

BLUE FALCON

The roots of the JBA Falcon Sports go back a long way, as David Hill discovered in Don Humphries' Fine Mk1

In the case of the Falcon Mk1 pictured, considerations such as these couldn't have been better illustrated. JBA quote a build time of 200 to 250 hours for the Mk1 which I feel, having built such a car myself, is not out of the way. However,

the time taken to build this, JBA Owners Club Secretary Don Humphries' car, was some 600 hours. This included that most important and time consuming aspect, thinking in three dimensions, and the results are gratifyingly subtle. At a glance,



Putting your own car together is, amongst other things, a matter of self expression. After all, if we had no need for self expression, all our cars would be uniform in shape and colour. Mr Average takes advantage of the choice of cars on the market and may even add accessories to enhance the

visual appeal of his pride and joy. We self-assembly types operate in a rather more esoteric area, and can further extend the concept by undertaking modifications to the kit manufacturer's design. This not only prevents the existence of a population of clone kits on the roads, it also creates a measure of competitive interest for the builder, in the nicest possible way, of course.



the Falcon looks like any well-constructed example; closer examination reveals Don's painstaking approach. For instance, the 'standard' Mk1, if such a thing exists, has a rear luggage area which is generally trimmed as per the front seats. Don's car boasts a decent amount of room behind the seats which incorporates two convenient lockers providing valuable



exhaust system, intelligent additions lie beneath the skin. For instance, most users of the Pinto would be content with the standard mechanical fuel pump. This low tech device was not for Don, however, and a pair of Pierburg electric pumps, piped to two Filter King pressure regulators, reside in the boot, in a sound-proofed alloy housing. Talking of sound deadening, there is no significant area of the car bare of acoustic material, Don's preference having been for a type used in fire engine cabs. This expensive material can also boast the ability to resist flames as effectively as leaden sheeting. The quest for refine-

ment continued into the interior. Instead of the usual hardboard panels, Don employed plywood, supported by peripheral alloy frames. The practical result of this method is that the trim panels can be easily removed to gain access to hinge mountings, locks and the like. Acoustic material apart, the panels are thickly padded, and surfaced in carpet or leathercloth, as relevant to the trimming scheme. Naturally, no amount of top quality material will serve to conceal poor underpinnings in a car and, in this area, Don was fortunate. The donor car used was formerly in the hands of a sales representative. This may have



storage space for the paraphenalia of motoring. This is complemented by a centre console of aluminium and plywood, bearing a QD radio—cassette player which can be stowed in safety, you know where. Immediately above the console, the normal JBA plywood dash blank acts as a substrate to a handsome piece of burr walnut, whose fine lacquered finish was ap-

plied by no less a personage than the foreman at Rolls—Royce's carpentry shop, in the Crewe factory.

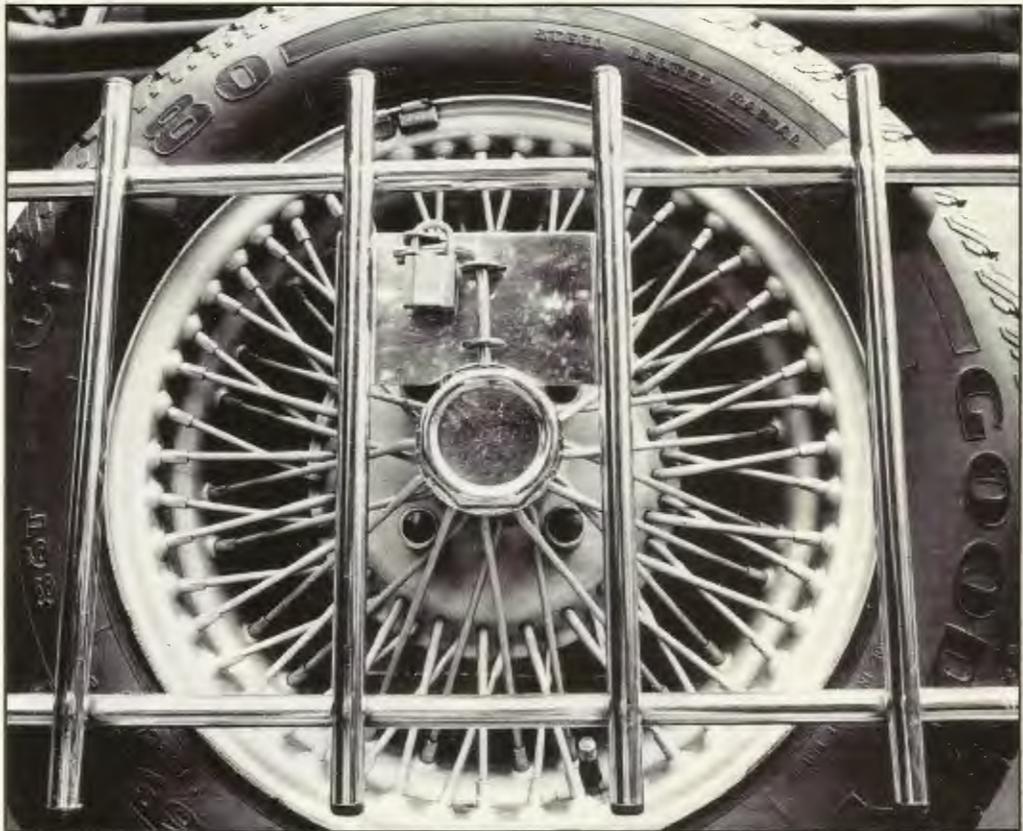
These, and items such as the bespoke luggage grid with its locking spare wheel retainer may tempt the viewer into dismissing the car as a mere exercise in visual titillation. Not so. Although the 2 litre Ford Pinto engine is standard, apart from a Janspeed manifold and

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been cause to look elsewhere, but for the fact that the previous owner was a rep with a difference—he looked after his car. Don's acquisition of the 2 litre Mk4 Cortina Estate came about through the good offices of Don's long standing friend, John Hides who, as a garage proprietor, had serviced the car for four years, until it was written off after a minor coming together. Thus, Don was able to buy the remains for £300. On strip down, a total absence of bore wear was found and even the camshaft, although sufficiently worn to warrant replacement, was silent. The consequent replacement of wearing parts throughout the running gear was largely a token gesture, and Don could rest assured in the suitability of his donor parts for the task in hand.

The 600 hours of the build were spread over a period of 18 months, and Don found the construction particularly easy. The same couldn't be said of the paint, though, and after an initial attempt marred by microblistering, Don sent the car to a professional painter. This man, Colin Ravenscroft of Middlewich, could boast a wealth of experience in concours paint preparation, most especially on classic Lancias for the U.S. market. In the case of the Falcon, the results spoke for themselves. Colin used ICI's Belco cellulose refinishing system, with five coats of Ford Hawaiian Blue Metallic paint beneath eight coats of lacquer. On its return from the paintshop, the Falcon's various panels were reassembled, and the brightwork, for which Don had wisely predrilled, was fitted. Unsurprisingly, Don opted for a top quality mohair hood and, with the addition of a set of Motor Wheels Services' enamelled wires, shod with 165/70x15 Goodyear 80s, the car could be considered nearly complete. Latterly, a Hella wiper delay unit was included to pander to the vagaries of our climate, the same consideration applying, in its way, to the lumenition ignition unit. After a minor hiccup involving a failed starter motor, the car was ready to go, in April 1987. Since then, the car has covered nearly ten thousand miles, its main useage being recreational. Unlike many cars in such use, the Falcon has remained the apple of Don's eye, not least because in those ten thousand

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miles, it has never once let him down. Having concluded the photographic session, I was able to experience the result of a painstaking build from the passenger seat. Although the aforementioned climate had decided to make a hasty hood erection necessary, there was no denying the worth of a pedantic approach. In road tests, the Falcon's ride quality is often remarked upon. In Don's car, the attention lavished made this, and the general feel of the car, better still. With eyes closed, I might have been in a production car: in fact, there are production cars with lesser levels of refinement. Don Humphries and John Hides are both engineers, with over 60 years of experience in the aircraft and motor industry between them. This has revealed itself in the blue Falcon, but that's not all. Don and John are setting up in business as a bespoke building service, under the name 'Classic Automobile Recreations', or CAR, for short. They are currently working in John's premises, on two unfinished projects, for ultimate sale, after which, they will be able to undertake bespoke construction from scratch. Judging by the standards of Don's car, for which he has declined an offer of £13,000, the results should be exemplary. Interested parties are invited to contact Don at 18 Vicarage Lane, Elworth, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 9LB. Tel: 0270 763059.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr Sloan, of The Owls Restaurant at Standish, for his permission to use the grounds of that establishment as a photographic location.

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