

## **The Roaring Forty.**

**Sam King**

### **A tale of 39 Ferraris, and one bloody Porsche.**

It was a bright New South Welsh morning as Ian Buddery (my father) and I pulled into the servo at the outskirts of Sydney, where we would meet the other cars driving to Melbourne for the 2009 WH Lowe rally. We were driving our '71 Daytona spyder, and we were looking forward to the opportunity to give it a bit of a workout. A cup of coffee later, Miles Sandy and Russell Reeves arrived in Miles' Daytona; a plexiglass 1969 model, the London motor show car and the fourth RHD built. While waiting for the 2 other cars to join us, we grabbed a bite at the café, and exchanged stories about stuff falling off logging trucks. Eventually, Kate Robey pulled in with her striking yellow 246 Dino and we departed for the Barton Highway junction, where we were to meet the last member of our convoy. But when we arrived, he was nowhere to be seen.

Some people break down during a rally. Others break down before it even starts, but go anyway. Enter Geoff Corah. He drove his 246 into the services sheepishly, and pulled up next to a pump. He then explained to us exactly what had happened. Apparently, his alternator had expired at 11pm the night before. He had managed to make it here on a spare battery given to him by the NRMA. We exchanged worried glances as we considered the possibility of ending up waiting for a tow truck on the wrong side of the Great Ocean Road. After asking the servo attendant where the nearest auto-electrician was, we push started Geoff's Dino and set out for the Yass.

As we pulled into the workshop, we copped a few strange looks from the bloke on duty as we asked him for the biggest battery he had in stock. After ten minutes of trial and error battery fitting, we were on our way to Melbourne. Several hours later, the two Daytonas, one proper Dino, and one hybrid battery powered (let's call it a 246 Prius) finally crossed into the parallel universe where speed cameras outnumber people. This begins on the Hume at a town called Seymour. Talk about overkill, try 8 cameras in as many kilometres. Arriving on the outskirts of Melbourne, we realized that Geoff was not going to have enough battery power left to run his headlights. So we decided to risk a ticket and sneak him into the city in the middle of our convoy. Our grand entrance into Victoria's capital was made going along slower than golf carts as we gallantly protected Geoff from the vicious city traffic. Ian and I winced as Volvo after Volvo overtook us (the ignominy of it all !!), as we nervously glanced over our shoulders to check if Geoff was still moving.

After my navigation skills and Ian's tram-dodging skills received a hefty workout, we eventually found our way to our St Kilda hotel in one piece. Incredibly, the Dino had made the entire journey from Yass to Melbourne on a single battery. No alternator to provide it with power. We praised Mr Marshal as we parked the cars in the off-street garage, and settled down for the night.

The next morning, we set out for the KFC/Shell servo where we were to meet the other 36 or so cars joining us on our tour of the southern state.

Compared to last night, the journey was painless. That is, until we hit the road works. Colonel Sanders himself grinned smugly at us from his billboard as we drove by slowly in wide-eyed disbelief, eyeing the roadwork barriers that separated us from where we needed to be. Somehow we had managed to find ourselves on the wrong side of a row of giant concrete index fingers. And no, there was no detour around these barriers, only the Westgate bridge, that would place us on the opposite side of the city. We pulled over and began some serious collective head-scratching. Eventually, Miles discovered an access road meant for trucks to carry supplies to the offending road works. This trail lead through the centre of the construction, but put us on the straight and narrow to the KFC and the waiting carby group.

No sooner had we arrived when everybody else departed. Was it Geoff's strange mutterings about amperage hours and cranking rates? In any case the Dino/Daytona hybrid/petrol mini-convoy was once again mobile, west bound in steady rain.

The lunch stop was at Wye River, not far along the Great Ocean Road. We all were looking forward to the legendary track, but were wary of the revenue raising cameras and highway patrol cars sure to lie ahead. After I finished my fish and chips, Ian and I made our way to the Daytona, which seemed to be begging us to hurry up for a real drive. We followed Andrew Cannon's beautiful 275, at a "brisk" pace. The (almost) empty road cut across Cape Ottway and climbed into the mist, our pair of howling V12's echoing off the trees. Bliss. All this magnificent driving coupled with the breathtaking scenery of the Bass Strait, made for a transcending experience.

After taking a couple of shots of the seven Apostles left standing, we pressed on past Camry's and mini busses, to arrive at the oldest port in Victoria, Port Fairy. The rain was still coming down. Geoff's battery was still producing sparks. The Hotel car park rapidly filled with (mostly) classic Ferraris, in various stages of hydration (it isn't only the soft-tops that leak!). We drank in Victoria's oldest pub and ate well at a local restaurant, then settled down for the night.

After breakfast the next morning, in beautiful bright sunshine, it was decided that I should passenger with Miles for a while, so that others could ride in the magnificent (not meaning to be biased) Daytona. Miles and I headed for Mount Eccles national park along long, open roads. We took a few quick pictures, followed by a brief but painful stint on unsealed roads. Steering with his knees, Miles discusses with me the best way to keep petrol fumes out of a 1969 Daytona. Once we arrived at the morning tea point in the national park, I learned that we had been joined by two fuel injected 550's and, god forbid, a Porsche 911. Not a carby between them, but no one seemed to mind.

Once morning tea was over we set a brisk pace along the A1, at the front of the pack but behind the two 550s mentioned earlier. Despite my misgivings, these are beautiful cars, and we got a couple of shots of the two of them cruising side by side. After admiring the 550s we realized that we were running low on fuel, and decided to cruise for a while well

below the speed limit. This tactic seemed to work, as we arrived for lunch in one (wet) piece. Lunch was enjoyed at the Cape Bridgewater surf life saving club and, after filling up on sandwiches and sausage rolls provided by the hardworking Penny Fraser and her team of helpers, we hit the road again in search of a BP to give life to our ever-depleting fuel gauge.

It is at this point that I return to the subject of Geoff. Like the toy rabbit in the Duracell commercial, Geoff had been running the whole rally by cycling three batteries. He would leave one in the car at night, and charge the other two in the hotel room. Amazingly, this seemed to work quite well. We may be on the cusp of a major revolution here folks. And if you ignore the lights dimming every night as the two batteries were plugged into the wall, this may well be an excellent solution to faulty alternators worldwide. Geoff seemed very proud of himself as he explained this revelation, even as we eyed the stains of unburnt fuel, very obvious on the back of his bright red Dino.

But a new challenge lay ahead, because at this point after leaving lunch, it was raining quite heavily. And of course, Geoff couldn't use his wipers. So he spent the remainder of this leg with his head out the window, desperately focusing on the white dotted line. All this as his wife Sharon sits next to him, no doubt her opinion on classic cars darkening by the minute.

Back in Port Fairy, we were looking forward to a roast dinner at Harton Hills, the beautiful home of Andy and Penny Fraser. We left for their estate at 5:30 sharp (AKA 6:00), and after an hour long trip, arrived to be greeted by Andy and Penny. We ate in a marquee, kept warm by gas heaters and red wine. Brendan Quinn was presented with a vintage trophy for most active carby run participant, the trophy itself having originally been won by Nino Farina at the Circuito di Modena in 1936, where he raced an Alfa 8C-35 for Scuderia Ferrari.

We left the next morning (Sunday) in torrential rain, and headed north to Dunkeld. We took the scenic route around the rim of an old volcano, Geoff driving with his head outside again, but unfortunately not much could be seen on account of the small hurricanes mother nature was sending at us in an attempt to scare us silly. They don't call it the "The Shipwreck Coast" for nothing! Arriving in one piece at Dunkeld, we enjoyed a quick coffee before heading off in the direction of Halls Gap, on the final leg of our journey, with the skies clearing again.

Upon arriving, we enjoyed a great lunch at a local restaurant, and more yarns with the rest of the club. Then goodbyes were performed and the NSW convoy formed once more for the long drive to Sydney, via an overnight stop in Shepparton.

Our thanks to the organisers and everybody from Victoria who made us feel so welcome. We'll see you at Port Fairy in 2011!

Sam.

PS. Geoff's 246 Prius made it from Port Fairy to Pearl Beach on one battery.

PPS. Ian Buddery continues: I can only add to Sam's story by saying that the WH Lowe rally is run every other year by the Carby group in Victoria. It's open to carby Ferraris, or carby owners who have a good excuse for bringing an injected car (but no excuse is good enough for a Porsche, Bill!). This event compliments the McKay Rally, which runs in alternate years and is for pre-73 V12 Ferraris. WH Lowe were the first Ferrari agent in Australia and some of the cars at Port Fairy were actually supplied by them.

4 cars from NSW joined 35 from VIC and SA and its great to see these events bringing the older (and very valuable) cars out. The run down and back on the Hume turned into a real "road trip" for the NSW contingent and we were all sorry to reach the end.

The western Victoria roads were fantastic, the scenery breathtaking and the people great. Driving in a large group of early cars is a very special experience. There is simply nothing that compares to the sight and sound of old Ferraris, before noise regulations and plastic bumpers intervened in car design. The rain was a challenge, but gave us all something to struggle with and laugh about - not to mention a few weekends of car cleaning to look forward to!

Reliability issues were minor, a (ex NSW) 275 "failed to proceed" with a failed water pump and my wipers turned themselves permanently on while negotiating a very rutted gravel detour. In fact quite a few cars had wiper problems, nobody had planned for rainy days! A big thanks to Russell and Miles from Cavallino Motorsport for helping to keep everyone mobile.



Grant Perryman's 250PF coupe interior



Clive Smith's alloy 6 carb 275 overtaking. I hope it has enough power to overtake a 4 wheel drive.



A beautiful 330GTC



Clive's 275 cornering in the wet.



Andy Cannon's 275.



Andrew dropped a coin under the car.



Geoff Corah getting his 246 updated to Prius specs.



Brendan Quinn the well deserving recipient of the inaugural Farina trophy.



Typical car park in Port Fairy.



More car park.



Even more car park.



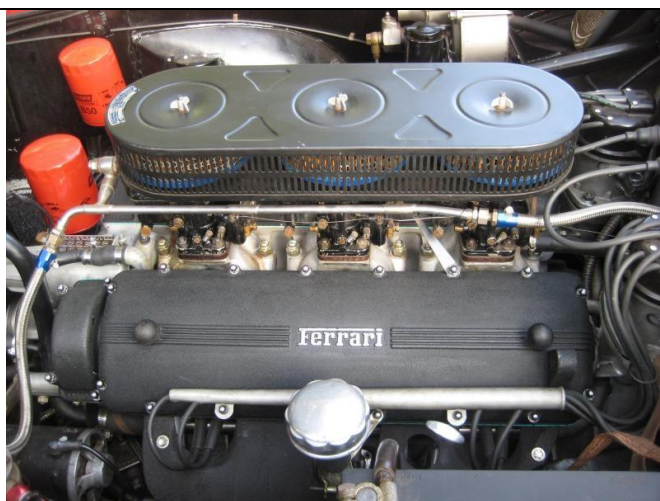
Dave's beautiful wet Lusso.



Again a typical car park in Port Fairy.



On the road.



A Ferrari V12. A work of art as well as powerful. A perfect synergy of form and function.



A 6 carb Ferrari V12.



It's red, so it must be a Ferrari.



On the Great Ocean Road in the wet.



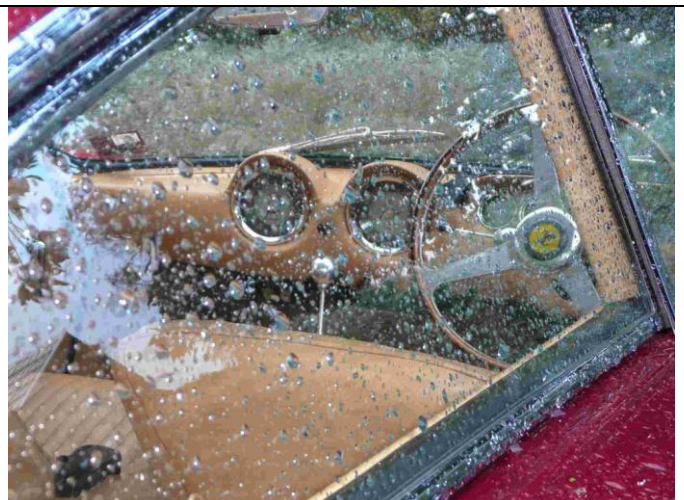
Lusso interior.



A 275. A work of art from any angle. Pity that can't be said of the driver !!



At least it carries more than a motorcycles pannier bags and is just slightly drier!!



It actually looks dry in there?





A beautiful Lusso in the rain.



Clive Smith's 275 in the rain. It is wonderful to see these cars being driven.



On the road again.



A couple of likely lads.



More Port fairy car park.



Mt Eccles morning tea stop.



Sat night dinner at the Fraser's home.



More Sat night dinner.



Sat lunch venue. A beautiful place.



Russel and Geoff discussing the merits of a 246 Prius.



Was it wet ??



Sat dinner was wonderful.



Mt Eccles car park



10 years of PF design.



More happy customers. These events have great cars but the people are better.