

**THE
WORLD'S
BEST-SELLING
CLASSIC MAG**
1000s of
great classics
for sale

CLASSIC & SPORTS CAR

FEBRUARY 2006
Overseas £3.65 USA \$8.99
www.classicandsportscar.com

LIVE THE DREAM ON THE CHEAP!



Can you get all the thrills of a legendary sports-racer for a fraction of the price?

TOP REPLICAS



LAMBORGHINI URRACO
Pretty, practical and keenly priced



BMW 'BATMOBILE'
Track test of a '73 works legend

PHOTO GUIDE
Take professional-style pictures of your classic: our top tips



ASTON MARTIN DBS
Buckley's forgotten favourite

haymarket

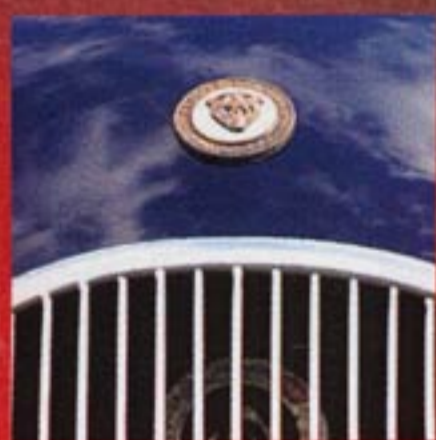
RETRO MOBILE

Sports-racers from the '50s golden age needn't cost a fortune. **Mick Walsh** lines up nine of the best replicas

PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES MANN & DAVID SHEPHERD

You've read the history books, watched the cars battle at the Goodwood Revival Meeting and Le Mans Classic and maybe even built the models, but that dream of owning a 1950s sports racing icon will always depend on winning the lottery or coming into a hefty inheritance. And, even if that multi-million windfall did come your way, could it ever really be enough to justify spending £1 million-plus on a Jaguar D-type or Aston Martin DB3S? The alternative, one being taken up by so many classic enthusiasts that it is thought to be the fastest-growing area of the hobby, is to buy a replica. As the spectacular group here proves, it's a highly convincing bunch and, though they vary hugely in price, can all be had for a fraction of the cost of the real thing.

It all started in America in the 1950s with the development of glassfibre moulding. Instantly, nothing was sacred and Italian sports racers were soon copied for racing specials. Atlas, Bocar, Byers and Devin all have Latin style origins. In the UK



it's more difficult to pinpoint the start of the replica phenomenon but the gorgeous form of the C-type begged to be moulded. Most lookalikes evolved out of the restoration or recreation of copies as body bucks and new parts became available. After all, building a sportier machine out of a saloon is at the heart of the specials world, and the very foundation of the Vintage Sports-Car Club. Is there really a difference between cutting up a decrepit Riley Monaco and rebuilding it as a racy Brooklands and the Ferrari Testa Rossa or Frazer Nash copies featured here?

Looks can be deceptive, too, as proven by the little-known WAM DB3S which hides modern BMW running gear under its seductive plastic curves. At the other end of the spectrum the 'WOK' Le Mans Replica is constructed just as the cars were at Frazer Nash's Isleworth factory in the '50s with identical Bristol running gear. Even the purists would be fooled by the driving experience.

Jaguar parts are a common element with many

of our group, and not just C- and D-type replicas use Coventry-built components. The easy availability of quality parts from rusty saloons has inspired a glut of lookalikes, some, such as the Proteus and Heritage, rather better than others.

Looking the part is one thing, but the ultimate test is driving and living with the replica and the one big question remains: do they cut it as cars? The key, after all, is the fun you can have with the finished result so we quizzed eight passionate owners and constructors to see if saving those millions has fulfilled their fantasies. Many of our group own classics too and enjoy the replica just as much as, and often more than, a pukka machine. Not having to permanently worry about a priceless original is a major relief, not that these enthusiasts covet their nostalgic recreations any less. And all have gone to great lengths to make the design even more convincing, sourcing details from an original steering wheel to remaking a complete bonnet.

None of this group kids themselves they own an original, but making a pilgrimage to La Sarthe, looking down a beautiful swoopy bonnet line with exhaust roaring on a balmy summer evening must be magical. A common thread here is driving to the 24-hour event and several have even driven the course prior to the big race. At such moments you probably don't give the independent suspension, the plastic body or modern chassis a second thought. So, if you are tempted by the seductive looks, could you really kid yourself *en route* to the Le Mans Classic that you're getting an authentic experience, or should you channel your funds into a genuine classic with less iconic status? That's the question we try to answer for you here.

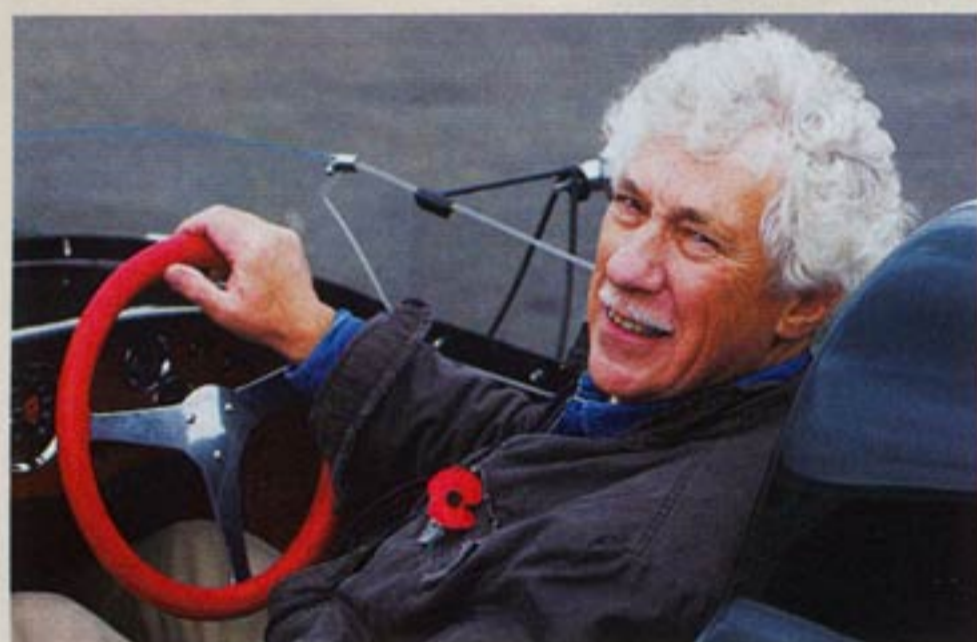
For my own part, during ownership of a replica Frazer Nash, I received a blunt letter from a lucky owner of an original saying he'd rather own a genuine Fiat 500 than a fake like mine, but I loved every moment driving and fettling the lookalike. Fantasies have rarely come more rewarding.



Westfield XI

Information

Specialist Westfield Sportscars; tel: 01384 400077; www.westfield-sportscars.co.uk
Kit price starts at £8950
Styling 8 **Performance** 7 **Character** 8
Handling 9 **Cockpit** 8 **Value for money** 9
Total 49



Clockwise, from top: sexy lines capture Frank Costin's original; Minilite alloys are clue to Westfield's tubular chassis; A-Series 1275cc motor gives 65bhp and just had to have Austin rocker cover; neat cockpit features classic Lotus-style wheel; proud owner Austin Weltman



Of all the originals that inspired this 1950s sports racing group, a genuine Lotus Eleven is the most affordable, starting at £30-40,000. Westfield's lookalike, at around half the price on the road, is therefore a different proposition to our other replicas that cost a smaller fraction of the real thing. Yet the appeal of Chris Smith's A-series-powered replica goes beyond living the '50s fantasy. The neat tubular spaceframe design has a race-bred character that makes it an ideal road/track car in the spirit of Chapman's Climax-powered original.

Launched in 1982, the first series of 162 Westfield XIs stopped after four years, but Smith revived it last year with a further batch of 50.

Other than an adjustable seat, reworked pedals and revised steering, the design is unchanged. Austin Weltman, who has covered 900 miles in the first two months of ownership, is impressed: "I'd thought about the real thing, but wanted a fun car I didn't worry about and could take on the track. My AC-engined Ace is the love of my life, but I'm always nervous about it getting damaged."

Weltman's sports car interest started with MG T types including a supercharged TC he hill-climbed in the '60s. A Healey 100/4 followed but an Esprit turned him on to Lotus: "Handling has always been more important to me than speed, and the Esprit was fantastic. You put up with any problems just for the joy of driving it. I'd been through a major restoration with my Ace and, when I read about the new batch of Westfields, I thought this is a chance."

Weltman ordered a kit from the factory which recommended Jim Bickley to build it. The total price including donor Midget came to £17,500, which included the full interior with red leather-trimmed steering wheel and smart alloy header tanks. Bickley delivered the finished car in three months with MoT, tax and SVA paperwork. And Weltman is delighted: "I can't fault the finished car. The only problem has been the low suspension setting. You really have to watch the very low

sump and speed-bumps are a concern, but it's fantastic to drive. It's surprisingly comfortable – better than a Caterham – and fuel economy is wonderful. The steering and gearbox are the best I've experienced in any car and the go-kart-like handling is so rewarding: I can't wait to enter some sprints and track days. With twin 1¹/₄in SUs, I'm happy with 65bhp – any more power would mean changing the chassis to cope."

It's easy to appreciate Weltman's enthusiasm for the Westfield. It may be the least powerful car here but the fun factor is near to the top. Set it up for a corner, take aim and wrist steer through on the throttle, and it never fails to bring a big smile. If it does break traction, the crisp rack-and-pinion steering responds as quickly as you can think. Every aspect of the Westfield is sharp and beautifully balanced thanks to its sorted suspension, particularly the well-located live rear axle with four trailing arms and transverse Panhard rod.

The mildly tuned 1275 A-series has more than enough beans to squirt the slippery Costin-designed shape along at an impressive rate and its power-to-weight ratio is almost identical to the original. Best of all is the way it carries speed through the turns and few cars are more fun around wet roundabouts. More power and grip would corrupt this car's natural charm.

Best of the rest and verdict



Jag recreations are most common and at the top end of the C-type market are faithful copies such as the ally-bodied beauties from Racing Green (01252 544888, www.racinggreencars.com). Built to order in New Zealand, they are available in three versions ranging from drum brakes and SUs to the lightweight spec of the '53 Le Mans winner with Webers and Plessey pump-assisted Dunlop discs. Prices range from £85-135k. One of the best C-type reps was built by restorer Paul Jaye.

The ultimate D-type copy is the Lynx, launched by Guy Black and Roger Ludgate in '73. Available as long- or short-nose, or XKSS conversion, it features a full ally monocoque just like the original. Production to date is 52 with nine XKSSs and work has started on a lwb version. Performance offered is 0-60mph in 4.7 secs and 0-100mph in 12 secs. Built to order by Lynx (01424 851277, www.lynxmotors.co.uk) if you have a spare £200k. Lynx also produces a superb C-type replica.

If Jag reps are too common, there are other options. Proteus' ally Merc 300SLR replica is powered by a 280CE engine, but it would demand a forceful personality to drive one, particularly with 722 numbers! Built to order from 01794 340309.

Tempero Coach and Motor Co produces a range of replicas from HWM, Testa Rossa and Dino 196S to Jaguar-powered reps including Knobbly- and Costin-style Listers. Also on offer from its Sarasota, Florida workshop is a DBR2 replica offering DB4 power in a tubular frame with all-independent suspen-

sion and accurate ally body. Call 001 941 355 6500 or see www.temperocars.com. If you can live with Jag power in an Aston DBR2 rep, AAR Racing's new design created by Anthony Anstead might be tempting at £35,000. Call 01920 413083.

More a celebration than a replica, the Beck Lister is popular in the US. With Corvette suspension and Chevy V8 power in a beefy tubular frame with glassfibre body, the 770kg road rocket is a fine evocation of the Lister theme. Chuck Beck (001 760 949 2297) also produces a VW-based 550 Spyder replica. For fans of Fantuzzi's Maserati A6GCS *barchetta*, D&B Enterprises (001 360 582 0388) offers a special using Alfa suspension and Buick/Rover V8 power with glassfibre body taken off the original. More spectacular were nine Quattroporte-based 450S replicas built in the '80s by Chris Lawrence of Wymondham Engineering. The chassis was a faithful copy with twin-plug 320bhp 4.2-litre V8s and hand-made ally body.

Various specs included Getrag five-speed 'box or Porsche 928 transaxles and disc brakes all around. Rarer replicas from the US include the Hemi-powered CR4 'continuation cars' built by the Cunningham family and sanctioned by John Fitch, and a Kurtis 500S roadster produced by Frank Kurtis' son Arien. Little known in the UK, it carried Jon Ward to a double victory on the reborn Carrara PanAmericana. One even has FIA papers.



From top; Cobra-eating, Chevy-powered Beck Lister; Tempero's impressive DBR2 replica; and D&B Maserati A6GCS

The results

You have to admire Bill Monk's DB3S but it's too refined to simulate the real car. The modern German drivetrain just doesn't sit well with this British icon. The Heritage C-type is too compromised with XJ suspension and doesn't feel like a '50s car while the RAM D-type is just too flash for regular use. Best value were the junior pair, the Technic 550 and the Westfield XI. Both are cleverly engineered quality kits and terrifically rewarding to drive. The 550 is more practical with enough boot space for tent and sleeping bags, but the Westfield is better suited for sprint work. Owner John Baker's quest to sort his replica Frazer Nash Le Mans Rep has paid dividends in driver appeal and it's the closest experience to the real thing. Like the priceless original, Rob Wilson's Testa Rossa was an event to drive,

but so it should be for the build cost. That said, similar Ferrari replicas might look as good, but wouldn't come close. Our favourite was the Proteus C-type which just pipped the Ferrari on points. It's hard to think how you could improve this copy which feels so friendly with robust construction, predictable handling, smooth controls and long-legged performance. To build a car to this spec today would be pricey, so watch out for a sorted one in our classifieds.

Proteus C-type	53
Rob Wilson TRC	52
Technic 550 RS	50
Westfield XI	49
WOK Le Mans Replica	49
RAM D-type	49
Heritage/Realm C-type	48
Dino 196S	46
WAM DB3S	45

but so it should be for the build cost. That said, similar Ferrari replicas might look as good, but wouldn't come close. Our favourite was the Proteus C-type which just pipped the Ferrari on points. It's hard to think how you could improve this copy which feels so friendly with robust construction, predictable handling, smooth controls and long-legged performance. To build a car to this spec today would be pricey, so watch out for a sorted one in our classifieds.

And the winner is...

PROTEUS C-TYPE

Disagree? Then have your say by logging on to our website: www.classicandsportscar.com