

KOTR PINS

VOLUME 10 APRIL 2025





KING OF THE ROAD ANTIQUE CAR CLUB

Staff and Management

CEO: Jim Rentz President@KOTRACC.org

President of Vice: Gordon Platt Vicepresident@KOTRACC.org

Bursar: Gordon Platt Treasurer@KOTRACC.org

Club Stenographer; Dee O'Donnell Secretary@KOTRACC.org

Certified Web Mechanic; Rich Courmettes Webmaster@KOTRACC.org

Visit our website; KOTRACC.org to see more of what we are all about

2

A TOUCH OF CLASS

We have a special treat this month for your enjoyment. Frank O'Donnell has shared the saga of his restoration of his 1970 Maserati Ghibli. As many of us have experienced the ups and downs of restoration projects, his was no different. Over time and over budget.

Our March and April activities will be highlighted as well. As you know I was unable to attend our St. Paddy's dinner at O'Keefe's Irish Pub in Tavares. Fortunately Gordon Platt stepped up and chronicled all of you that were in attendance in the photos for this event. The story is just my usual BS, I know you were well cared for by the staff and the food is always superb.

As you may or may not know The Villages Special Events Department has cancelled the Spanish Springs Cruise ins for the balance of 2025. We will not be the feature club in May, therefore we will not be holding our annual Jersey Mike's hoagie fest at that venue. If anyone has a suggestion on where you might like hold said festival please let us know. We're all ears. Also we have not heard from any senior/assisted living center concerning a special showing for Father's Day. However if we would like to have our own Father's Day celebration that could be arranged!

Since we are entering the summer season and will be light on participants your suggestions for the season would be most appreciated.



SAINT PATTY'S CELEBRATION MARCH 13TH

O'Keefe's Irish Pub

Great plans were laid for our annual Saint Patty's celebration, but sometimes not all goes as planned. At the last minute the venue was changed to O'Keefe's Irish Pub in Tavares, an always reliable source for a good time and great Irish fare. All who attended, I am told, had a wonderful evening. I was still recuperating from a recent stint in the local infirmary. My thanks to Gordon Platt for providing photos, proving that you did have a good time!



Gilbert and Joyce Volling were joined by Steve and Flo Rode on the front porch of O'Keefe's for dinner

MORE ON FOUR

4



Ellen Harcourt and Rich Courmettes enjoy the evening with their friends Pat Behrens and Ralph Coogan



Above Brad Werner and Terry and Nancy Woods along with Elaine Werner wait for their dinners to arrive.



Nancy Buehrig, Rich Udell, Nancy Sutters and Richard Buehrig get served their favorite Irish fare while enjoying the great outdoors at



To the right we have Tom Sweitzer then Bob and Linda Durst and Carol Schweitzer rounding out the quartet of good friends.



Pies In The Park

Sunday, April 13th

After being rained out on our previous attempt at this annual event, April 13th dawned bright and clear, perfect for our Pies In The Park party. The set-up crew arrived right at 1:00 p.m. to get the tables set for party to start at 2 o'clock.

The guests with their pies in hand started arriving a few minutes early so as to get their entries sliced and ready for the judging. It didn't take long for the judging to start and the eager party goers to dig in to delicious pies.

There were apple pies and cream pies, most home baked, a few store bought. The home baked were in the judging section. They were all good, just some a little bit better than the rest.

The winner for the day was Diana Bray for her quiche, it was superb.

Good food and good friends together on a beautiful day with old cars too, now that is a KOTR party!

More pix on six.



Above, Leif Drexler (L) arrives at the party in his 1914 Model T tourer and is greeted by party host Rich Courmettes.

Below Rich Udell slices his pie for the judging.





On the left above we have our #1 pie baker for the 2025 “Pies In The Park” contest, Diana Bray for her quiche Lorraine. Presenting her ribbon award and \$25 Publix gift card is Dee O’Donnell along with Ellen Harcourt, the fine judges for this competition. Well done ladies!



The contestants with their pies start arriving and they prepare them the crowd as the two judges, Dee and Ellen oversee the staging.



Pat Rentz had a special placemat made for her entry of a cinnamon three apple pie.



Rich Udell sits with “Hoochie Mama” his Min Pin companion. She attends many KOTR events and manages to steal the hearts of all who cannot resist her big , brown eyes.

6

“Pies In The Park” has become one KOTR’s signature events over the years. Our members enjoy the opportunity to get out with their cars and travel to a beautiful, quiet setting for some good ol’ fashioned picnic of just pies. Maybe one of our upcoming events this summer we’ll make it a “Potluck” picnic that we can all don our aprons and each bring our specialty to share with our good friends.

GOING ITALIAN

FRANK
O'DONNELL



My two favorite automobile styling cues are hidden headlights and long, fastback rooflines. Think 1965-67 Stingray, 1982-91 Porsche 944 and 1990-2001 Acura NSX. It's the long-hood, short deck, Raymond Loewy design style of looking like you are going fast when you are standing still. It is not surprising I would be drawn to owning a Maserati Ghibli. I also wonder if other Ghibli owners think Datsun stylists had a picture of the Ghibli on the wall when they were penning the 1969 240Z.

I'm referring of course, to the *original* Giorgetto Giugiaro designed car of 1967-73, often referred to in automotive journals as one of the 10 most beautiful automobiles ever produced. To me, when you translate the word 'Ghibli' from Italian to English, the six letters spell "beauty".

I have owned many cars during my lifetime, but never an 'Italian Job.' Among classic car owners it is commonly held that the Germans manufacture great handling cars, the Japanese make reliable cars, the English can't make a reliable car, and the Italians create great works of art. Art that sometimes translates to, "Fix It Again Tony."

If you know **anything** about cars, you don't buy an English or Italian classic automobile unless you are prepared to deal with the service and running issues. It is a trade-

off; beauty for disillusionment. The concession is that the car will always look beautiful sitting there parked in the garage, even when it is not running.

However, if you are mechanically inclined, patient, willing to take the time to translate Italian to English and become familiar with how all the systems in your car operate, you can work through most of the problems. I have discovered the true worth of owning an Italian car is the ultimate satisfaction you get when it IS running.

THE STORY

I bought my 1970 Maserati Ghibli from Hyman, Ltd., a consignment dealer in St. Louis. It is a 'mid-production' car assembled in June of 1969, after the U.S. safety regulations took effect. The toggle switches were relocated directly under the dash pad and headrests were attached to the seatbacks.

After sitting in Hyman's inventory for nine months, management listed the car on the popular online auction site, Bring-A-Trailer in August of 2023 on behalf of the owner. While the auction was live, I flew to St. Louis, fully inspected the car and took it for a test drive. I found the car to be all original and still wearing period-correct Pirelli

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Cinturato tires. The engine seemed to run well enough and underneath the hood, the spark plugs, wires, and distributor were all new. While on the lift, I noticed a few leaks, but nothing that seemed excessive. The interior would need freshening, and the original paint finish needed some TLC. But it was RUNNING!

I learned the original owner only kept the car for a year and traded it in. The second owner was a collector who kept the car for the next 43 years until his death in 2014. The Ghibli was then purchased by Richard Gent of Ohio who stored it with his prestigious collection for 9 more years, selling it to me in 2023. I imagine that both long-term owners shared the same idea: to restore the car once the value increased. Being an automatic, that just never happened.

For those of you that say a Ghibli with an automatic is not desirable, I will tell you this. As a rule, cars with automatic transmissions are usually purchased new by older drivers, who most often own houses with a garage. They tend to be wealthier, follow maintenance schedules and seldom abuse their cars, as younger owners do. This is one of the secrets of buying classic cars for your own use. Cars with automatics tend to be less desirable for collectors, but more affordable and usually kept in better condition.

Hyman knew I was interested enough in the car to fly there for an inspection, so I had set the precedent. I did

not bid during the auction, thinking the car wouldn't make reserve, which it didn't. Hagerty Insurance tells us that auctions get a lot of publicity but account only for a small slice of sales in the collector car market. However, they help expose the car to a much wider audience even when they don't sell.

I started negotiating immediately with Hyman to purchase the car. The conversation went something like this: I would increase my original offer by \$5,000 each time, and they would lower their asking price by \$2,000! Eventually we came to an agreement, and I bought the car. Hyman arranged covered transportation for the shipment to my home in Florida at a discount. Things were going great. I would soon be the proud owner of an authentic, limited production Italian classic!

Two days before the arranged transport, Hyman called and said they could not get my Ghibli started. There was a strong smell of gas present in the rear compartment and asked if I wanted them to fix the car (at MY expense of course) and then reschedule shipping. I declined the offer and told them to, "Ship away!" The car arrived a few days later and we rolled the car into the garage.

My plan at the start was to keep the Ghibli as original as possible; make it more presentable and make it safe to drive.

THE RESTORATION WORK BEGINS

The first order of business was to get the car running again. With the rear cargo panels removed, inspection of both sets of fuel lines showed the driver's side rubber with pinhole leaks, being soft enough to bend and break. I figured it best to drain both gas tanks, inspect the fuel and run all-new hoses.

The fuel pumps were original, so I invested in a new pair. I found the same model Bendix pumps from a supplier in Australia, as there were none available from domestic suppliers. I replaced all the fuel hoses except the section of the fuel line that passes from the trunk into the body and out the front firewall. When that time comes, I will run a metal



line outside the vehicle and up into the engine compartment.

With the repairs completed, I had a constant flow of fuel. The car started, and I was able to drive around the neighborhood. I always feel so proud and privileged to drive this Italian thoroughbred.

To be driven safely, the original tires and inner tubes on the car had to be replaced. Research showed that every few years, Pirelli reproduces a run of its original pattern Cinturato radials. It just so happened that the company was scheduled to do just that. I purchased the tires in advance to ensure delivery and waited five months for the tires to be shipped.

Next, I contacted Dayton Wire Wheels in Ohio to restore the five original Borrani wheels on the car. To be able to continuously service and drive the car, I sent one wheel at a time to Dayton. The process took a year to complete. I had intentions of restoring the 8-sided center caps that came on the Ghibli, but the dealer said he had access to new Borrani spinner caps. I never imagined there would be any new centers available, much less the same highly coveted dual spinners available as an option at the time my Ghibli was being produced.



In February of 2024 I had the Ghibli towed to an independent Ferrari shop about an hour from the house. I chose this shop because of the owner's knowledge and ap-

preciation for the Maserati brand. He agreed to let me assist in the work being done, so I could learn more about the car's different systems. He had many beautiful exotic cars in the garage in various stages of repair, some covered in dust. I'm aware of the many horror stories about shops that start a project but never complete them. I thought working alongside the technician would keep things moving. However, work was done at various times, and I was called only once.

I contracted the shop to work on four areas: improve the brake system's stopping power, switch out the exhaust system from the headers back, replace the transmission gasket and rebuild the carburetors. I supplied all the parts in advance. After 90 days the carbs were rebuilt (but not re-adjusted) and the transmission gasket had been replaced. The brackets on the new stainless steel exhaust system I had purchased did not line up with the originals (welcome to reality again, Captain Obvious). A welder was called in to reweld the brackets on the pipes and mufflers to fit the attachment points on the chassis. After waiting three more weeks for a lift to become available, I paid the owner for the work they had completed and rescued the car with another tow. (I now have a one-on-one relationship with the flatbed driver for future multiple-tow discounts--based on our shared respect for classic cars and a love of local barbeque establishments.)

I shopped around and found a local independent muffler shop whose owner was not afraid to tackle an installation the national muffler chains claimed they couldn't do. He

kept the car over the weekend to fit it correctly and now has a picture of the Ghibli hanging in his waiting room. The brakes are still just adequate to stop the car safely and I will get around to fixing them soon.

I tackled the leaking radiator next. With the help of another enthusiast, we managed to lift out the heaviest radiator I have ever owned on any automobile. An afternoon spent learning all about radiators from an experienced repairman revealed no leaks at all, even under 150 pounds of pressure. Turns out all the leaking points were due to the overflow hose not extending far enough past the radiator. The overflow dripped into the bottom tray, which is angled downward towards the passenger side of the car. The radiator man would not take any money for his time and said he only charges if he makes a repair.

I replaced all the coolant hoses by removing them and visiting my local Advance Auto store. The staff there appreciate the cars I drive and allowed me access to their stockroom to match my old hoses to all the ones they have hanging from the racks. I was able to find replacements for all five hoses, with minimum trimming and at bargain prices compared to the cost of ordering originals. Turns out that the main lower coolant hose on my Ghibli is the exact upper hose for a 2001 GMC Suburban.

Next, I asked one of my car friends, a retired upholsterer, if he would be willing to redo the foam and leather seats in my Ghibli, as they were in bad shape. He did a marvelous job, and it was a pleasure dealing with one individual, versus an upholstery shop working on numerous other

projects. My wife liked the new seats so much she stated, “Those worn door panels make the seats look out of place so, we **have** to recover them.” As this was not my original plan, I conceded instead, to replace the water-stained ‘mouse pad’ dashtop.

With a new matching leather dash pad, along with the new door panels, (of course), we were off to the races. Seems I had completely forgotten my wife’s inherent trait of redecorating any area she spends time in.



We are well on our way to having a completely new leather interior. The cargo areas and front trim panels have all been recovered. After seeing other restored Ghiblis with color-matched consoles, I decided to do exactly that to my car. New carpet has been ordered and I’m switching out the original beige flooring for a deep black to make the beige interior ‘pop’ and not show dirt and scuff marks. The front of the dash will remain black. My upholsterer and I have also decided not to drape the new cargo area carpet over the rear ledge to leave the rear seat cushions visible.

The tool bag that came with the car was missing most of its

parts. I was able to find the rest of the tools at [Scuderiaricambi](#) in Italy for a very reasonable price. They were a bit shop-worn and rusty but perfectly match the car’s age.

My Veglia Borletti clock did not work. The operation of the clock is a newer design than the spring-loaded reset clocks in other 60’s cars I have restored, so I was unable to repair it. The estimate to repair the original was \$1700, which made the \$700 clock I was offered on Ferrari Chat look like a bargain. Not content to just leave the clock inoperable, I decided to replace it with a new analog-face electronic VDO clock on eBay costing only \$45. The new clock measures 52mm and the original Veglia Maserati clock measures 60mm. To solve that problem I found an adapter ring reducer, also on eBay that will fill the hole in the dashboard and hold the new 52mm clock.

I repaired the lower trim strip below the door on the driver’s side where it had been bent by being placed incorrectly on jacks or lifts in the past. This equated to drilling out the rivets, removing the strip, straightening the metal, then sanding and painting it black. I chose to reattach the strip with stainless steel screws rather than using rivets, as I imagine it will have to be removed to be straightened again due to the small, confined jacking post areas provided in the car’s design. I’ve already replaced the four arm pods on my two-post lift with screw-in adjustable pods that I use under 4” hydraulic jack pads. This helps me center the pods more evenly under the Ghibli’s tubular jacking points.





12

ON GOING WORK

As I wait for the new black carpet to arrive, there are plenty of other replacement parts received and ready to be installed. There are new gasket sets for below and above the rebuilt carburetors and a new fuel regulator with a removable gauge, which will allow me to dial in the correct psi. All the newly covered panels must be fitted before any new carpet can be glued in.

Since the brake pressure system problem was not addressed at the Ferrari shop, I ordered a brake master cylinder repair kit. A friend has volunteered to supervise my work and we will rebuild it. I'm always a little reluctant to tackle something I've never done before, but once I've seen the procedure, I feel more confident of a positive outcome. I use clear sandwich bags to hold both parts and descriptive Post-it notes when storing things that remain off the car for a few days. Cell phone pictures help ensure things go back in place correctly.

There are also items that need to be refinished such as safety belt anchors. I need to address some minor rust around the rear trunk lid and replace the rubber gasket. The lower trim strip on the passenger side also needs to be straightened, painted and reattached as does the same

strip underneath the body across the rear of the car.

For those of you starting or contemplating a restoration, so far, I have been able to find every part I needed to replace on my Ghibli. My best source for parts has been Jacques at MIE Corporation in Washington State. I've had to come up with a few "creative adaptations" but the previous work done on American, German and Japanese automobiles over the years has served me well on this car.

I've been lucky to have Ivan Ruiz and Mike Demyanovich answering endless questions and giving me suggestions as to where to source parts. The Maserati blog on **FerrariChat.com** has been somewhat helpful, as well. Ivan and Peter Straub's 78-page **Guide to Understanding Changes** has proved invaluable as a source of history and information as to how things work and the Ghibli's features. Likewise, the Owner's, Service, and Parts manuals give you the rest of the information needed to complete a restoration.

Giugiaro, Ghia and Maserati created this masterpiece of design to serve both performance and beauty. The car truly has soul. You feel it every time you get behind the wheel. Classisch Masters has written that, "No car massages the ego of its occupants more than a Ghibli." Italian classic car lovers are captives on a carousel of life and cars.

I hope to follow up with additional updates on my restoration as time goes by. I will close with one more thought. Restoring a classic automobile not only leaves you with a vehicle others will appreciate, but will give you a deeper understanding of yourself, and a pride very few people can truly comprehend.

Here is a fun idea! Let's get in the "Wayback Machine" and take a little ride to see how things were in days long gone by. Just click on this magic picture and you will be there. Enjoy and have a good time!

