

barchetta

UK Owners Club

Newsletter

Issue 9
December 2002

2003 barchetta has a face-lift!



Unveiled at the Bologna Motor Show in Italy at the beginning of December, here is the 2003 barchetta.

Exterior changes are largely cosmetic, with new bumpers front and rear, revised front indicators and fog lights, a larger exhaust pipe and 16 inch wheels.

The interior features a new cloth and titanium-coloured air vents, door handles and centre console panels. New hi-fi equipment incorporates a CD and MP3 file player, four speakers and twin 80 Watt subwoofers behind the seats to ensure superb sound even when driving top-down.

The new front is dominated by a grille below the existing slit, which makes the car look more aggressive (*quite similar to the Honda S2000 in my opinion - see photograph, right; Ed.*) The headlamps now have silver sealed units rather than black. Apart from the front and rear bumpers, the rest of the car is true to the shape of the barchetta as launched in 1995.

The new barchetta range, due on sale in Spring 2003, comprises three versions with ABS, airbag and fog lights as standard throughout the range. The 130bhp 1747cc engine remains unchanged.

Three of the five founder members of barchetta Club Italia, Paolo Zanone, Paolo Claus and Fulvio Rivetti were invited to Bologna to view and photograph the new car. The two photographs below showing the rear of the car, plus several others, can be found at the Italian Club's website at www.barchettaclubitalia.it



**UK BARCHETTA OWNERS CLUB
MINUTES OF FIRST AGM
HELD 30th NOVEMBER 2002
AT ALISON PARK HOTEL, BUXTON**

ATTENDEES:

Rosemary Kind, Bernadette Bowles, David Gwilliam, Vicki Gwilliam, Ian Barnett, Rachel Cole, Nick Anderson, Steve Auty, Chris Auty, Richard Keogh, Deborah Goodman, Ken Davey, Lyn Davey, Mark Baker, Sarah Coward, Joanna Wales, Emma Wales, David Cole, Jac Cole, Paul Harris, Helen Grieseson.

APOLOGIES: Geoff Bowles

DISTRIBUTION: All Members in Newsletter.

1.0 Chairman's Report

(presented by Bernadette Bowles on Geoff's behalf).

"Welcome to the AGM of the UK barchetta Owners Club and apologies for my absence, on business in Japan. I have already spent more than four months of this year working in Japan, so I have unfortunately missed out on many opportunities to join meetings and meet club members.

Japan is not a country I ever expected to visit and I didn't know what to expect when I started working here, but I've found it a fascinating and enjoyable place to live and work, despite some strange - some would say ridiculous - working hours.

On the other hand, not being able to drive my barchetta is certainly a downside and I always get that little thrill of excitement if I glimpse one on the streets of Tokyo. How can a mere assembly of metal, plastic, rubber and leather be quite so charismatic?

There were no clubs when we bought our barchetta in 1997, but there was Marc Kloosterman's marvellous website and a thriving international mailing list on the Internet. It was a revelation to exchange views with people from Holland, France, Germany, Italy and elsewhere and we soon started taking the barchetta to Europe to attend meetings and meet other owners, many of whom are now very good friends. Soon owners' clubs started to appear. The first meeting we attended was hosted by 'Del Piacere Barchetta', a club based in Aachen whose members met regularly in Eis Cafés and went for weekend drives through the Eifel Mountains.

Then there was the French Club started by Fred Fatoux. For a long time, Fred did everything himself, membership administration, meeting organisation,

newsletter, answering technical queries and so on. The club still thrives and I recommend its slightly surreal meetings to any UK barchetta owner.

Soon there were moves to set up clubs in other countries. The email list was starting to be dominated by British contributors, whose main questions were about importing a barchetta from the Continent, driving a left-hand drive car in the UK, the best place to get insurance and grumbling about lousy service from Fiat dealers - some things don't change!

Owners also started getting together for small meetings and we started to talk about what was involved in starting a club. Eventually, I started the club with Stéphane Bazin, Neal Harvey and others, mainly to make it easier to organise meetings in the UK that would attract our friends from the continent.

At that stage, we had no interest in becoming what we thought of as the traditional British Car Club, with chaps in overalls and flat caps gathering to compare oil leaks and camshaft profiles and bolting enamelled club badges to their radiator grilles. Nor were we particularly interested in tuning, body styling, loud stereo systems and track days. That didn't seem quite right for the barchetta. Perhaps the stereotypes are unfair, but we simply wanted to get together with friends, drive together and explore beautiful areas and roads after the style of the continental clubs. We had no ambition to market or promote the club, but if someone came to us we would go out of our way to answer their questions and to share with them the very special experience of driving at a barchetta meeting.

While some of the continental clubs have faded or gone through painful reorganisations, membership of the UK club has steadily increased year by year. Membership levels have now reached the point where it needs more than one or two people dabbling at it for a couple of hours a week.

We are all extremely fortunate that all the people on the current committee have come forward with such enthusiasm and such determination to make the club more 'professional' and to offer a package of real benefits to all its members. I am especially grateful this year, when I have not so much taken a back seat, as retreated to another continent!

I would like to be the first to thank everyone on the committee for their efforts, not forgetting past contributions from people like Ian Farquharson and Neal Harvey.

Enjoy the meeting."

2.0 Treasurer's Report and Appraisal of Accounts

The Club's accounting year runs from 1st October to 30th September and the funds are to be used effectively, for the benefit of the club.

UK BARCHETTA CLUB ACCOUNTS 1st October 2001 to 30th September 2002

Income	£
Subscriptions	1800.00
UK Meetings	8105.00
Merchandise (Sales)	803.90
Insurance Commission	360.41
Bank Interest	9.16
Total Income	11078.47
Expenses	
Admin Costs	123.82
Merchandise (cost)	659.51
UK Meetings Cost	7972.44
Total Costs	8755.77
Surplus	2322.70

UK BARCHETTA CLUB ACCOUNTS Balance sheet at 30th September 2002

Assets	£
Stock of Merchandise at cost	350.66
Bank	2947.17
	3297.83
Funded By	
Surplus brought forward	975.13
Surplus for Period	2322.70
	3297.83

Rosemary Kind
Treasurer
27th November 2002

3.0 Membership Report

The membership numbers for the club are currently 143, with renewals due. A questionnaire will be sent out in the February Newsletter for comments and suggestions on the Club website.

4.0 Merchandise Report

Historically, T-shirts were the limited leftovers from International Meetings. The 2002 range includes:

Caps; Polo Shirts; Fleecees;
Tax Disc Holders (anodised aluminium);
Stainless steel badges for the rear of the car (i.e. *barchetta*)

The clothing is quality branded with the logo being embroidered rather than printed. This year the car badges have been the most requested items. The 2003 range includes a Denby pottery mug with the Club logo, launched at the AGM. Future plans include:

Scarves; Key Rings; Lapel Badges; Pens;
Watches; Umbrellas

The Club operates a dual pricing structure for members and non-members of the Club.

5.0 Election of Officers

President (Honorary)	Stéphane Bazin
Chairman	Geoff Bowles
Treasurer	Rosemary Kind
Membership Secretary	Bernadette Bowles
Secretary	Vicki Gwilliam
Merchandise	David Gwilliam
Web Masters	Ian Barnett & Nick Anderson
Newsletter Editor	Steve Auty
Fiat Liaison	Richard Keogh

Regional Representatives

North West	Steve Auty
South West	Ken Davey
Midlands	Rosemary Kind
South East	Richard Keogh

6.0 Subscription for 2003

It was decided that there was no need to increase the Club subscription of £15 per annum for 2003.

7.0 UK International Meeting 2003

The date for the UK International Meeting to be (provisionally) set for the first weekend in June, avoiding Bank Holidays and School Holidays in the UK. Meeting to be held in East Anglia, over 3 days, (Fri/Sat/Sun), with the option of arriving on the Thursday evening.

8.0 AOB No matters arising

Meeting closed

barchetta UK Owners Club - Northern Meeting - 29th September 2002

Having previously been a participant in "convoy" type events in other car clubs, it didn't seem too daunting to be "volunteered" (thanks Alistair) to arrange a late summer run for the Northern contingent of the barchetta club. It was decided after enthusiastic positive responses (can't think why) that the end point of the run would be the Black Sheep Brewery in Masham, North Yorkshire, for a bar meal and tour of the brewery. The date was fixed.

On the Friday before the meeting I drove the route to make sure there were no unexpected roadworks etc. and get timings, mileages and landmarks for the written instructions which were to be the fallback in case of anyone getting lost. A couple of alterations were made to avoid bad junctions, but otherwise the route seemed fine at 41 miles long and about 1hr 15mins.

Sunday arrived, and we had arranged to meet at 11 a.m. in a lay-by just outside Wetherby, with the departure time set for 11:30. Ian Barnett was waiting when we got there and soon after more cars turned up. Tony and his daughter from Harrogate turned up unexpectedly - their intention was to go as far as Ripon with us, and then head home. By 11:30 we had seven cars and had enjoyed many admiring glances from motorists, taken Paul and Helen's top down, and been quizzed about the cars by a "mature" new age traveller/crusty with his

obsценely young girlfriend! Still, he liked our motors!

There was only one car we were waiting for, which was Tom and his daughter who were en route from Merseyside but currently cruising up and down the A1 looking for the Wetherby turn off. After a couple of phone calls they pulled in to the lay-by, dropped the top, and we were off.

It's always quite a thrill when you see another barchetta on the road, but to have seven in your rear view mirror is different again. I think the guy at the manned level crossing was quite impressed too as we queued up for him to open the gates!

We all managed to stay together through Boroughbridge and Ripon which was quite an achievement, and continued out into the countryside.

The route stuck mainly to B roads with the last section from Ripon to Masham being the A6108 - one of my favourite bits of road! We arrived in Masham, which was very busy due to it being the town's annual Sheep Weekend, and just about managed to get all the cars parked up in the already full brewery car park. Surprisingly Tony was still with us as well - he was enjoying the opportunity of driving in a barchetta convoy so much that he drove to Masham instead of leaving us at Ripon! Quite right too!



Before long we had commandeered most of the tables in the beer garden and were enjoying the weather and the odd drinkie. After waiting a little too long for some of our meals due to the place being very full, we went back inside to learn about beer (always useful I feel) and to sample some of the brewery's produce.

After the brewery tour and complimentary half, Ian did some Del-boy style trading from his car boot and nobbled me for a polo shirt and tax disc holder, before heading back down south. Shortly after we all headed home by various routes, still enjoying the late afternoon sun.



**Report by Tim Sinclair
Photos by Ian Barnett**

Tech Corner

DISCLAIMER

The Club wishes to point out that all technical advice is given in good faith, and that any work you undertake on your barchetta is entirely at your own risk. None of these technical projects have been approved by Fiat.

Please read ALL the instructions for a project BEFORE commencing any work, and if you are unsure about **ANYTHING**, do not start work which you may regret later.

All technical projects have a “spanner rating”, ranging from one (simplest) to five (scariest).

In the June 2002 Newsletter, we showed you how to change the gearbox oil. In this issue, **Bert Reid** spills the beans on how to perform an

Engine oil change

Spanner Rating:



PARTS REQUIRED

- 4 litres of oil, your preference, but FIAT and most owners prefer at least semi-synthetic oil or, if the budget allows, fully synthetic oil. At today's prices, the difference in cost is less than a tank of petrol. A move to fully synthetic oil would probably be beneficial to younger and lower mileage cars.
- Oil filter, part number 60612882.
- A crush washer will be required. **DON'T EVEN CONSIDER** starting the job without this - the old part is not reusable, and the crushing action of the washer saves you from over tightening the sump plug, and also ensures that the sump plug does not slacken off during the service life of the oil.
- A suitable drain pan to run the oil into.
- A plentiful supply of clean cloths/rags.

TOOLS REQUIRED

- A 12mm Allen-key-type sump plug removal tool.
- An oil filter wrench, preferably of the “nylon-strap” type as the space between the oil filter and the coolant hoses to the top is limited. You could of course use the rather unsubtle method of driving a screwdriver through the oil filter can to lever it off (very messy and not recommended).

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Ideally, do not allow engine oil to come into contact with unprotected skin. The use of rubber gloves is recommended, especially when draining off **HOT** oil in order not to get burned.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **NEVER** pour used oil into the water table (down drains or on open ground). Used oil should **ONLY** be disposed of in approved reclamation sites. Contact your local council for a list of sites near you.

METHOD

- Set out all your tools and materials on the floor of the garage/workspace. Take the barchetta for a short run to warm up the oil up (makes it easier to run off). Once the car is back in the garage/workspace, ensure that it is level (makes it easier to check the correct oil level once refilled), and switch off the engine.
- Open the bonnet and remove the oil filler cap and the dipstick - this allows the crankcase to vent and will let the oil run out easier. Time to get under the car and place the drain pan near to the sump plug.
- Insert the sump plug removal tool ensuring that it is a tight snug fit before applying any force to slacken it off. If you are reaching in from the front of the car with the tool pointing back towards you, turn it towards the timing belt side of the engine (away from the gearbox). If you cannot get the plug to slacken, it may need a quick tap with a mallet on the end of the removal tool to break the seal. Once the seal is broken, remove the tool and take the sump plug off by hand - don't forget your rubber glove to protect your hand from the hot oil!
- Allow the oil to run off into the drain pan (*see photo below*).



There are two types of sump plug depending on the age of your barchetta. Older cars will have the type shown on the right, whereas the one shown on the left is fitted to more recent cars.



As the warm/hot oil is draining from the sump, be careful it does not splash over the sides of your drain pan.

- The oil filter (*shown in blue in the photograph below*) is located in front of the sump just behind the front spoiler on the passenger side of the b. Take your oil filter removal tool, wrap the strap around the oil filter, and using a socket ratchet bar slacken off the filter just enough to allow the oil to run out - be careful to position the drain pan between the sump plug hole and the oil filter so that it catches both lots of waste oil.



- Once the oil has fully drained out (should take about 10 to 15 minutes) completely remove the oil filter and move the drain pan away. Place some cloths on the floor to catch any drips.
- Take the sump plug, clean it, and remove the old crush washer. Put the new crush washer on, and screw the sump plug back in by hand. Once some resistance is felt, insert the sump plug tool and turn the sump plug through 45 degrees (1/8 turn) - don't be tempted to tighten it further as you could strip the sump (not good)! If you have used a new crush washer then the sump plug should not slacken off during the next service interval.
- Remove the new oil filter from its packaging, and with some new engine oil on the tip of your finger rub a thin film onto the rubber seal. Clean the area around the oil filter mount and hand tighten the oil filter.
- Fill the engine with about 3½ litres of fresh oil, and refit the oil filler cap and dipstick. Start the engine (but DO NOT rev it) and let it idle for about a minute, then switch off. Allow the oil to settle back to the sump (2 to 3 minutes). Using the dipstick, check the oil level, and add oil until the sump contains enough oil to reach the MAX mark on the dipstick.
- Re-check the oil level after you have taken the barchetta for its first run following the oil change, and top up if necessary.
- Check your oil level once a week to ensure there is always sufficient in the engine.