP.



Edgar Elder at the wheel of the Malloy Special, at the Sacramento 100, in October of 1953. Malloy would desperately love to locate this car from his father's past.

Then about eight years ago, I bought Ed Pink Racing Engines. Ed was getting older and I had engines there being rebuilt and he brought up selling one day. I said to myself, well hell this could be a little bit of fun, let me see. I've always felt that the vintage racing group, racing in general but particularly vintage racing, needed a good engine company. Because of my association with vintage racing and people knowing me, I was going to take a chance of buying this place and making it a good vintage engine shop. It was making no money when I bought it. Since then, I've turned the place around and we have a good base of vintage racing people who bring their engines to Ed Pink Racing Engines. We've also been lucky enough to pick up accounts such as Singer Porsche, which has turned out to be a really good thing for Ed Pink Racing Engines.

VR: And then the last question we always like to wrap up with is that if a genie were to pop out of a bottle and grant you one automotive wish, is there still one magic car out there that you'd love to own if money were no object.


TM: Yeah, ironically. The champ car that Bob Pankratz built for my dad in 1952 to take back to Indianapolis for the first time in 1953. Bob Pankratz is Wally Pankratz's dad.

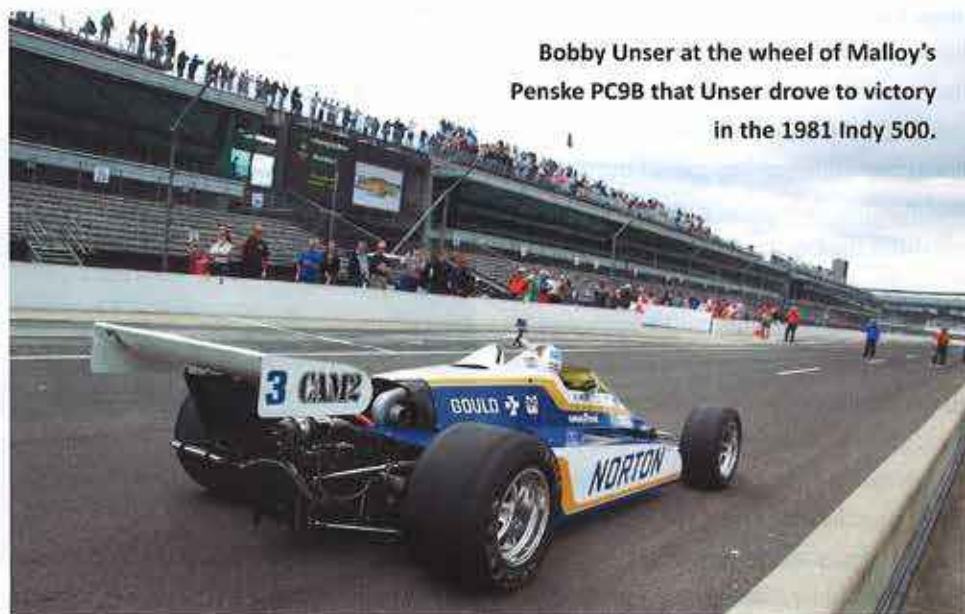
Bob was a racecar driver in his own right in the '40s, and he became a very good fabricator and he built a lot of racecars. I have one of them, a sprint car that he built. Anyway, he built a car for Sid Street in 1951 and they took it back for the race, and then he built another identical car for my dad in '52 for the '53 Indianapolis 500. So Dad took it back there and it did not make the race, they were not fast enough to qualify.

So they brought the car back West and they did a couple of dirt races that year, Sacramento being one of them and Phoenix was the other. Then they took it to Eddie Kuzma,

a very famous car fabricator. Eddie redid the suspension on the car and dad took it back in both 1954 and '55 and made the race with Jimmy Reece driving the car. Started 7th in '54 and finished 17th. It qualified a little worse in '55 and was the first car out of the race with a broken rod.

I cannot find that car and I can't find the Sid Street car. I've actually paid people; I've given them stipends to find either one of them. I can tell which one was my dad's car because I was around that car—if I wasn't in school or sleeping—I was down at the shop in Torrance where the car was being built. I was down there every minute of every day helping—or I probably should say I was in the way! It didn't matter, I was there and I loved it.

I was the guy who did all the safety wiring on the tanks and everything like that because they didn't have a tool in those days. I was the tool to put the safety wire on! But I'd give my left arm, maybe even my right arm, to find that car, and I've got the feeling it's probably gone because I've tried everything. I'd love to find that car. That would be a feather in my cap if I could find dad's old car. Interestingly enough, four or five months ago I bought a car, a rail Champ Car. I needed this car like a bad toothache, but it had my dad's Offy engine in it. If I ever would find the car, now I have the engine. 



Bobby Unser at the wheel of Malloy's Penske PC9B that Unser drove to victory in the 1981 Indy 500.