

Corso Veloce

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW ZEALAND FIAT OWNERS CLUB

February/March 2019





MARK'S MUSINGS

I'm not sure how many of you watched Top Gear when it featured Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May. I was always a fan of their humour, never mind the cars which was a bonus. Well, they've moved onto a new show called The Grand Tour, which streams on Amazon Prime. It's now

up to season 3, which has just landed (or 'dropped' as I think the lingo is), and I've temporarily subscribed to Amazon each time a new season is released as it's every bit as funny as when they were on Top Gear.

Anyway, it's worth checking out episode 7 of the latest season as it features the trio driving around the Scottish highlands in three classic Italian cars, all of which I wouldn't mind having in my own garage.

The Hamster is driving an X1/9 (tick), Captain Slow is in a Lancia Gamma coupe (series 2), while Clarkson is driving a late model Alfa GTV6. The scam is they all had to buy an Italian that they think will be future classics which appreciate in value. Hamsters' X1/9 was the cheapest at a couple of grand, whereas Clarkson paid £10,000 for his mint GTV6 – which he bought off the original owner! Here in NZ, there are three late model GTVs for sale on TradeMe (it never rains but it pours) for over \$25,000.

I'd quite like a GTV, specifically the V6 because Clarkson himself has said it is one of the best engines ever made. And I'm intrigued by the Gammas, more so the Berlina, and did look at one for sale at Bains Classic Motor House in Canterbury a few years ago, but was put off by the condition. But you never know...

Fleet news

My Familiar is still not back on the road, but there has been a lot of steady progress. Suffice to say, what was meant to be an engine recon and steering box repair has taken on a life of its own, which my bank manager is none too happy about!

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Anyway, it's great to see these cars in action on roads that they seem so suited for, and I'd encourage you to check the episode out. If you've never subscribed to Amazon Prime before, I think you get the first month as a free trial, so you could binge watch the show and cancel your subscription before it costs you anything (it normally costs around \$10/month, but it doesn't have as much to offer as Netflix).



Also, there is a two-part episode where the trio drive through Colombia (deliberately avoiding references to cocaine and Pablo Escobar), often off-road. Clarkson drove perhaps the most sensible car, a Jeep Wrangler, while the Hamster had a monstrous Chev ute (literally monster truck with oversized tyres), but Captain Slow had the most eclectic choice – a Fiat Panda 4X4 which proved surprisingly capable.

Anyway, in this issue, there is a story on what must be NZ's fastest 127, reprinted courtesy of the Canterbury Fiat Lancia Club, and thanks also to Cliff Gibson for part 2 of his member profile (this time featuring Fiats!), and the latest instalment from Mellow Yellow.

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CLUB EVENTS

British & European Car Day, 10 February

This is the second year this annual event has been open to continental cars, and our club had six cars on display including new member Sam Mills' Yugo.



Shannon Spectacular car show, 17 February

The second car show in the month saw seven club cars take part, including Palmerston North member Alan Brown in his 125T.



NEW MEMBERS

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

William Broadmore, Wellington – Fiat 128 Sport Coupe



William Broadmore's 128SL race car

Robin Capper, Auckland – Fiat Brava HGT, Fiat 500 Esseesse

Nick Cassidy, Auckland

SUMMER 2019—MELLOW YELLOW FINDS IT HOT HOT HOT

February 2019

It's a new year and I am just 2 years away from my 50th and terrified of my new proof reader. Well not *new* more accurate to say *the* proof reader. About time you are saying, and I agree.

Not much to say as I haven't been out and about much. Did have a six-monthly health check and can report a *tick* in that box. If ever I needed proof that he who must be obeyed (hwmb) is a wimp the hot weather has proved the point. He enters the garage and I can hear his deliberation. Fun to drive or air-conditioning. You guessed it air-conditioning gets the nod. Pathetic!

She who must be obeyed (swmbo) very rarely gets behind the steering wheel. Accuses me of being misogynistic something about making parallel parking difficult because the steering is too heavy. I ask you, what is she like?

Got quite excited recently when I spied a Fiat on Trade me being advertised at \$230,000. Although the Dino is a Princess, will a sale at this price or somewhere close, extend my life? Although a lowly and distant cousin, hwmb might be encouraged to spend a little more time and money to keep my attributes up to scratch.

Would quite like to share a garage with this beauty.



President's fleet news

[continued from page 2](#)

Basically, work completed includes a strip of the underside and new underseal, a tidy-up of the engine bay (right, looking from underneath) including paint touch-up, and all components stripped, bead-blasted and powder-coated and with new bushes fitted etc.



The photos show the refurbished engine subframe, rear subframe, suspension arms, driveshaft, and reconditioned disc brakes (with new pistons). Also the engine has been reconditioned (but not unwrapped!) – my restorer (Bristol Motors) had to inspect a couple of my spare alloy cylinder heads until they found one that had not softened apparently.

Bristol's have also been busy sourcing hard-to-get parts from all over the world, as well as pilfering from my own used parts supply (e.g. spare steering box, engine parts, overdrive). I guess my decades of collecting parts from wrecked 2300s is paying off! The upside of this is that we will need two sets of everything (one for the sedan) so at least



this exercise will save time and effort sourcing parts later on.

Bristol's say all of this will transform how the car drives, which is great, so I will have to find an excuse to use it more, which is easier said than done as I have too many to choose from as it is. Still, as I am only the second owner of this car, I never plan to sell it so hopefully all this work will be worthwhile over the coming decades.



New underseal

Anyway, don't take my word for all the refurb work that has been undertaken – come along and see for yourself! We have organised a technical clubnight at Bristol Motors on Monday 25 March for you to have a look at the work and learn about the process and to ask questions.



MEMBER PROFILE—CLIFF GIBSON

Part 2: after Fiat (aF)

June 1992 and the dark ages were about to be lifted permanently and the dawn of a new era broke. There was a tear in Julie's eye when Mellow Yellow was installed in our Karori garage. I thought it was because she recognised the joy her husband was experiencing, but no, Julie realised there was to be a third party in our marriage.

Very soon membership of the Fiat Owners Club followed by introduction to the Manfeild Sprints stoked my excitement. But first what did Mellow Yellow need to ensure our relationship would be long term? Stem to stern service, inspection, all liquids, plugs, points, tune-up, cambelt replacement etc. I believed this would be a mechanical baseline for the future of both my own and expert maintenance activity. A little later some serious steel preservation work plus the replacement of an incorrect body part took place at a cost representing a significant percentage of the purchase price! Train spotters among you will identify the offending detail in the photograph below taken at MY's debut at a Fiat Nationals. Monthly meetings occurred at the Hutt Valley Car Club rooms in Petone. Leaving the rooms one evening we were dismayed to learn that Anthony Freeman's (*of Bambina parts fame*) 125T had been stolen. It was recovered a few hours later but worse for the experience – fortunately recoverable.



Taupo was the venue for our first participation at a national event. Taking refuge – citing my advanced years, I seek tolerance for the possibility of confusing details of those early national events. Apart from the shine and show event I recall a speed event being a bent sprint along a forestry road and a grass motorkhana on a farm property somewhere along the Taupo to Napier highway. My relationship with MY and Fiats generally was rapidly becoming obsessional.

Subsequent years the venue for Fiat nationals included Napier with MY participating but I think it was a weekend at Taranaki that we missed.

After two visits to Manfeild with MY I was rapidly reaching a

conclusion that risking it on the track was not desirable. Coincidentally two or three members conceived an idea for an inexpensive track car. The Fiat 128 was to be the basis, permitting the installation of 1300 cc engine limiting induction to the original double throat carburettor but with no limitations on exhausts or suspension components. Capable of being driven to and from the track was another requirement. Made sense to me and I set about getting one prepared.



“Kermit” took to the road with the shell hiding a multitude of errors. I learned there is much more to building a track car that I imagined. Still it served a purpose and we enjoyed several visits to Manfeild and one to the Taupo circuit (a Waikato Fiat club track day). On this visit the circuit had just been resealed and sadly several participants suffered damaged windscreens.

I had just returned to my own consulting practice and indulged myself by locating and purchasing a one-owner 131R with 25,000 miles then added to the company asset register. A towbar fitted meant the Kermit could be towed to events on an “A” frame. In this configuration we attended the Palmerston North Nationals.



It was our turn to organise the National event and I received the hospital pass being elected to President for the first time. The committee decided that Palmerston North should be the venue. The municipal camping grounds were booked for accommodation and Manfeild was hired for a day (try to repeat that feat today). I was blessed with an extremely diligent organising committee who also found a venue for a grass motorkhana and plotted a time trial. It was a success and despite the risks taken, the event I believe achieved a small profit.

Memories of that weekend that stood out was the embarrassment of spinning the 128 on the left-hand corner of the esses ("Castrol") at Manfeild. I only managed this seemingly impossible manoeuvre by dropping the inside front wheel over the curb – dumb! According to Alan Mac there is a video of this "achievement" somewhere and he has threatened me with it from time to time. Hopefully it was lost in the move up North. Your current President and I shared Kermit in the motorkhana and its powerful hand-brake helped us to a podium result. Again memory acuity dependant I believe this was the first time I was introduced to Phil Sutton, just returned from the USA with his PhD. I was awestruck by the description of his hand luggage (Dino, 124 Spider and an X1/9).

An abiding memory of this time was another visit to Taupo circuit with MY and agreeing with Phil (driving his Dino) that we would happily position ourselves at the back of the grid and keep well out of the way of the serious racers up front. An important lesson I absorbed during this day was Campbell Robertson forgoing his lunchtime to give me the benefit of his experience on tar seal tracks. Sitting in the passenger's seat Campbell calmly corrected my ignorance of corner entry positioning. Not forgotten and much appreciated – thanks Campbell.

Towing Kermit on an "A" frame with the 131 did not feel right so it was sold and I replaced it with a Croma Turbo. Although less than elegant it was exceedingly practical, comfortable and with more than adequate performance.

A phone call from Anthony Freeman suggested we should jointly purchase a serious 128 coupe race car. I was convinced within minutes and a few days later we were the owners. With Antony's experience we made a few minor changes which resulted in a well sorted track car.



Regularly campaigned at Manfeild sprint series, Whittakers classic weekends, Taupo meetings and a highlight, Ruapuna. We suspect the promoters of the Skope/PDL classic meeting that year did not have all the competitors desired. The promoters contacted (the late) Mike Booth of Continental Cars to recruit some competitors. An incentive was offered to contribute to the costs of travel to Christchurch that included (memory accuracy dependant) ferry fare, heavily discounted accommodation at the Commodore and waived entry fee. Our agreement to participate took a nanosecond. Arriving after a painless journey to Christchurch on Friday in Anthony's Alfa 164 with the 128 behind connected to an "A" frame we were



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met by Mike and others (Ray Hartley, Peter Francovich etc.) at the Commodore. Scrutineering and documentation on Saturday morning was followed by practice. Ruapuna is quite a complex track and whilst attempting to find my way round I was assaulted by the PDL Mustang that threatened to blow the 128 off the track. Anthony was as usual seconds faster than me and was in the fast group while I was relegated to the slow grid. Competing in the slow group I had the pleasure of a close observation of Alastair Caldwell's (McLaren Formula One motor racing team manager from 1974 to 1978) gorgeous Lancia Fulvia HF Fanaloni replica, fresh from an outing at Targa Tasmania. Sat alongside Alastair at the event dinner on the Sunday night and was thoroughly entertained by his stories. Disappointed that he wouldn't sell the Lancia to me.

The weather on Sunday was threatening and as my second race was about to begin the rain started. Managed to negotiate the left hander off the grid but by the time I reached the same corner next lap a puddle had formed inconveniently at the braking point. Straight ahead! Fortunately, the outside of the corner was grassed and I managed to re-join the track without damage except blushes. Being a slow learner, I repeated the manoeuvre next lap. Lesson – wet track, increase braking distance!

In the other group Anthony was having fun and was very competitive illustrated by the two photos below. Note the difference between the two taken on consecutive laps.



Impressive eh!

Returning to Wellington Anthony and I reflected on a great weekend, kidding ourselves that as that we had some expenses paid, we must be professional racing drivers.

Further indelible memories of our joint ownership included another trip to Taupo for a Waikato Fiat club-hosted track day. During practice the gearbox gave up the will to transmit. A rapid discussion revealed that Maurice Thomson had a gearbox at his workshop in Te Awamutu. Leaping into Anthony's Alfa 164 we picked up the gearbox, some oil and "flew" back to Taupo while Phil and others removed the unwilling gearbox. While Anthony exercised the 164, I had a mini-nap which appeared to annoy him. I thought my nodding off was flattering? Later in the day I succumbed to the dreaded "red mist" and ended up in the "kitty litter". I drove out carefully but, on the way back to the pits the engine note changed and I swiftly cut the ignition. Back in Wellington and in the capable hands of Phil Sutton the bent exhaust valve along with the other three were replaced with less radical types. Although the "kitty litter" had slipped a cog of the cambelt no further damage occurred – big relief. On another occasion we had our Whittakers Manfeild weekend cut short when the front wheels became disconnected from the motor. This time it was not the gearbox but the centre of the flywheel had sheared from the part that connected to the clutch. Again, with Phil's help a replacement flywheel was fitted with a less dramatic clutch plate. Apart from these mishaps the 128 was

campaigned regularly with little more fuss than a wash, fluid level checks and occasional brake bleeding.

Sometime later Anthony had his eye on a 124 race car and sold his share of the 128 to me. I continued to campaign it for another 5 years with few problems and heaps of fun. Another vivid memory was a cloud burst during a race at Whittakers when it was so dark that officials instructed headlights to be turned on. The first couple of laps we were racing but as the gloom increased and windscreens fogged up survival was the focus. Exiting the "Sweeper" for the last time and with visibility severely compromised I could see taillights and headlights ahead. It must be significant carnage I thought and considered evasive action. Taking to the inside of the track seemed my best option resulting to me crossing the start-finish line with the 128 at 90 degrees to the direction of travel. This was the first and only time I got a mention by the on-course commentator – my 10 seconds of fame. In fact, the anticipated carnage was just a few bruises, thankfully.

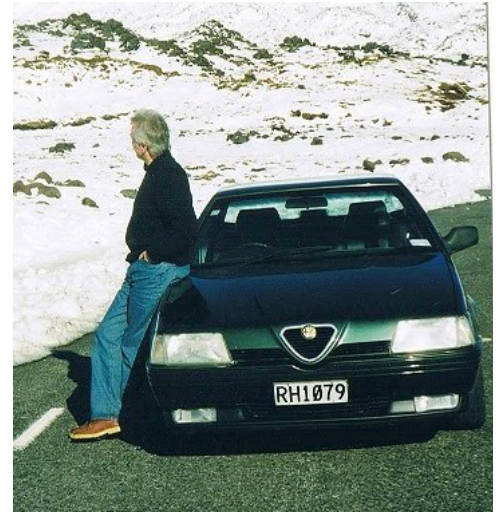
At another Whittakers the 128 was hit in the right rear fender by a Holden Torana (bully) as we entered Coca Cola, the first corner. I caught the unexpected oversteer and finished the race without further incident. The Torana didn't! The hit resulted in a significant dent. At this time the 128 was being stored at Rongotai along with a dozen or more classics. Two weeks after the collision I returned to the storage and found that a kind person had fixed the dent and primed the scar. Neither Anthony nor I have any conclusive idea who the benefactor was, but on the off-chance some of our guesses might be correct we did thank several people. A colour matched spray can from Union Hardware and beauty was restored.

As has been made clear, Anthony Freeman is clearly more skilled and more experienced than I and when he achieved a 1:27.9 lap time at Manfeild I was determined to better 1:30. Eventually at a Sprint meeting the planets aligned and I achieved a 1:29 tick. I have always supported safety equipment for track cars and drivers including the logbook documenting scrutineering results. Introduction of the Certificate of Compliance documentation started the decline of enthusiasm and eventually when I discovered a family of spiders in the exhaust pipe it was time to find a new home for the 128. End of an era!



After riding in Anthony's 164 I had to have one. A one-owner 164 came on to market in Auckland and I sent Nigel Derbyshire off to check it out. I sealed the deal the next day, flew to Auckland and drove it back to Wellington. Thirty minutes into the journey south I shouted to myself "this is bloody gorgeous" and was a happy man with the 164, MY and

at that time the 128. Enjoyment of the 164 coincided with an incredibly busy work life. As the mileage raced past 250,000 km's I was forced to consider replacement. What to do? A swap of the 164 with a low mileage 156 V6 was offered and was accepted with reluctance.



Although a perfectly likeable car the 156 was not the drive experience the 164 offered. It remained the company car until Julie and I decamped to the UK for an 8 month "sabbatical".

Almost forgot, we also owned a very low mileage 2 litre Alfa 145. Perhaps the forgetting is a Freudian slip. The only person who was pleased when we acquired it and sad when we sold it was Bruce at Hutt Valley European, 'nuf said!

Our sojourn in a small Berkshire village included inheriting a non-Italian car. Won't bore you with the back story but it was imported to NZ arriving several months after we did. Not only non-Italian, it's automatic and an oil burner. I must concede it is extremely competent and Julie loves it. So, MY is having to share space with an alien. No wonder it has taken to writing drive!

While we were awaiting the import to arrive we purchased a Punto 80 ELX. Again, bought in Auckland sight unseen and again following Nigel Derbyshire's inspection. It was meant to be temporary transport until the import arrived, but it was still in our position three years later. Realising that MY was not getting the exercise it needed the Punto was sold. MY then became a daily runner – good decision.

What's next – your guess is as good as mine – an Alfa Giulia ummmmm!

COMING EVENTS

25 March – Technical clubnight at Bristol Motors, 40 Ward St Upper Hutt from 6-7pm. Followed by a meal for those interested. Come along and hear from Bristol's manager to learn about the mechanical restoration they've been doing on your President's Fiat 2300 wagon, and some of the other interesting projects they are working on.

MARK'S MODEL CORNER

I mentioned in the last issue that I would run a column reviewing scale models of various Fiats and Lancias – what are generally known as ‘diecasts’ – for those who may be interested in collecting their own. Each issue I’ll review a single manufacturer, and illustrate some of the notable Fiat/Lancia models they’ve produced – although they all have much broader ranges. These will vary between 1/43 and 1/18 scale depending on manufacturer (although some do both scales) – and I may throw in the occasional 1/24-sized model too, although these are less common. I’ll kick it off by profiling a small quality Italian brand below.

Laudoracing Models 1/18 scale

Laudoracing are a relative newcomer to scale models, specialising in resin models of mostly Italian cars. Being resin, that puts them in the high-quality category of scale models (being better than the traditional diecast). Based on the one Laudoracing model I’ve purchased, I’d have to say the level of detailing is right up there with the best resin models I have seen, but their pricing is quite reasonable, in some cases less than half the cost of other resin brands, with prices on their website around €83 (NZ\$137) not including postage (so probably around \$200 all up).

The model I bought was their 128 SL, as it was an almost exact replica of a car I once owned, including the colour (albeit mine was modified for racing). I’m really impressed by the detailing of this model, including the chrome trim like door handles and fuel filler cap, and the vents that have been let into the bonnet, which on a diecast model would simply be replicated by a decal. Even the C-pillar vents are moulded-in and detailed (again would normally be a decal), and there is even detail for the rear-opening windows including the small ‘button’ on the outside.



Because resin models have no opening parts, you may expect them not to excessively detail the interior, but this one looks accurate with chrome-effect trim on the door cards, and even a passenger grab-handle! The only detailing that I could criticise is that not all of the window surrounds are detailed in realistic stainless steel (and what there is, is a bit clunky), with some of it just a silver decal. But it’s difficult to criticise considering the overall detailing, and price.

One thing about these resin models is that they don’t use hard plastic for the windows, but rather a very thin, almost celluloid-type material. It adds to the realism, but requires



Laudoracing Models Fiat 128 SL; note the accurate engine vent detail. Likewise the badging detail is very authentic.

delicate handling if you occasionally have to dust the models.

Laudoracing have produced a range of Fiats (and Lancias, Alfas and Abarths amongst others), some of which are illustrated below. However, as with other resin manufacturers, these are produced in limited numbers (although in different colours) so you may want to subscribe to their newsletter to learn about new releases if you are interested in collecting any.



- www.laudoracing-models.com

FIAT 127—A LITTLE MONSTER!

As told to Jono Kidd, Canterbury Fiat Lancia Club, kindly reproduced with their permission.

About 4 years ago now I was having a look through TradeMe for possible future classic car ideas. I randomly came across an old, run down Fiat 127 and my first thought was that behind the 'old man' facade, I could see the Fiat 127 in general had some very nice lines and also some racing history from I could find online, it also still had available custom racing parts and accessories that could be sourced.

Unfortunately, by the time I had researched enough to make a decision to buy it had been sold or disposed of. I thought oh well, I'll just buy another one... Well, time went by and by and by, another 2 years filtering for Fiats on TradeMe and nothing. I found out that there were only a small handful left in NZ and out of those even less that are road worthy and legal, I ended up with no choice than giving up thinking I had missed the only opportunity to own one.

Moving forward my savings had gone into my mods on an AMG Mercedes I had at the time, lighting the wick to 700+ hp. One day a mate of mine who frequents TradeMe messaged me with a link to this one, I knew I had to have it, but with splurging all my savings I didn't know what to do.

So I sold my 700hp Mercedes ASAP, just to buy this 40hp Fiat, my mates honestly all thought I had gone mad. They eventually all changed their tone once they saw the current result, some who were even avid late model fans have even gone out and picked up old vehicles to play with themselves. The car had no previous race history, the previous owner used it for a few club meets and a few gymkhana events, sub 1300cc club events and spirited cruises, that's about it.

Now that I had finally found a 127, my initial idea for it was an instant engine swap; gut it, 5-600kg race car for use on the street – done. My fabricator was hinting at the Hyabusa setup he had on a crate in the corner and I would have taken him up on the offer – ONLY if I had found the car easier, but with it



being such a scarce item on the road now I couldn't take myself to hack it up, the intention to leave it as period correct as possible was decided upon. So I drove it home and parked it up, that's where it stayed for ~4-6 months as I was waiting on maintenance items, replacement items and also custom parts from Italy, Germany, the UK, Croatia and local NZ, plus I had already gutted the majority of the car and engine bay area to refit asap when the items arrive.

The previous owner had put a 5 speed gearbox in it, this turned the car into more of a tourer, the tall gear ratio was all wrong for the little car, top speed would have been 180-200kph with this setup, this had to change, a modified 4 speed was placed back in with a new top speed of ~120-140kph, this instantly livened the car up and is now more of the stop light racer it should have been, I still travel long motorway distances to car meets with it sitting ~6000rpm the entire trip but oil pressure stays on point, cooling is perfect and the car seems happier when pushed.

Challenge 1

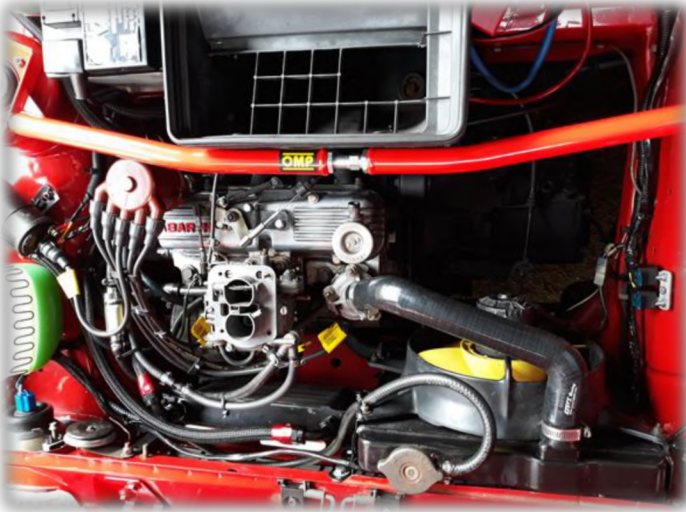
Numerous Google translate sessions were performed to source rare Abarth items and were ordered, all items refurbished where needed before fitting, Italians seem to be very hard to communicate with, if they have a part, then they will say it is the one you need, even though it isn't, so lots of research into what I needed, what they were selling and if it was exactly the item I required.

The original front brakes were seizing so I went to rebuild, one was completely gone, so instead of buying another one I got some later model Fiat brakes for the front, fortunately these just fit inside the wheels I had sourced. The interior was odd, Toyota Celica seats, oddball blue carpet, sagging visors, someone's old speakers cut into the rear panels, a bus sized steering wheel, just a feeling of old and tired. It was completely refreshed, seats were ordered from the UK and fitted by my local fabricator, panels replaced, and any items replaced with new that I could source.

It took me months to find a set of original ATS Classics, they were found a couple of times with overseas sellers not willing to ship, finally I found a set in need of a complete overhaul and the seller was ok to ship them, upon their arrival I saw how bad they were, I think I put about 40+ hours into getting the wheels tidied up and repainted as they are now, one of those "never again" ideas thinking it was going to take me a weekend at most.



Ceramic paint and polished chrome make such a visual statement



A bit of engine reworking and the statement steering-wheel

Challenge 2

The largest wheels suggested to fit on one of these was ~5.5", I attempted to bring up conversations overseas as to potential for fitting a 7" front wheel and 8" rear wheel, with all of them saying it could not be done, so I was expecting to have to overcome some large hurdles here.

Fortunately for me, everyone who ever provided any sort of advice to me were all wrong and had no idea what they were talking about. Sure, I had to get the wheels machined, sure I needed different wheel bolts, sure there was camber bolts added for adjustability and some light guard massaging, but how hard was all that?

Once the wheels were on and tested it was time to lower it, now the previous owner had lowered it already, but after fitting the ATS Classics it needed another 8-10cm—YES cm—before it would sit at a reasonable height, the front assembly was dropped into Autolign in Henderson where they custom

modified the shocks and springs to suit, rear aluminium lowering blocks and custom made bolts for the rear were imported from Italy with my specs on how low I wanted to take it.

To lower it this much the passenger side driveshaft boot bracket had to be modified so that the driveshaft wouldn't smash into it and damage the boot and the box during upward travel, the right side was left stock and unmodified as it didn't have this possible issue. The rear wheels being so wide also needed A112 Abarth bump stops fitted above the transverse leaf spring to limit upwards travel on large bumps, this was solely to eliminate the outer wheel smashing into the chassis if ever there was a heavy passenger sitting in the car.

There have been a few overseas now that have tried to imitate my cars appearance with ATS classics, but they have all failed with the 7-8" combo and have gone down to 5.5" widths and

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thin tyre setups with no lowering, which just don't have the same effect. The car literally handles like an adult sized go-kart, it will accelerate from the lights better than a later vehicle with twice the engine capacity and will turn a corner like it is on rails, the carb induction noise scream when the secondary's open all the way to ~10,000rpm is euphoric, every stop-start and back street corner feels like you are in an all-out race, it's a great feeling.



Some original factory bits did stay on the modified car!

As a new convert to the classic Fiat marque, the main challenges in this process were finding rare parts – especially pricey Abarth racing parts. so items have sometimes taken a few months to find, then shipping can take 3-6 weeks. Finding any sort of offset specs for the vehicle, no-one ventures out of the normal stock configuration overseas, the 1 or 2 that have seemed to keep all their findings to themselves, possibly so no-one copies them and gets the spotlight? Lastly, the suspension lowering mods were a challenge requiring a custom driveshaft bracket mods and rubber stops. While the rebuilding and modification process was long, and at times painful, to use a Facebook analogy, during my ownership I have been 'Liked' on many an occasion. People often pull-up at the lights and compliment the car. Equally, often people will wait outside of

shops and in car parks for me to return just to talk about the car. As a 'new' driver of a Fiat, the way it drives like it's on rails, and I can throw it around like a go-kart. It also surprisingly out-performs a lot of modern traffic and I've taken the engine up to 10,000rpm on many occasions. Another key attraction for me was the ease of working on the car: I stripped it down to a bare shell in under a day with no knowledge of mechanicals.



Sexy twin exhausts and 'old' black and white numberplate works a treat

Summary of main features and key modifications:

Abarth 4-2-1 headers, exhaust and muffler, rocker cover, 32 DMTR carb freshly built; altered compression ratio; close ratio gearbox; OMP Strut Brace; customised rear lowering blocks, front leather mid back bucket seats (imported from UK), front assembly, interior. Fiat 124 Spider Sport 9000rpm rev counter - speedo - fuel - oil - water temp sensors (all fitted to look stock), Nardi Torino steering wheel with Abarth horn, front suspension mods.

Arguably NZs only set of 1970s/80s ATS Classics 13" x7" front and 13" x8" rear refurbished wheels on brand new Nankang 175/50/13 tires, the wheels were imported from Germany. Paint correction and a full ceramic paint and glass coating applied. Weighs ~700kgs wet.



Even the fuel cap was correctly sourced