

Squire SS-100 Registry

CLBCOM 67
JUNE 1996

CHASSIS #5 (aka THE BLACK BEAUTY)

we are pleased to report, has been purchased but will remain at home on Long Island. The new owners are Sam & Cindy Handle of Smithtown, NY. Sam is a real devotee of rod and custom cars and has owned most of the classics since starting his lifelong automotive hobby in his boyhood home of Las Vegas, Nevada. However, the really exiting news for you Long Islander's is the fact that in addition to being a car-nut, Sam is a graduate mechanical engineer and is General Manager for A&W Specialty Co., a machine shop in Bohemia, Long Island. He has made many of the parts for his automotive projects over the years and will be a real assist for you Eastern types who need some of the one-of-a-kind parts that are failing on our twenty five year old Squires - like the convertible top clamps. And again, he says he has a complete understanding of automotive electrics and wiring. (I don't know who's going to be happier, Sam finding the Registry or us finding him!). I'll be getting out a new Registry roster soon but mean-while you can reach him at home at 516+361-9028 and his shop at 516+563-1100. (FAX 516+563-7529)

The last owner of Chassis #5, Michael Lindgren, remains in the Registry and he is quietly pursuing another Squire that has been in storage for many years. Look for news of that in an upcoming issue.

AND NOW PART 11 OF ED SPIELMANS EXCITING SQUIRE SS-100 SAGA

The answer? AMERICAN POWER.

In my heart of hearts, I wish I had my beautiful XK140 roadster today. (As it stood, it would now be worth about sixty grand.) Nevertheless, I would do the unthinkable; I would totally devalue it in the collector market and endure the ire of the purists. I would shlepp out that old, over heating, oil guzzling XK Jaguar mill and use it as a boat anchor. I would install Chevy running gear front to back.

I am not alone in this conviction. Still, there are those who claim that putting an American engine in a foreign sports car (whether by original design or later frustration) causes it to cease being a 'pur sang' (pure blooded) sports machine. Dishwater!

American power makes sense partly because British (and much European) engineering is legendary for bizarre surprises; i.e.: to put a clutch in an XK140 Jaguar requires pulling the engine out (a principle akin to suggesting that if you need to change a light bulb in your house, first you should rip all of the wiring out of the walls).

Ed Felbin and Mike Wolf were merely dumping the mythology and opting for style with practical American power. There is a peculiar satisfaction in buying a water pump with lunch money and installing it yourself in an hour. There is an equal satisfaction in actually being on the road as opposed to watching the mailbox for an overpriced pound of bolts about to arrive from 'The Continent'.

I cite some examples of milestone cars that used American power to good effect. These were as 'pure blooded' as any rapid transit ever built:

Sid Allard's fire breathers (including the legendary J2) used DeSoto, Chrysler, Cadillac and Mercury. Iso Grifo and Rivolta (Chevrolet), Bizzarini Strada GT (Chevrolet), Dual Ghia (Chrysler\ Dodge), Pantera (Ford) and DeTomaso Mangusta (Ford), Intermeccania\Italia (Ford) and Apollo GT (Buick), Sunbeam Tiger (Ford 289). The French Facel Vega sported Chrysler mills of up to 6.3 liters. And, of course, there is the King of the Latter Day Hybrids (thanks to Carroll Shelby); the A.C. Cobra, a Ferrari-eater par excellence.

There has been a similar tradition on the 'dream car' circuit: Ghia and Vignale bodied Cadillacs and Chryslers. Remember the Dodge 'Fire-Arrow'?

It is not a new idea. The concept of the reliable Euro-American hybrid goes back a long way. Jensen of England was making sleek American powered stuff long before they produced the big block 440 Chrysler powered Interceptor. They built a beautiful 3.6 liter Ford engined sports tourer ...in 1937.

There have been many such cars, some as obscure but noteworthy as:

The 1936 British Leidart with a 3.6 liter Ford V-8 (a neat looking job with the style of a Morgan Plus 4... but twice the size.)

The elegant British Railton which used Hudson V-8's.

The Brough-Superior (same fellow who made the Brough-Superior Motorcycles ridden by Lawrence of Arabia). The Brough cars were built with Hudson Sixes and Straight Eights.

Suffice it to say that there is a venerable history of designers world-wide who understood the simplicity of design, the value and integrity of American engines.

Some preface, huh?

So, now to the Squire.

Being the sum total of this experience, I was leaving the New York Coliseum Auto show (1971-72) when I glanced over to the Mezzanine where a few limited edition offerings were being shown...and I was promptly struck by a thunderbolt.

There was a Squire SS-100.

Remember, there were no kit cars to speak of in those days. And here was this fabulous AMERICAN POWERED ITALIAN SPORTS ROADSTER.

I walked over and met Mike Wolf at the stand. He was Ed Felbin's partner and the principal designer of the car. Wolf was a really neat guy, knowledgeable and personable. He gave me the highlights, the sales pitch and sat me in the car. I was hooked, but it was pricey in those days (list at \$12,500). I left with a couple of the original brochures that Mike gave me. I still have them.

I kept the Squire at the top of the 'toys wanted' list. Time went by. I didn't see another Squire until the winter of 1977. One came up for sale in the classic car section of the New York Times.

The last owner had bought it as an investment from D.B. Kaufman in Kenner, Louisiana. This poor lawyer (is this an oxymoron?) was going through a divorce. I was talking to him on the phone with the brochure and complete specs in front of me. In routine conversation, I gave him details about the car he never heard of.

"Who are you? How do you know this stuff?" he asked.

He sold the Squire to me for less than he wanted... because no one else had called him. At the time, no one else knew what it was.

I drove the car home in the snow with the top down...and I have been having nothing but fun ever since.

Sure, you have to get it right. Over these two decades, I have had to do the same stuff you have: motor mounts, rear springs, electrical, etc. I have fixed, invented, invested, collaborated and tap danced around old number #32 from front to back. But one often unstated beauty of the Squire is ... once you fix it right, it's fixed. Much of the Euro powered exotica I am acquainted with cannot be 'fixed'. They are inherently unreliable. They can never be anything else. In my opinion, the only way to fix a vintage Jaguar (or any Lucas equipped vehicle) is to stuff a Chevy in it...or buy yourself a frontal lobotomy so that you'll cease to care if you don't get where you think you're going.

Or, you can ask yourself this question. If your wife was about to deliver your first child, would you drive her to the hospital in a Fiat? (Only if you think you can get quality Obstetrics service at the local AAA.)

Thankfully, those of us who own Squires still have enough technical problems to keep it interesting, but not so many that the car is a door stop instead of a conveyance.

And make no mistake; despite the fact that our 250 Cu. In. powerplant can be found in such proletarian vehicles as Mavericks, any objective view will conclude that this industrial quality, seven main bearing Straight Six is as fine an engine as one could want. Bags of torque for a 2200 pound sports car. It was a stroke of inspiration that put this running gear in these Squires. And as far as beauty is concerned, that's why Edelbrock and Clifford sell fancy aluminum valve covers and other such goodies. The bottom line is...it goes.

I would like to close this diatribe by thanking Art Stahl, Terry Becker, Bill Lieske, Mark Offenber, Mike Sher, Bob Murray, John Fulton, Tim Sharon and the rest of you in the yeoman guard, because I have the best of both worlds. Good friends and the adventure of a truly enjoyable car that keeps improving in performance and value. And more power to us.

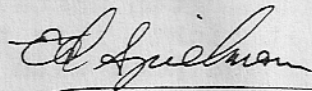
I have a favorite retort for those rare occasions when a resentful civilian approaches me at a car show and asks;

"Hey, pal, any problems with this car?"

"Yes," I reply mildly, "I didn't have it in high school."

'Nuff said. That's my Squire story. Undoubtedly, every one of you has his\her romantic tale of how you got the bug ...and the car. We invite the members to offer their personal recollections. Feel free to jot a few lines and send them to Art for the Newsletter.

Best regards,



ED SPIELMAN
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.
APRIL, 1996

UNDER SUBJECT HEADING "SPARE PARTS"

You will recall that last year Bill Lieske installed a Mustang II front end on his Squire SS-100, complete with rack/pinion steering. He has kept the original Ford suspension and brake parts for both right and left side to include torsion bars, upper & lower "A" arms and the complete drum-brake-backing plate & positioning strut. So, if you wear out or "cream" your front end suspension/brake parts, Bill has spares available. Call or write to him.

SQUIRE TORSION BAR SUSPENSION

is once again in the news and I tell you now to ignore almost every thing I told you on Page 2 & 3 in CLBCOM 19, January 1992. On June 22nd Ed Spielman flew in from Los Angeles and Sid Weaver flew in from Albuquerque. I picked them up and we drove to Jim Dimond's where we were joined by Bill Lieske and our non-owner expert, Terry Becker. We completely disassembled the torsion bar portion of both sides of Jim Dimond's Squire and learned a simple method of height adjustment and also how to tear down, clean, service and lubricate the torsion bar bearings. Chief Draftsman Bill Lieske (and I think I just gave him a new title) is working on an exploded-view drawing to detail the torsion bar assembly and we'll include it next month with a complete write up on "how-to-do-it."

SQUIRE SUNDAY III

has been tentatively set for August 16th & 17th at the Offenbergs Sand Castle at Lloyd Neck, Long Island, Saturday for a tech-session and work-shop and Sunday for eating and socializing. RSVP to Mark so he can plan the menu and make motel reservations for the out-of-towner's. Write or phone Mark Offenbergs c/o Whitman Gold Jewelers, 190-5 Walt Whitman Mall, Huntington Station, NY 11746. Phone 516+271-4424 (10:00 AM to 4:00 PM EDT).

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER

Happiness is merely the remission of pain!

