

Corso Veloce

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW ZEALAND FIAT OWNERS CLUB

August/September 2018





MARK'S MUSINGS

Welcome to the latest edition of the newsletter. A few bits and bobs to report this issue, mostly around club administration. As reported in our event round-up elsewhere in this issue, we held the AGM in late July, as part of the road run to Foxton. While most committee members have remained

unchanged, Phil Sutton stood down as both secretary and editor. As such, I have offered to take over editorial duties, and Paul Morgan has become secretary (as well as being membership secretary). Many thanks to Phil for his long service as both secretary and editor – having taken over from former President David Birse when he upped sticks to Tauranga.

Also, as part of the AGM, *immediate-past-President-in-exile* Cliff Gibson was nominated for Life Membership, recognising his long service to the club over many decades, which included two stints as President (which suggests he didn't learn the first time around!). Congratulations Cliff.

Thanks also to Cliff for contributing a couple of articles to this edition, including an update on his 124 Sport, and another overseas story on the 508 (for what it's worth, the NZ Motor Vehicle Register has just one 508 recorded in NZ, a Ballila). I hadn't realised that Cliff's coupe went into long-term storage while Cliff and Julie waited for their new house to be built (or perhaps I just wasn't paying attention!). Had we known, I'm sure the Wellington *La Fiat Familia* would have been quite happy to "take care of it,

amico mio" in the interim – although he may have needed to pay a ransom to get it back!

As mentioned, I've now assumed editorial duties, this being my first edition at the helm (I aim to produce one every two months). The good news for readers being that I do have some experience in desktop publishing. I do plan to make refinements as I settle in (this is my first attempt at a new format), plus I also want to publish some member profiles. I always find it interesting chatting to members at events to learn what Fiats – or Lancias – they have owned in the past, not to mention what they have in the shed. Every time I chat to Phil Sutton I learn about more cars he has stashed away. Likewise every time Trevor and Barb Wall attend a function, they share yet more humorous Fiat-related stories from their long involvement in the club. I'm sure other members will also find it interesting to learn what – and who – we have in the club, and fun anecdotes. So I plan to email a selection on long-standing members a short questionnaire to help provide background for these profiles, plus request photos. There is no obligation to respond, but I hope most of you will. I also have some ideas on other articles, but as always, I welcome feedback and suggestions from you – the members.

Finally in this issue, I've included a summary of various obituaries on the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles CEO Sergio Marchionne, who died suddenly following complications from shoulder surgery, and who is credited with turning the Fiat group of companies around in the past decade.

Mark Stockdale
FOCNZ President

Fleet news

Not too much to report, the main event being that my 2300 Familiare has gone into get an engine overhaul, plus repair the steering box. The engine has been smoky for a while, and the car has had no use in over a year, after first failing a WoF for visible smoke, and a second time for a steering fault. So, it was time to bite the bullet and give the car some TLC, and was scheduled for repair at Bristol Motors in Upper Hutt, who have a long waiting list. Luckily I already had a new engine gasket set, and also got a new water pump and engine chain and gear set off Mal Simmonds (plus in order to keep both my 2300s going long-term, I also have a couple of spare engines, which I hope I won't need). Whilst getting that work done I am also getting a factory overdrive unit installed, taken off one of the cars I have dismantled. Hopefully I'll be able to report that the car is up and running in the next issue.



Hey—someone's nicked me engine!

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CLUB EVENTS

Vintage Car Club Daffodil Rally

On 26 August we had our usual bi-monthly Italian Car Breakfast at The Esplanade with the Ferrari and Alfa clubs. After which a group of cars went on a convoy to QEII Park in Paekakariki to display our cars at the Daffodil Rally for Cancer organised by the Vintage Car Club, an event that was held around the country. We were joined at the breakfast by Gary Adams in his 124 Spider and Foxton members Paul and Tricia Brice, with local member Adam McFerran joining us at the Rally in his modern 500.



NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to new members who have joined us in the last few months:

Grant Ransley, Waikanae
– 1972 Fiat 850 Sport

Alan Brown, Palmerston North
– 1973 Fiat 125T, 1972 Fiat 124S, 1978 Fiat 128 3P

Foxton road run

A fun day on 29 July with 9 people taking part in the road run to Foxton, including new members Grant and Angela Ransley (in a non-Fiat). We began with a quick visit to the new Te Awahou museum, before lunch and a quick AGM (see elsewhere in the mag for the annual accounts), followed by a screening of the McLaren documentary at the art deco MavTECH sound and vision museum. Special thanks to local members Paul and Tricia Brice for hosting us for lunch, and for co-ordinating the day.



(above) Te Awahou museum and windmill

(below) MavTECH sound and vision museum

FOCNZ round of the Intermarque club sprints

A number of members got up early on 24 June to help run our round of the Intermarque club sprint series at Manfeild. It was a successful event, blessed by perfect weather for the time of year, although alas there were not many Fiats out racing – save for club member Alan Howe and his 128 Coupe (pictured below).



COMING EVENTS

Sunday 30 September:

Road run to the Rush Collection in **Feilding**. The Rush Collection comprises a collection of racing cars and memorabilia along with some classic cars and commercials. Cost is \$10 per person. Will be followed by lunch and then an optional visit to the Coachhouse Museum which also has classic cars. Rendezvous at Plimmerton Weigh Station at **9.00am**, or for the northern members, meet at 51 Mahua Road, Feilding at 11.00am. Note daylight savings starts this day. RSVP to focnz.contact@gmail.com

Saturday 17 November:

Fiat 124 Reunion. An anniversary of Fiat 124 Coupes and Spiders is being held in Wellington from 16-18 November. The club will join them for a display in **Paraparaumu (approx. 9am)** before travelling to **Martinborough** for lunch (depart approx. 10.45am). More details to be advised by email and on our Facebook page, but mark this date in your diary now.

Sunday 9 December:

Xmas BBQ lunch. The club is once again hosting our annual end-of-year BBQ at the **Otaihanga Domain** in Paraparaumu. A BBQ will be available to cook food, bring what you want to eat and drink. Its family-friendly, so bring the kids too! There's plenty of parking and there are public toilets. Entrance is off **Makora Rd**, which is off **Otaihanga Rd** – take the old SH 1 (now Main Rd) and take the exit at the roundabout to Southwards Museum and stay on Otaihanga Rd and then turn right at the end onto Makora Rd. Aim to arrive by **midday**. For those coming from the south, meet at Plimmerton Weigh Station at **11am** for a 11.15am departure. RSVP to focnz.contact@gmail.com

OBITUARY – SERGIO MARCHIONNE

Sergio Marchionne, who died in July aged 66, was renowned in the motor industry for the way he engineered dramatic turnarounds in the fortunes of Fiat and subsequently Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA). He became chief executive of Fiat in 2004, even though he was an accountant and tax specialist who had no previous experience of the car industry, taking the helm of a company that had lost US\$7b the previous year.

He took drastic measures to restore Fiat to financial health, including cutting costs and models which weren't profitable enough (including the Lancia brand). One coup was persuading General Motors to pay US\$2b to sever its partnership with Fiat. One of his most notable successes was overseeing the introduction of a new Fiat 500.

A master negotiator, Marchionne engineered one of the most brazen automotive deals in history when in 2009 he persuaded the US government to sell bankrupt automaker Chrysler to Fiat, and turned the combined Fiat Chrysler Automobiles into one of the most profitable firms in the industry, and the world's seventh-largest automaker, in less than a decade. Marchionne argued that further consolidation was inevitable in the global car industry, and had tried to negotiate another merger with General Motors, which never eventuated.

During his tenure, he boosted Fiat's share value by more than 10 times, and the market value of FCA rose to US\$30b, all while releasing models meant to make

petrolheads feel excited to drive an Italian car again: the new Fiat 500; the Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione; the Alfa 4C; the Alfa Giulia and Stelvio SUV, and of course the new Fiat 124 Spider. Not to mention Ferrari is having one of its most successful eras in over 70 years (Marchionne kept a black Enzo in his collection, and could often be found testing the latest wares on the Fiorano circuit after his famous 6am meetings on Monday morning).

Marchionne was born in Italy but emigrated with his family to Toronto when aged 13, where he later completed his studies in philosophy, business administration, and law, earning an MBA before starting his brilliant career with consulting companies. He would pass through some of the most

significant and visible multinational organizations in the world, and would join Fiat's board in 2003, four months after the death of Gianni Agnelli. He became CEO in June 2004, following the death of Gianni Agnelli's brother, Umberto, Fiat's chairman, leaving a family void in the company. He was first person outside the Agnelli clan to be at the helm (current Fiat Group vice president John Elkann is an Agnelli heir).

Marchionne had already planned to retire next year and turn the reins over to successor Mike Manley, who headed the company's Jeep and Ram brands.

- Sourced from www.stuff.co.nz, www.todrivefor.com, www.petrolicious.com, www.cbsnews.com



REPATRIATION OF MELLOW YELLOW

Just a week or two back, for better or for worse, HWMB0 (he who must be obeyed) turned up and claimed me back from the tender care of Uncle Mal. Leaving my dry and comfortable accommodation and especially the assembled whanau, was with mixed feelings, but it was good to have tarmac under my wheels again. Having had a recent fluid transfusion and health check I sang all the way to my new home in a brand-new garage. On arrival I promptly left my mark (just like a cat – you know what I mean)! I have noticed that there is now a shiny tin thing sitting under my belly.

Although a Waikato newbie I have some observations to share. Aftermarket exhaust systems must be a growth industry followed closely by suspension lowering kits. Now, I have been known to emit a significant level of decibels until Uncle Mal supplied an OEM system, but there are many roar-ty exhausts here than expected. Some of these are fitted to vehicles less than 4 years old. Even the Harley guys struggle to make an aural impact – got to feel for them! And there is a proliferation of lowered vehicles. Does this mean a number of sympathetic WOF inspectors in the Waikato?

It's easy to be sniffy about these vehicle mods; exhaust systems that probably drop horse power by 5% and suspension kits reducing handling performance on any surface but billiard table smoothness, but I've realised thinking like this is missing the point. It's all about how it sounds and how it looks, the owners demonstrating

that they care and what's wrong with that?

After 25 years in Wellington it is now exciting to journey east and west as well

as north and – well just north. The revelation that travel is possible to all the points of the compass has stimulated my sense of direction. But I miss lots. Sunday morning visits to the Sandbar, catching up with the whanau and sharing stories with Alfas and the aristocrats who, despite perceptions are quite friendly. Rubbing shoulders with interesting 4-wheel compatriots at car shows and lunches at the Mediterranean warehouse are other examples. HWMB0 also seems to miss chatting about my idiosyncrasies and comparing notes will fellow victims. Hehe, he has no idea what is really going on, but I intend to maintain the delusion!

If the editor sees fit I will check in again during the Spring.

All the best

Ciao MY
August 2018



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Coppa d'Oro delle Dolomiti

July 31, 2018 from *Veloce Today*; a selection of content with a focus on Fiat 508s. BTW one sold for NZ\$600,000+ see <https://rmsothebys.com/en/auctions/MC18/Monaco/lots/ro083-1935-fiat-508-cs-balilla-berlinetta-aerodinamica/661784>

Photos by Alessandro Gerelli

The Coppa d'Oro delle Dolomiti, Alessandro Gerelli, and the Editor are all 71 years old. While this is purely coincidental, Alessandro's phenomenal coverage of the modern event is not. It is the result of years of dedication to his photography, his passion, and his ongoing and

remarkable support of *VeloceToday.com*. He began reporting the event, a re-creation of the original race that began in 1947, sixteen years ago in 2002 when Phil Hill was an honored guest.

Alessandro lives in Bresso, near Milan and is interested in flying, collecting Ferrari literature, photography and art. The car bug bit at age 16, and he has owned Abarths, Lancia, including a Delta Integrale 16v, and a Toyota MR2. He has been taking race and car photos since he was in college.

Here below is his fourteenth report on the fascinating, ever-changing cars that compete in the Coppa d'Oro delle Dolomiti.



Fiat 508 C 1937



Lancia Aprilia 1937



Fiat Campagnola 1965



**Lancia Lambda Casaro 1929.
Winner of 2018 edition of the Coppa d'Oro.**



Fiat 508 S Balilla Sport 1934



Fiat 508 coupè 1934



Fiat 508 Cs waiting in line.

Classifieds

Classic Bambina wanted for wedding.

A couple are wanting to hire a classic Fiat 500 for their wedding photo shoot, to be held in Tongariro National Park next February 9th. If you're able to help, contact Vee nickandvee2019@gmail.com

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FIAT OWNERS CLUB OF NEW ZEALAND INCCash Receipt and Payment Summary
For Year End 31 March 18

| | Cheque Account | Term Deposit Account | Total |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Opening Balances 1 April 2017 | 2,276.24 | 8,202.38 | 10,478.62 |
| Cash Receipts | | | |
| Subscriptions | 1,135.00 | | 1,135.00 |
| Advertising | 0.00 | | 0.00 |
| Intermarque | 1,138.38 | | 1,138.38 |
| Interest | 0.00 | 164.41 | 164.41 |
| Net Transfer to Term Deposit | | | 0.00 |
| Total Receipts | 2,273.38 | 164.41 | 2,437.79 |
| Cash Payments | | | |
| Magazine Subscription | 147.44 | | 147.44 |
| BBQ | 156.97 | | 156.97 |
| Social | 455.00 | | 455.00 |
| Gift | 25.00 | | 25.00 |
| Subscriptions | 570.85 | | 570.85 |
| Website (Domain Name) | 105.80 | | 105.80 |
| Total Payments | 1,461.06 | 0.00 | 1,461.06 |
| Cash Surplus/Deficit | 812.32 | 164.41 | 976.73 |
| Closing Balance 31 March 2018 | 3,088.56 | 8,366.79 | 11,455.35 |

President M. Stockdale

Treasurer M. Lynskey

Date: May 2018

Forza Corsa

Raucous, lairy and hilarious, the Group 2 Fiat-Abarth 1000 dominated its classes in international motorsport in the 1960s. What's it like to drive today?

Words: Simon Park
Images: Michael Ward



In a feature on another potent Abarth, some years ago, I suggested that '101 Things To Do With A Baby Fiat' still awaited an author. Since then, Big Mama herself has staked her literary claim, churning out the current 500, 595 and 695 in a bewildering number of variants and special editions. But in fact, Carlo Abarth was a dab hand at that in his day, too, and his reworkings of the 500 and 600 models were equally prolific.

He certainly wrote that other book, too – the one about squeezing unfeasible amounts of power and performance out of the Torinese toddlers which, with his moniker added, dominated the lower echelons of international motorsport throughout much of the 1960s. Should you venture into your friendly local Abarth dealer now, shopping

perhaps for one of the current 595s (and you should – they're irresistible), you will be offered a range of versions which includes a Turismo and a Competizione. Nowadays, these 'Touring' and 'Competition' epithets are ascribed, perhaps somewhat whimsically, to different versions of the same model; but 50 years ago they were joined at the hip.

Like Enzo Ferrari, Carlo Abarth was first and foremost a racer. But whilst Ferrari built distinctive, dedicated road cars merely to pay for his (generally) very different, but similarly focused, racers, Abarth's road-going models derived from Fiat's little shopping trolleys were essentially dual purpose, designed to be deployed in every conceivable motorsport discipline. Which is why the 600-based cars were labelled Turismo Competizione – until, that is, the ultimate g82cc version arrived in

1965. Although often referred to as the 1000TC, its official factory designation was now Berlina Corsa – simply, racing saloon.

In the 850TC (actually 847cc) that it replaced, the 600 engine's bore, at 62.5mm, was pretty close to the water. In the quest for a full litre, therefore, Abarth built his own blocks with thicker metal which allowed for a 65mm bore (in conjunction with a 5mm longer stroke). Its other essentials – camshaft, carburettor and so on – were unchanged, but the extra capacity took power from around 60hp to an eventual 85hp at a heady 7600rpm.

The example we have here is an archetype of the breed – an original, pukka Group 2 car from 1967. "It is believed to be a 'client' car", says marque guru Tony Castle-Miller, whose Middle Barton Garage is currently offering it





for sale. "Abarth used to 'lend' cars to teams based outside Italy (such as Radbourne Racing), not because he was generous but because he wanted full grids in the 850 and 1000cc classes. In order to score maximum points in the European Touring Car Championship, the classes had to be full."

Carlo had another compelling reason for fielding as many of his cars as possible: a deal he had struck with Fiat guaranteed him cash payments for all points scored for a first or second place – by factory entries or privateers. Nice work if you can get it; but this cushy arrangement was obviously of

benefit to both parties, allowing Fiat to bask in reflected glory whilst helping to keep the Austrian émigré's company afloat for a good few years.

Climb out of a modern 595 and straight into its 50-year-old ancestor (which I did) and the genetic inheritance of the current car becomes as plain as the proverbial pikestaff. The hard bark of a small, well-tuned four-potter and the womb-like interior environment are common to both – but on different scales. Reminders of how lardy new cars have become don't come any starker than this – the 600 feels like a

toy now, but it's nice and snug in here, the seat a comfortably tight fit for the average male *derrière*, the high side bolsters clamping you firmly in place around corners. The two substantial padded leg-rests – on the door and just in front of the gear lever – are a big help here, too.

Turning the key really transports you back to the (tail-)swinging Sixties. The noise makes the 2017 car's fruity, carefully nurtured exhaust sound quite polite – that anyone could do 500km around Monza, say, in one of these without serious hearing damage beggars belief. But at least you'd

FIAT ABARTH 1000 BERLINA CORSA

Feisty 1.0-litre lump may have only 85hp but light weight gives it great pep. It's very, very loud though!



have had time to master the gearchange, which is, er, challenging. The five ratios are arranged with the top four in the 'H' (first is out on its own, bottom left) and the sideways 'throws' are *really* short.

With synchromesh on the top four, actual gear selection is excellent – crisp and clean. But getting across from one plane to the next involves luck as well as judgement. It was, therefore, quite reassuring to hear Tony admit that he, too, has had problems with this type of 'box. "I've lost races going from first to fourth [at the start]", he admitted. "It's an original Abarth gearbox that wasn't

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

FIAT ABARTH 1000 BERLINA CORSA

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| ENGINE: | 982cc 4-cyl OHV |
| BORE X STROKE: | 65mm x 74mm |
| COMPRESSION RATIO: | 13:1 |
| CARBURETTOR: | Weber 36 DCD7 |
| POWER: | 85hp @ 7600rpm |
| TORQUE: | 65lb ft (88Nm) @ 5500rpm |
| TRANSMISSION: | Five-speed, rear-wheel drive |
| SUSPENSION: | Double wishbones, telescopic dampers (f), coil springs, telescopic dampers (r) |
| DISCS: | Discs all round |
| WHEELS: | 4.50L-13 |
| TYRES: | Yokohama A.drive 165/70 R13 |
| WEIGHT: | 583kg |
| MAX SPEED: | 120mph |





built for getting you off the line, but for doing 500km around Monza". Quite.

Once you are off the line, though, you'll get plenty of practice. No fewer than five final-drive ratios were available from the factory, ranging from a 5.4:1 hillclimb screamer to a relatively relaxed 3.9:1 for those 500km marathons. Tony is unsure which one resides here but reckons it's probably one of the ones in between. Whatever, the gearing feels low-ish, and the little four's eagerness to assail the upper reaches of the 10,000rpm rev counter (which is redline-free) means cogs need swapping frequently.

It's a properly meaty motor that really starts to pull at between four and five thou and is still delivering the goods big time at six-plus. I don't doubt it would have continued happily on upwards into the mid-sevens, where the power peaks, and probably well beyond; but I decided to take that on trust. Mustering around 145bhp per tonne, the 1000 Berlina Corsa actually feels much closer in sheer thrust to the current 595 (172bhp per tonne) than it has any right to, and it would

certainly keep the young upstart on its toes. And thanks to brake discs on all four corners, it stops as well as it goes.

Steering is nicely direct with only minimal free play around the straight-ahead, perfectly weighted and giving you good feedback about what's happening up front. That's likely to be pretty formidable understeer, exacerbated by the limited-slip diff – unless and until you lift off mid-corner, that is, when you have to be mighty quick to catch the alarmingly sudden transition to lots of the other stuff as weight transfers forwards, combined with camber change, dramatically reducing rear wheel grip. That's the *other* sting in the scorpion's tail – just like a baby Porsche 911.

On the track, the answer is early turn-in and pedal to the metal all the way round; but on north Oxfordshire's greasy back-doubles, that's a high-risk strategy. Mind you, one deserted roundabout did allow me to dip a toe in the water, so to speak – enough to confirm the basic principles whilst keeping it on the island (or rather, off it). While all this

stuff is going on, you tend not to notice the ride quality, which is actually not at all bad for something so focused on going round corners insanely quickly. But you'd probably appreciate it whilst notching up those 500 clicks round Monza...

A brisk drive out in one of Carlo's hot babies makes it crystal clear why they were – and indeed still are – so sought-after and so successful as racers. In their day, they could mix it with the best of the opposition – Mini-Coopers et al – and they brought home the bacon with astonishing regularity. They may no longer be as cheap as they once were – this example is priced at £75,000 – but you still get a lot of bang for your buck, to say nothing of loads of fun. They were also, of course, the inspiration behind the wonderful contemporary 595. But it is the original which retains the bragging rights – the foundation of an Abarth dynasty with a unique, *truly* iconic aura. 

Thanks to Middle Barton Garage. Tel: 01869 345766, Web: www.middlebartongarage.com

