

DE TOMASO

Winter 2008



De Tomaso Drivers Club News



Pantera Gr4 - would have looked better on original Campagnolas

De Tomaso meet

at RetroMobile, Paris Saturday 7th February 2009

I was invited to attend a social De Tomaso meet at The Auto Passion Café, 197 Boulevard Brune, 75014 Paris at 12.30 pm and from there to the RetroMobile exhibition at Porte de Versailles where several valuable Panteras were being auctioned. The meeting had been arranged by Club member Patrick Hals from Belgium with relatively short notice. Unfortunately I was unable to properly circulate it within the Club. However, we plan to support the

event in February 2010 with an over-nighter.

I initially planned to go on my own as the day was going to be hectic with an early Saturday morning BA flight from Heathrow Terminal 5 and a late flight back from Paris Roissy in the evening. Club member Geoff Peters came on board at the last moment and joined me for the day.

With snow falling on the Friday evening quite heavily in West

Sussex, I decided to drive north to Cobham after an invite to stay at Geoff's just in case the roads were bad in the morning.

As it was, a heavy frost had frozen the snow as we departed for LHR at 5am on the Saturday morning. Kim had offered to drive us to the airport but she was suffering from a cold and bad cough and thought the best place at that time of morning was under the duvet.

I pass T5 weekly on the perimeter road but had not been inside before. If one forgets about the opening disaster, the terminal building is amazing with direct access from the car park (2 mins!). No queuing, straight to our departure gate. There are plenty of interesting shops as well. Our flight took off on time and took just 50 minutes.

On our arrival at Roissy, we decided to take a train across Paris direct to Porte d'Orleans where we were due to meet. We arrived in good time at the Metro station but weren't quite sure where the Auto Passion Café was in Boulevard Brune. Geoff Peters took control and walked into a hotel reception to seek directions. He came out

seconds later laughing, 'It's here!' Right next door to the hotel was the café! Well, it was sleeting at the time which impaired our vision - more on spectacles later!

Unbeknown to us, several other guests had already arrived. We were 50 minutes early so we explored the theme café which was very interesting, with numerous Renault F1 engines on display. Lots of motor racing memorabilia with video screens covering Le Mans. I am not aware of a similar venue in the UK. It was put together very well. We do in fact forget that it was the French who started road motor racing on Michelin tyres.

At around 12.30pm, Patrick Hals arrived with De Tomaso friends,

notably Claude Dubois, the Belgian De Tomaso Concessionaire who sold some 280 cars! A remarkable achievement.

As we sat down, I believe there were 14 of us. Patrick had hoped that the figure would have been closer to 20 but I know several invited guests had other commitments including Stephane Bergeron of Pantera French Connection in Paris. He is, I gather, an Air France pilot and was on a simulator for the new Airbus that day and sent his apologies. Stephane Poux from the De Tomaso Club de France had been invited but was at RetroMobile where he was responsible for looking after a 1976 Pantera Gr4 (I believe it was actually a Gr3 Pantera with a 300,000 Euros estimate!) in the Artcurial Classic & Racing Cars

Geoff Peters reading a back issue of DTDC Club News at Auto Passion Cafe





De Tomaso drivers past and present

auction. I did notice under lot 32 was a Tomaso Sport 1000 BRM that I later established was being sold by DK Engineering on behalf of a Club member. From the internet, I gather it did not reach its reserve.

Sat next to me to my left was Claude Dubois who I had met a number of years ago. He is a famous De Tomaso figure and a very interesting man. We spoke about everything from armour plated Deauvilles to him racing at Le Mans. He has written a book in French and I will see whether we can get it translated into English for publication. Claude has subsequently sent me an e-mail which is enclosed in this Club News. I have invited him over to the UK later this year to give our club a

talk on De Tomaso. It will possibly coincide with The Goodwood Revival in September. A date will be fixed and circulated very soon.

To my right was Pieter Boel who owns an original Pantera Gr4. I know Geoff was talking to him quite a lot but gather he has owned the Pantera for 10 years. Pat Hals sat directly opposite me. He told me that he has an interested party for his "Warhol" Gr4 Pantera which is currently for sale.

Sat opposite to one side was Pierre Rubens who raced a Gr4 Pantera at Le Mans [see photo]. Also in the gathering was Francois Breton. It was a thoroughly enjoyable lunch and really not sufficient time to talk to everyone. I took a number of

Club News along for those there to look through and it was rewarding to hear the comments on the Club magazine.

We left The Auto Passion Café into the wintery weather and caught a tram 4 stops to RetroMobile. We only had 2 hours before it would be necessary to get back onto the train back to Roissy for our 8pm flight.

What a pity we did not have more time! It was an excellent exhibition. I would say it was considerably larger than our UK Classic Car exhibitions. Apart from great car displays, the trade stands were numerous and I was pleasantly surprised with the content.

One of the stands was 'Shopping Formula 1 Maranello' via Alferieri, 1-Maranello, Italy tel 0536 941613. He had thousands of original badges and letterings for De Tomaso, Lamborghini, Maserati, Ferrari, Iso and just about every other Italian manufacturer. He showed me his De Tomaso bin which was full of rare pieces. A rather smart De Tomaso blue silk tie attracted my attention, something I had not seen before in this particular style. I saved my 50 Euros and bought a rare Lamborghini badge.

The owner spoke fluent English and his telephone number may come in handy when trying to locate this particular type of spares. www.shoppingformula1.it or info@shoppingformula1.it

We wandered over to see a Pantera Gr4 that was being auctioned that evening. The price guide was 330,000 Euros. You may well recognise the Pantera which has been for sale for quite a few months in numerous classic motoring journals.

Some members know that I used to own a Facel Vega HK500, my particular HK500 was judged as one of the best in the world several years ago. There were some Facel Vegas on display. Unfortunately I did not have time to spend on their stand.

Stephane Poux who owns about 12 De Tomasos including a Pantera Si joined us for about 10 minutes. Time was running out and with the

weather closing in, were anxious not to miss our flight so no sooner had we said "hello" it was time to say "goodbye"!

Back to the train station and immediately lost trying to sort out which direction and platform we needed. No worries, Geoff stopped an immaculately dressed lady who spoke English to ask her directions to which she replied 'You are standing by the platform sign Charles de Gaulle airport' which we were . . . couldn't blame the sleet this time!

It didn't help that we were given a mini plan of the Paris - Metro, RER, train et tramway guide which was the size of a normal envelope. As we both now require reading glasses, were both struggling to follow the map even though it was in colour. We did get the right train but it was a slow train stopping at 24 stations en route. As we approached the airport we did

notice it had snowed but were not aware until we arrived in the terminal that our flight had been cancelled to the following day!

Having enquired about other flights and the Eurostar, we ended up in a Campanile Hotel for the night courtesy of BA. Snow had fallen heavily mid afternoon and all UK flights had been cancelled to Paris. Over a beer, we both wondered how much our short term carpark ticket was going to be for 29 hours - it was in fact I believe £71. Sunday morning saw us up at 6 a.m. on the courtesy coach to the terminal and on to our early flight back to LHR.

It was an interesting trip which as I've mentioned will be repeated next year. Hopefully we will be able to see some of the same guests who made the conversation at the table.

Phil Stebbings

Pierre Rubens next to his Pantera Gr4



