

barchetta



UK Owner's Club

Newsletter

Issue 1

October 1998

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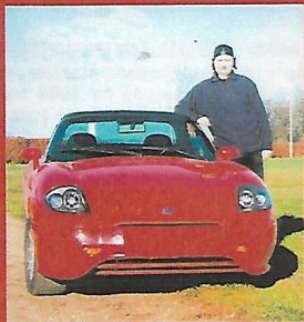
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**Stéphane
Bazin**

Ex-President & His
Ex-barchetta

The car is now a
hybrid red LE
following a flight
test accident.



President
Editor
Treasurer
Internet Site and
Contributions this
Issue

Geoff Bowles
Ian Farquharson
Neal Harvey

Marc Kloosterman

Welcome to the Newsletter

We recently voted to formally move from being a social group to a fully paid up owners club. With this in mind it was definitely time to start things rolling into producing our own official newsletter. We had a meeting one fine summer evening in St. Albans and this newsletter is our way of formally introducing the club. The original owners club was a group of friends found discussing the ups and downs of barchetta ownership on the Internet, and although we seem to have crossed paths with a lot of folk, it's clear not everyone has or want's to use this to stay in touch. It's your newsletter. I hope it appeals to you, but this is a first issue and any comments about content or layout would be much appreciated.

Ian Farquharson - Editor

Who Are We?

As regular readers of the e-mail list will know, several of us have been talking about launching the UK owners club for a couple of months. Initial doubts about the level of interest, international meetings, work, holidays, lack of time and all the usual excuses allowed us to put off the final decision to start a formal club. Also, like many people on this mailing list, none of us is very keen on the committee-culture that clubs so often attract. It's so much nicer to feel we're just a group of friends having fun, and none of us is prepared to risk losing that feeling.

Over the last few months, Stéphane Bazin has created the UK owners e-mail list, which has grown rapidly to about 40 cars. Stéphane and myself have been getting several inquiries every week asking for information about "the club", including several from people who don't have access to the internet. It seems that we can put off the decision to start the club no longer. As Stéphane has returned to his native France, I have succeeded him as President of the UK Club.

The club will be non-profit-making, but will obviously incur costs for things like postage, membership cards and stationery, copying and posting information sheets and newsletters, possible charges for the web-site as it develops and expands, printing of logos for merchandise etc. We will also need a modest "float" to order initial stocks of club merchandise and to meet any up-front costs when planning meetings. To cover these costs, we propose an annual subscription of 15 pounds per car. This will cover the car, and occupants, for one year, from 1st October to the 30th September. We may be persuaded to do a two-for-the-price-of-one deal for anyone owning two barchetta...

Geoff Bowles -- President

With This Issue

As this is a first issue, based on what the UK barchetta club has done in the past, this issue carries a technical supplement to help those unable to access the internet share in the collected knowledge of the many owners on the net. Please feel free to write in with any questions and we'll try and get some answers. Credit for maintaining this goes to Marc Kloosterman in the Netherlands. Similarly, if you have a good technical tip please let us know, and we'll pass it on to Marc.

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Meet The Owners

Each month we'll try and put a few faces to the names of folks we have come to know. If you'd like to feature, please drop us a line with a good barchetta and owner picture and we'll do our best.



Geoff Bowles, President of the UK barchetta Owners Club

Geoff is an IT Consultant working for the BBC. He lives in High Wycombe and visits as many International barchetta meetings as possible. Geoff and his car spend plenty of time climbing in Wales. This is Geoff organising the initial enrolment for the club at Beaulieu.



Andy Hill

Andy is a Technical Account Manager for Microsoft, and lives and works in Reading. Andy has been quiet on the UK list for a while now as he's working hard towards exams.

Upcoming Meetings

Now that the nights are drawing closer, we'll probably not be having so frequent meetings in the evenings. We will try and organize a couple of more day trips before the end of the year. One thing we do hope to still have is the Christmas Party, and again this is still in the planning stage, so please write in or let us know via email. It's likely to be a meeting in a pub one weekend before Christmas. Another great idea would be a pre-Christmas visit to France, to stock up on the finer things in life. This is a particular challenge in a barchetta, and presumably a few ingenious storage tricks would need to be employed. If you are keen on this please let us know.

Promotional Items

Now that the club is beginning to take shape financially, we can begin to think about promotional items too. Please write in with ideas for these and we'll hopefully have something to offer in an issue or two. The obvious items so far are: -

- *UK Owners Club T-shirts*. With the barchetta and UK Owners logo.
- *barchetta Key-rings and Badges*, in the FIAT accessory catalogue, in volumes of twelve! We should be able to get these and share out the colours as appropriate.
- *Mugs*, with the logo as the front cover, or a photo from a meeting.
- *Model Cars*, if we can track down a good supply.

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AutoItalia Festival of Italian Motoring

This was held over the weekend of the 4th and 5th of July 1998 at the historic Brooklands Circuit, in Weybridge Surrey. The weekend was split into 2 separate event days. Saturday being a supercar day, with demonstrations and rides in all manner of Italian motoring folklore round a sprint track on the airfield part of the course. Sunday was a meeting day for just about every model of Italian car ever built. The UK barchetta Club attended on Sunday, and with a few folks who turned up without prior knowledge of our attendance we had sixteen barchettas assembled on the edge of the historic banking. The cars themselves caused quite a stir, and we think that our showing may well have been the largest collection of a single model on the day.

We were intending to park on the banking at the circuit, but it was a shade precarious. In fact it's really only safe to walk about halfway up there without feeling like you are standing on the top of a thirty foot wall with nowhere to go. We found a good spot next to the banking, and lined all the cars up as is customary, and left them there top down all afternoon.

Many folks approached us for information about the club, and it was really at this time it was apparent that a wider audience than the internet mailing lists either owned or wanted to own a barchetta. Again FIAT miss out on another marketing triumph. We left that evening with the impression that there were at least three or four folks who'd gone away to find out how to get a car.



AutoItalia that month had featured an article on how to import (legally and efficiently) a barchetta from the continent. The car they bought and featured could be seen driving round as the official stewards vehicle for the day, piloted (the only word for a car twenty feet up, and tilted over forty degrees on the banking) by the editor Phil Ward. The assembled barchetta collection should be featured in the current AutoItalia magazine. It's normal for AutoItalia to publish at least one barchetta article a month and it's excelled itself of late with features on the Dedica, and Monotipo concept cars from Stola, based on the humble barchetta. The magazine is available from larger WH Smiths, and Martins Newsagents.

We have been in discussions with AutoItalia regarding next years event. It's likely to be even bigger, and with FIAT the featured marque, it should be a great weekend. The only

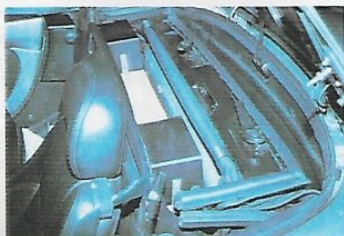
minor hassle this year was poor access to the site from the quiet country lanes of Weybridge. This will be fixed next time by opening up more entrances to the huge site.

-- Ian Farquharson

Above, red and silver still very popular.
Above Right, there were cars parked this high!

Parts and Toys

Each month we'll try and feature some of the things that people have done to modify either cosmetically or otherwise, their beloved barchetta. From engine mods, wheels, exhausts, to hi-fi. Even recommendations on the best car care products. Please write in and give details of your modifications and we'll feature them for all as soon as possible. The most impressive piece of coachwork seen so far goes to Jonathan Powell who has managed to very tastefully build a speaker enclosure behind the seats and extending the tonneau cover in carefully trimmed black leather. The version here shows normal PC style speakers mounted to just give that little touch of rear fill in that's missing in the original car. This of course is a moot point when the roof is down, and all you can hear is the exhaust as you tear through a tunnel on full throttle just for the sake of it.



Another add on that's worth considering is the front strut-brace. This is simply a tie between the front suspension turrets, keeping a little extra stiffness in the chassis, and helping the suspension to remain accurate when cornering. This is a MOMO one from Demon-Tweaks. Fitting takes about 10 minutes. Other makes are available (OMP/Sparco), but this one looks nice on a red car.

1998 UK International Meeting



This years international meeting was held in the Midlands, and included visits to Aston Martin at Newport Pagnell, Birmingham, and Donington. Despite the freak conditions in early spring, a great time was had over the three day event, with guests from the continent enjoying glorious English weather. The overnight stop in Birmingham was at the Chamberlain hotel near the city centre, which has a secure attended carpark next door.

Left, a collection of barchetta arrives in Birmingham for the night.

Not to dwell too much on the weather, but with floods, (yes, little boat is appropriate) and a reasonable covering of snow it was good to see everyone continue on as normal with the scheduled drives through the countryside of England and Wales.

It should be noted that we think this is the first ever international meeting at which every single standard

colour has been represented. This years meeting was organised by Stéphane Bazin and Geoff Bowles, and was all in for a cost of approximately £100.

Right, stopping for a snow-ball break

The meeting also took in Donington racing circuit. The cars were allowed onto the track for photographic purposes.

The whole 3 day event was a great occasion by all reports and we look forward to an even better turnout at next years. With a little luck the weather may turn out a little better than that experienced by everyone this year.

Below, Donnington Park Circuit features as a Photo Opportunity that couldn't be missed.



dates for the UK meeting in this timeframe. Hopefully as many members as possible will be able to attend and help us catch up on Germany where the sight of fifty plus cars is not at all unusual. However to reiterate, and as shown here, the 1998 meeting holds the record for every colour, so all we need now is the 2 LE styles to complete a full set in 1999.

Right, FIAT missed out on a great photo for publicity, every barchetta colour available at the beginning of 1998 represented in one picture.

1999 International Meeting

At the moment the location and dates of the UK International meeting for 1999 are not yet known. We have a few ideas so far, but it's your club, so if you know of any great places to visit, preferably including the manufacture of interesting cars, and the potential to drop into a racing circuit for photographs please let us know. The current membership is pretty well spread around the country, but as this is intended to be an international meeting it's better if it stays in the south, or midlands. That way our guests from Europe stand a chance of getting there, and within a days driving for the majority. We will have to fit the meeting in with the schedule of other European barchetta owners clubs, in order that those who often attend abroad have a chance to save up or recover their liver functions respectively. We'll be publishing a calendar of upcoming events in Europe towards the end of the year, and firming up the

