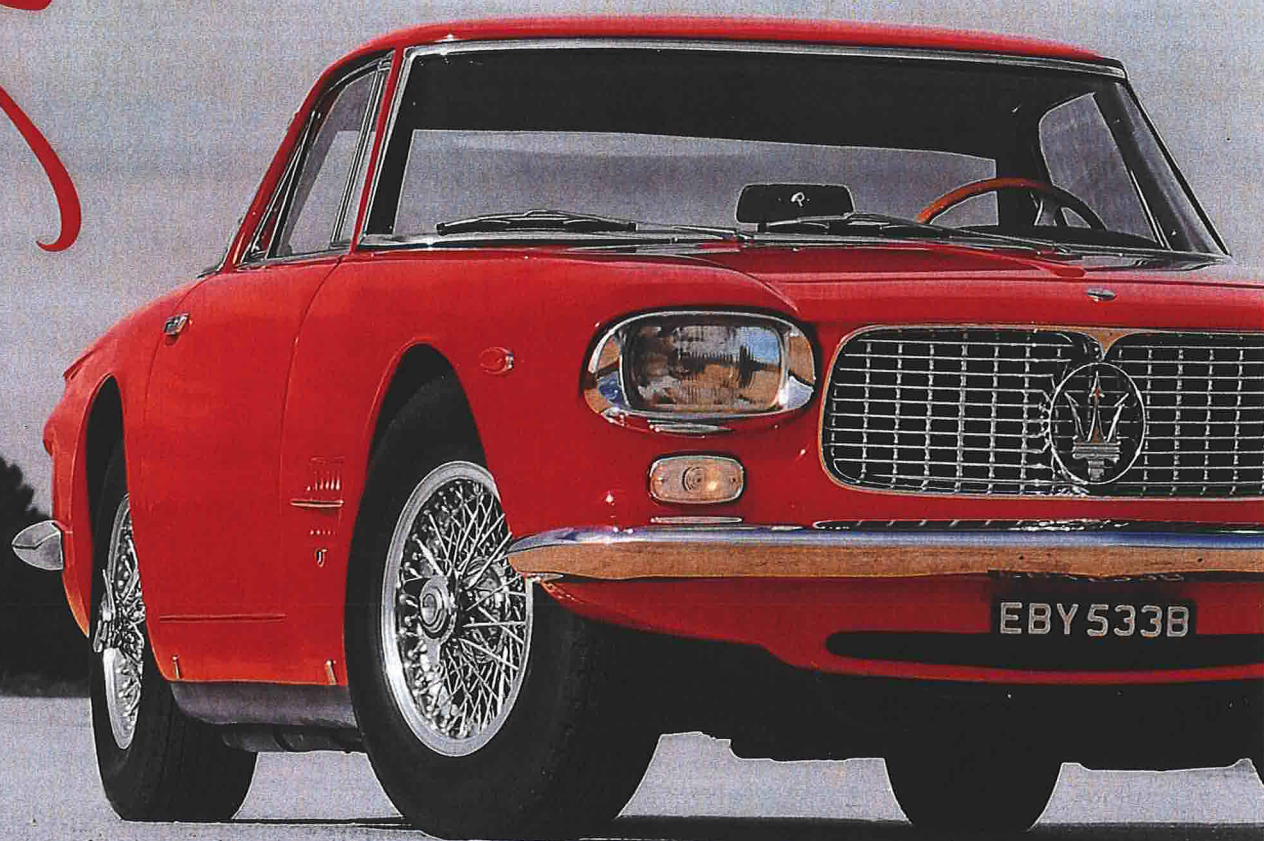
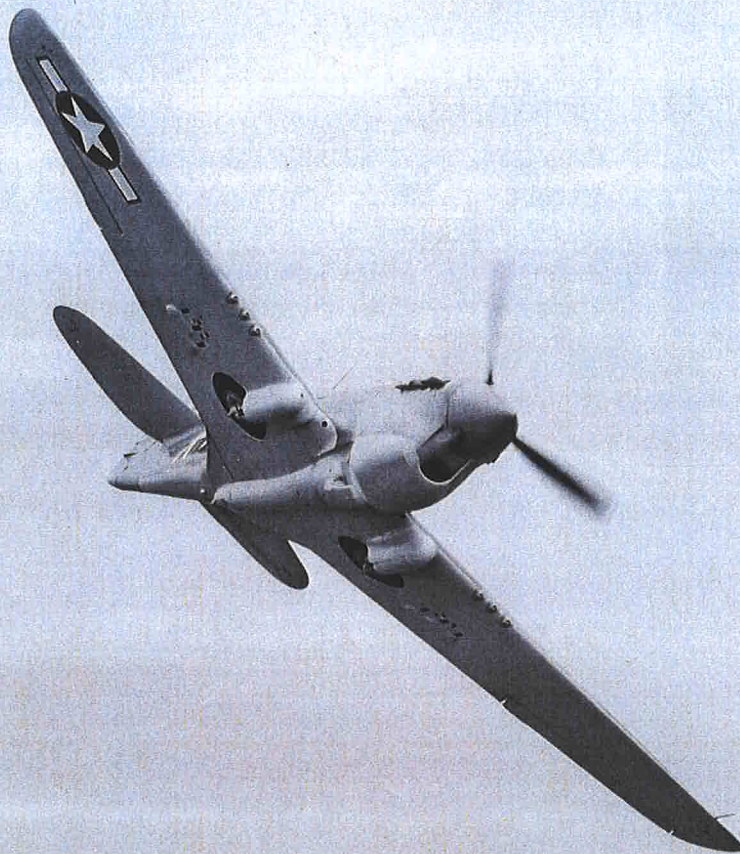


AM103.026

Allemano

STILL GOT MY LICENSE
STILL GOT MY DRIVE.





*M*aserati 5000 GT #AM103.026 was completed in 1962 and delivered in 1964. It has an Allemano body and retains its delivery colors of red exterior with black upholstery. The first owner was Alfredo Belponer of Brescia, Italy. Belponer, owner and president of the Scuderia Brescia Corse racing team, used the car to drive to the Italian Formula 1 GP in Monza. The car moved through various hands in Italy in the mid-60s, including a period of ownership by Italian matinee idol singer Antonio Ciacchi, aka "Little Tony" of San Marino. The car appeared in a photo with Little Tony in a newspaper advertisement in "OGGI" issue 17/1965 promoting the Italian fragrance company "Brilliantine Linetti"

In the late 60s/early 70s, the car was sold and imported into the USA. It is reliably purported that it was owned by Joe Walsh of the rock group The Eagles at one stage. I believe it inspired him to write the lyrics "*My Maserati does 185, I lost my license, now I don't drive*" in his song "*Life's Been Good*". I have heard that Joe Walsh sold it to Henry Vestine, guitarist of the rock group Canned Heat. Vestine may have over-revved the engine, which then required a new crank. For



Maserati 5000 GT Allemano #AM103.026 owned since 2007 by Stephen Dowling

a period, the engine was replaced with a Corvette V8 engine.

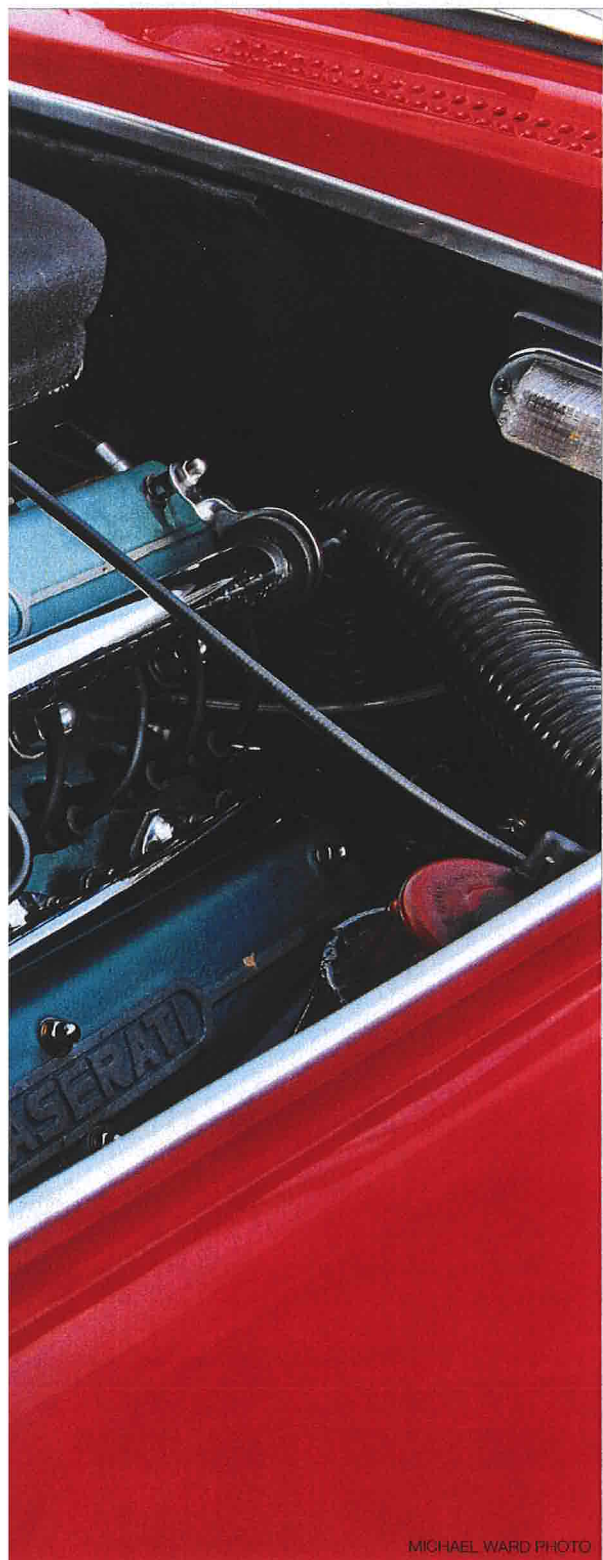
Circa 1980s, the original engine was fitted back in the car. It was acquired by Ken McBride of Seattle, Washington and registered as AWG 069 in Washington state. Mr. McBride displayed #AM103.026 at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. The

car was subsequently sold on August 17, 2002 via the Bonhams Auction at Quail Lodge, Carmel, California.

In 2007, I already owned a Ghibli SS Coupe LHD and Ghibli SS Spyder RHD in Australia. My Australian classic car dealer (who had sourced these two cars), located #AM103.026 in a UK collection.



I was not seeking to acquire a 5000 GT, but I was aware of their fabled reputation and rarity. My dealer asked if I "had interest". I purchased the car immediately and had it delivered into the care of Andy Heywood at McGrath Maserati, Kimpton UK where it has been serviced and stored since when not in use.



MICHAEL WARD PHOTO

Upon acquisition, the body and interior were in excellent condition. The engine was not. McGrath's rebuilt the engine and articles have been written about that. In fact, #AM103.026 has been featured in many magazine articles, appeared at various concours events and won "car of the show" on numerous occasions. Recently #AM103.026 has auditioned for appearing on the forthcoming new series of Top Gear, via the show's new connection with Amazon.

I have driven #AM103.026 extensively "without fear or favor". I respect my 5000 GT but I do not treat it as a trailer queen. #AM103.026 has been driven hard on track days and in all weather – rain, snow, mud and sun. Once properly fettled after teething issues surfaced it has proved reliable, tractable and great fun.

Destinations visited in the 5000 GT from Kimpton and return are:

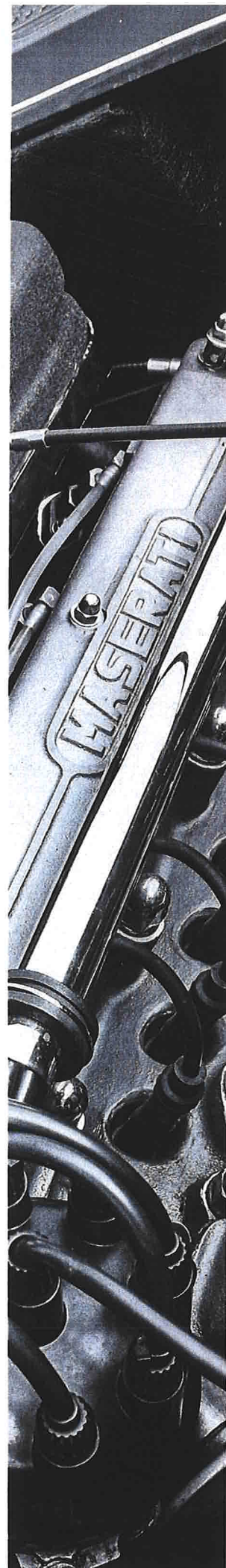
2009 – Goodwood, West Sussex UK for the Maserati International Rally hosted by the UK Club. This was the first exposure of my 5000 GT after the McGrath engine rebuild.

2010 – Bastad, Sweden for the Maserati International Rally hosted by Maserati Club Sweden.

2011 – Lago di Como, Italy via the original "over the top" San Gottardo pass in Switzerland. This adventure resulted in the first of only two breakdowns I have had with the car, both of which I put down to "learning experiences". In this San Gottardo "expedition," the Lucas mechanical fuel injection malfunctioned due too the high altitude. It was a "truck back" job to McGrath's where the injection system was further fettled and adapted to be less susceptible to "altitude sickness".

2012 – Ireland, with the UK Club, involving a drive through Wales, sea ferry to Wexford and subsequent touring through rural Ireland to the west coast and return to Kimpton without incident.

2013 – Northern Spain and high altitude Basque Country with the UK Club. This was a UK to Santander sea ferry trip, followed by a wonderful tour on very good Spanish main roads and interesting mountain detours in snow country. The second "breakdown incident" occurred on this trip. My fault for not being vigilant in watching the temperature gauge. A sensor malfunctioned, but the car showed no signs of overheating at speed.



The problem occurred, of course, when I came to a standstill at a gas station – resulting in a warped head. Back to Kimpton on a truck with the 5000 GT and we continued on the tour with a hired car. McGrath's completed a top overhaul (engine must be removed to remove heads due to intruding wheel arches) and cooling system upgrade

2013 – Montreux, Switzerland for the Maserati International Rally hosted by Maserati Club CH. A fabulous event superbly organized. Post rally, I drove the 5000 GT through Switzerland, down to Lake Como and on to Modena.

2013 – Static Display at Viale Ciro Menotti 322,

Modena. My 5000 GT stayed on display for a year in the head office showroom of Maserati headquarters. One aside here, before handing my 5000 GT over to Fabio Collina of Maserati Classic for the display, I gave the car to Loris Biccocchi to drive around suburban Modena briefly. Loris is a renowned factory test driver and engineering setup consultant for such projects as the Bugatti EB110 and later the Veyron, Koenigsegg and other famous supercars. He has been interviewed on Top Gear. I did not know what he would think of my old school, non-power steering 5000 GT. He returned the car with a big smile on his face, took his hands off the wood-rimmed Nardi steering



Not sure how many 5000 GTs have driven up and over San Gottardo. #026 has.

wheel and jokingly said he would never wash them just so he could retain the feeling of the car.

2014 – Maserati Centennial Gathering at Modena and Torino. I drove my 5000 GT in all events of the wonderful Centenary celebration hosted by the factory. Unforgettable drives through Italy to Torino and back to Modena culminating in a concours.

2015 – Biarritz, France. Maserati International Rally hosted by Maserati Club France. This was a great drive (pre-event) straight down to Alpes De Haute Provence after crossing into France on the Eurotunnel. Then a few weeks driving around

Provence, a preview trip over to Pays Basque and then attendance at the International Rally.

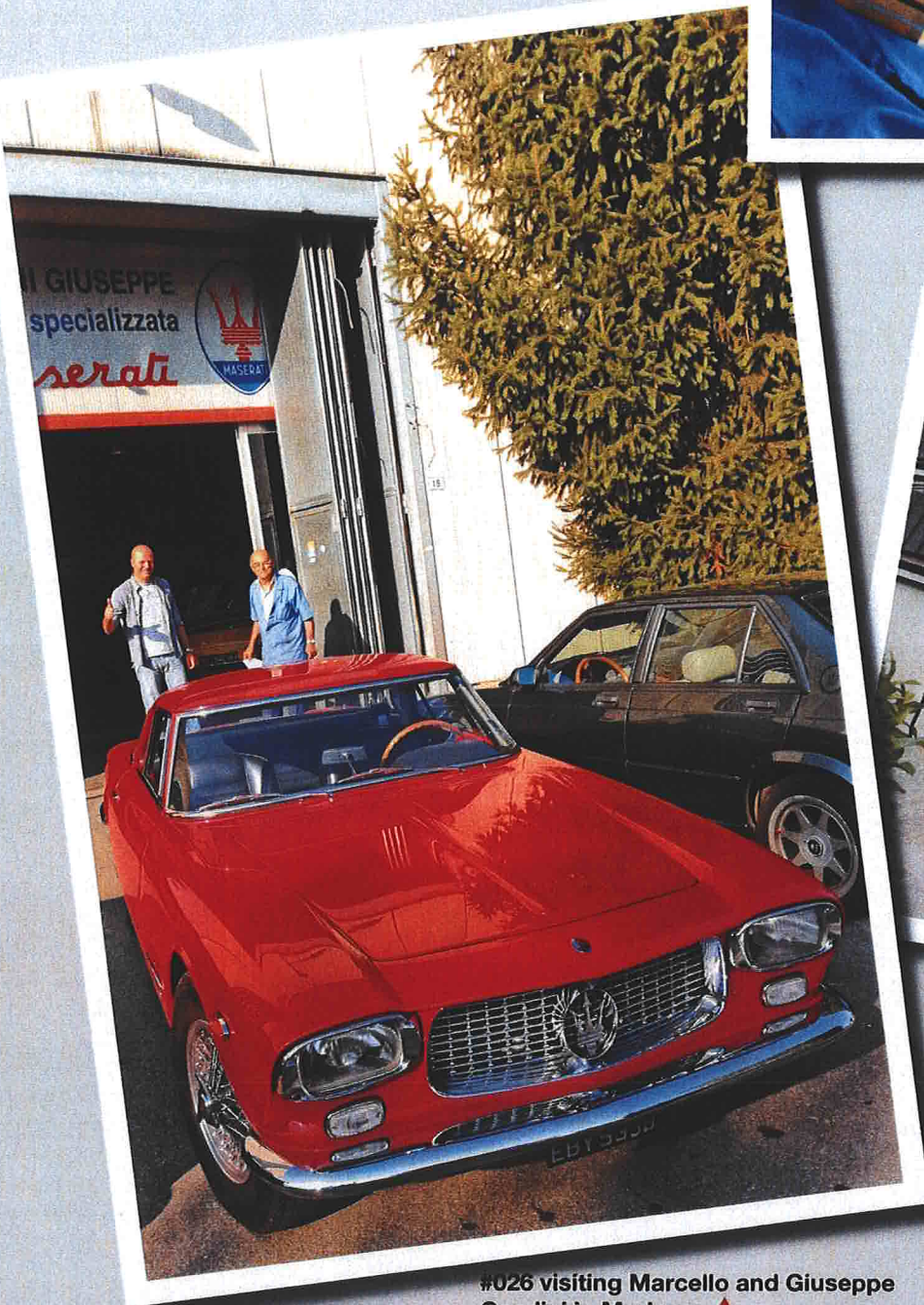
2016 – Mosel Region of Germany and Luxembourg with the Maserati Club UK. I participated with my 5000 GT in a 60-car strong, immensely enjoyable event, thanks to the UK Club organizers. My 5000 GT performed flawlessly and sat on sustained high speeds on German autobahns, easily keeping up in the “fast lane”.

#AM103.026 is back at McGrath's Kimpton as I write. The job in hand at present is having the Borroni wire wheels refurbished back to their original luster.



MICHAEL WARD PHOTO

Giuseppe Candini at the wheel in Modena. ➤



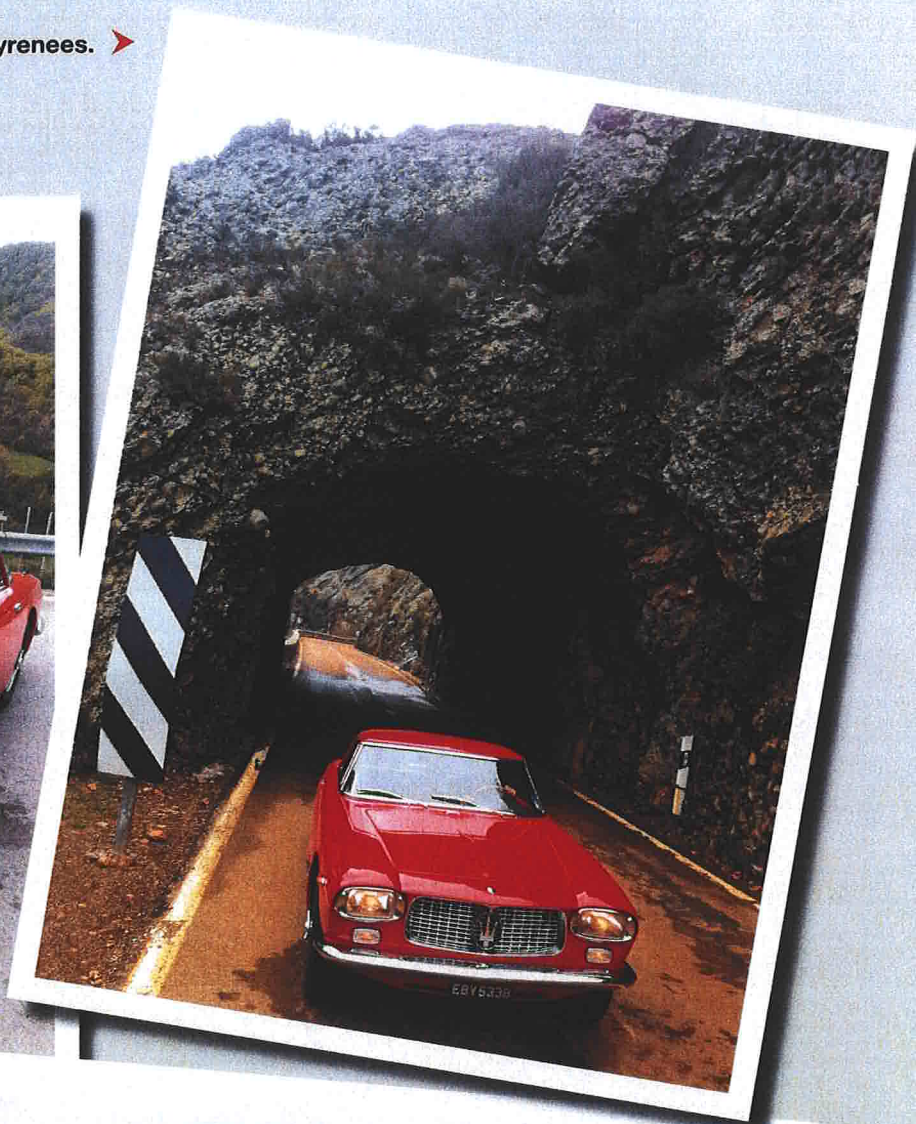
#026 visiting Marcello and Giuseppe Candini in Modena. ▲



#026 at her Lake Como home. ▲

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MCGRATH COLLECTION

#026 sees the light in the Pyrenees. ➤



Co-driver Australian Chris Young and Steve Dowling with #026 in Spain. ▲

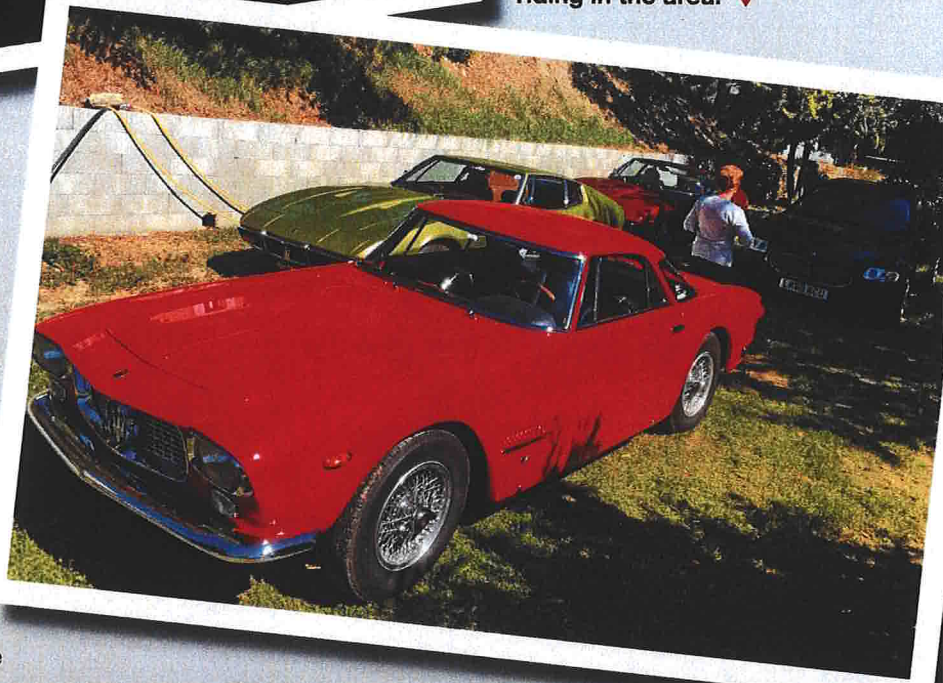


Steve and #026 high in Basque Country. ▲



◀ #026 driving in snow country, Spain.

Myself and friends in 2015, with #026, "Rosso Rubino" (my LHD Ghibli SS Coupe – my first Maser) and "Kermit", my verde gemma RHD Ghibli SS Coupe, plus my Bellagio support car. From Kimpton to Reillanne, a small village near Forcalquier approximately a 1.5-hour drive inland from Marseille. The cars were full of bicycles and kit for riding in the area. ▼



Before concluding I would like to give my own impressions of the 5000 GT driving experience. One enters the car easily. It is not as low as a Ghibli. The seating is comfortable, but there are no headrests or rear view wing mirrors. Secure seat belts are now fitted on my car. The impression I have from the driver's seat is somewhat like being in a fighter plane cockpit due to the low screen and large instrumentation. Start-up is instantaneous with a loud bark if one uses full choke then rapidly pushes the choke knob home to prevent flooding. The gearshift is extremely difficult to move into second gear until the gearbox oil warms up. Then shifting is firm and accurate. A fast change from second to third will need double de-clutching and always the same on changing down, even though it is a synchromesh box. Brakes are excellent for the era. At idle after start, the engine sounds like a threshing machine. That all changes to a sublime roar and endless surge of power at highway speeds. You want more, sir? Just put your foot down and hang on. My car is very stable at fast highway speeds – a joy really in that state, but forget about listening to music if you

had an on-board source. The roar of the engine negates that idea. The original radio remains in complete working order. The problem is it is AM band only. #AM103.026 no longer overheats. If caught in city traffic on a very hot day there is the option of engaging the auxiliary fan. Luggage capacity is quite adequate for trans-continental trips, especially when using the rear seat, which is good for little else. Fuel consumption is as expected. Oil consumption is within acceptable limits.

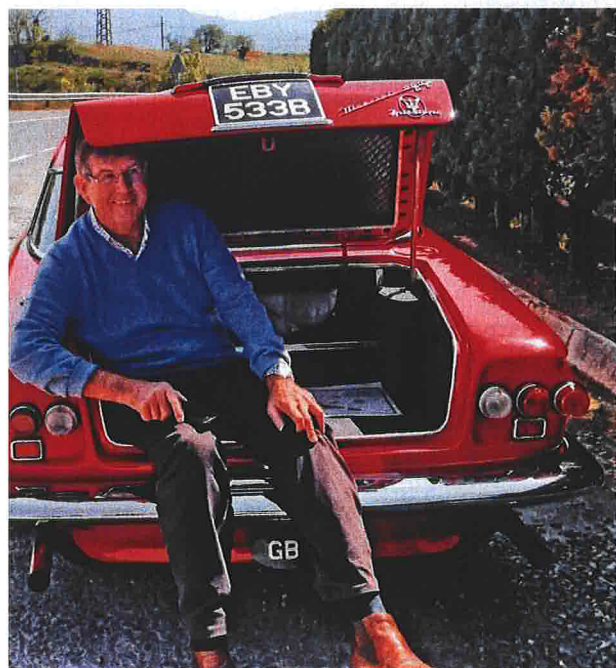
A bonus. The great benefit of owning a 5000 GT is the countless friends, contacts and interesting people that this car introduces you to. It provides entrée everywhere. My car has been displayed in the hallowed foyer of the royal Automobile Club in London. Like the ad for a credit card says: "priceless".

Thank you for this opportunity to share my

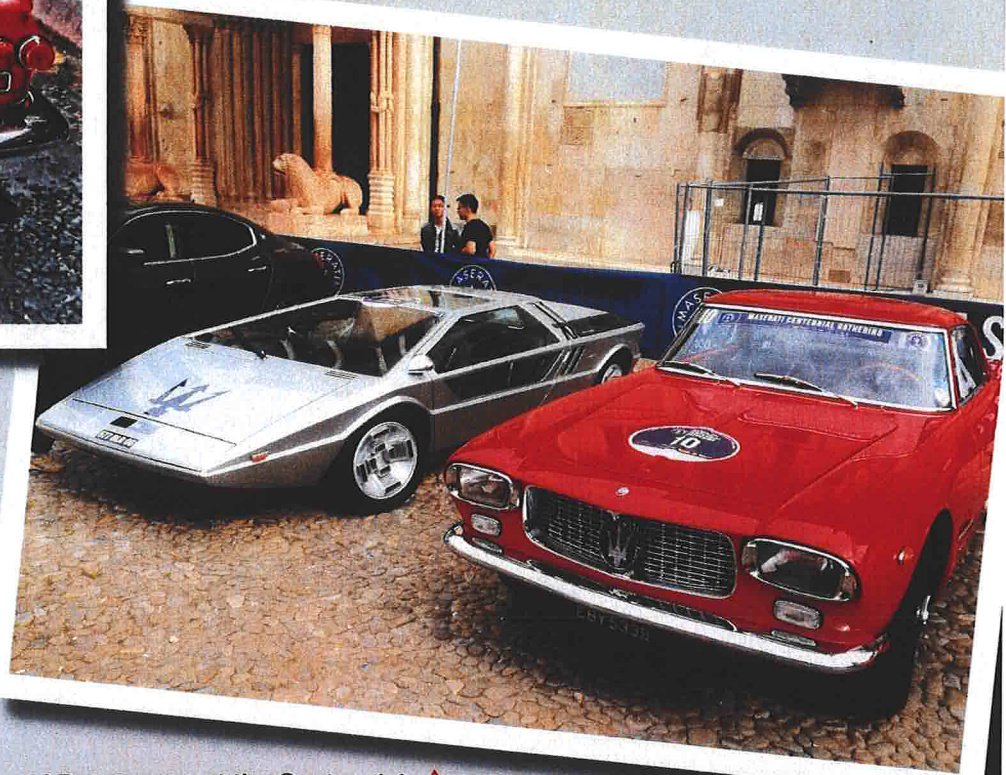
5000 GT experiences. I assume #AM103.026 is the most extensively driven 5000 GT in the world. My intention is to keep using this magnificent car according to the purpose for which it was conceived – grand touring.

– Steve Dowling

Oh dear, what can the matter be – break down in Spain with Mr. Heywood in attendance. ➤



026 In Haro Northern Spain Spring 2013 broken down with Steve. ▲



#026 and Boomerang at the Centennial. ▲

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MCGRATH COLLECTION

You get used to things you know. Almost every day of my working life, I see some of the most exotic and rare cars ever produced and eventually they just become the new normal. So it goes with #026, Stephen Dowling's 5000 GT. It lives here at McGrath when not out on an event or on one of Steve's walkabouts and we show it to all our visitors, of course. Their reaction is what reminds us how special the car is. Those 'in the know' have a religious experience as they talk in reverential terms about the 'Car for Kings'. Those who aren't, marvel at the complexity of the exotic engine and how powerful it was for its era. It was the McLaren F1 of its day, I tell them.

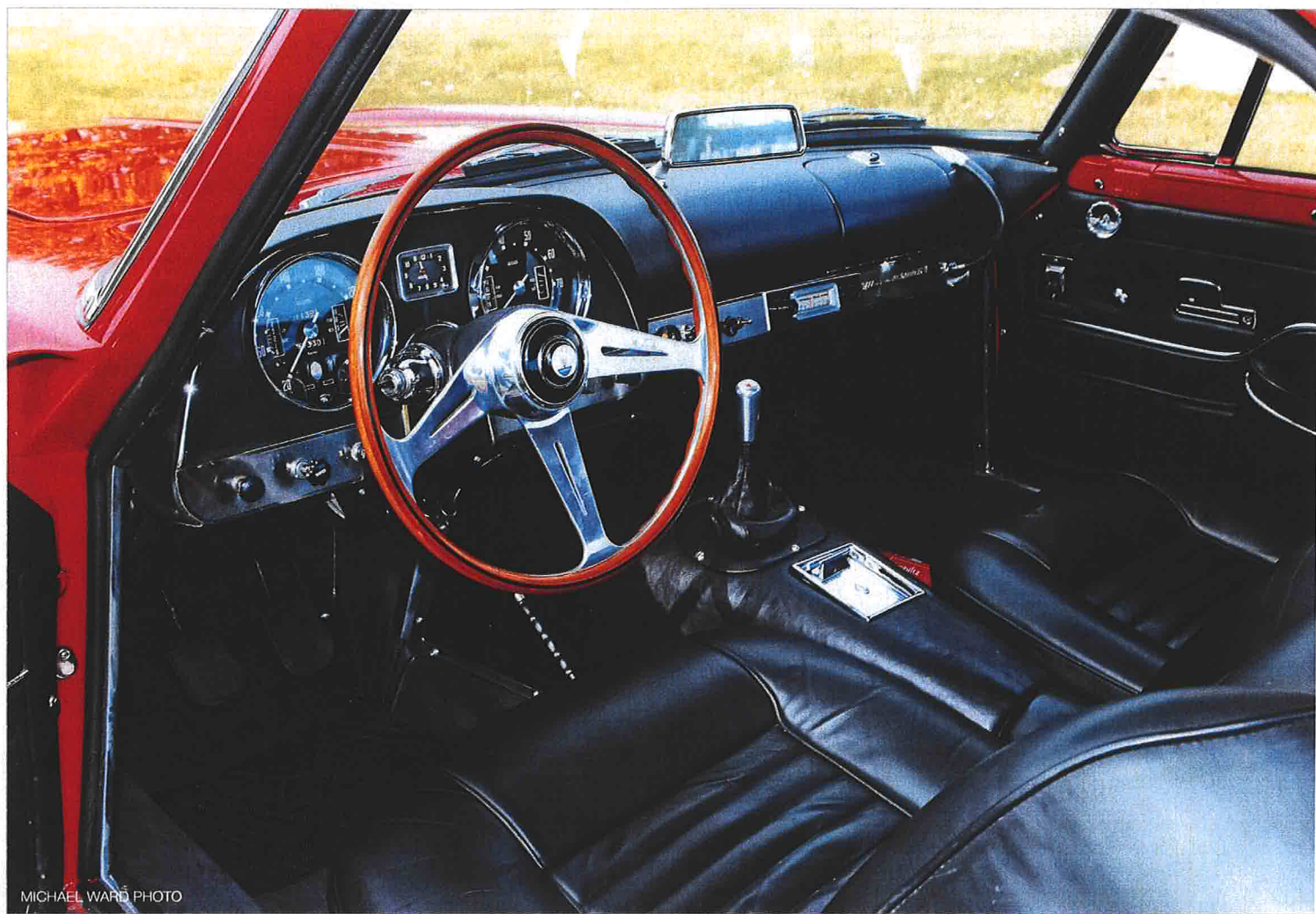
On events too, I forget to worry about this car sometimes, such is its ability to cross the continent reliably. While much more mainstream, Concours Queens get unloaded off trucks by mechanics in white gloves, this majestic automobile does battle with GranTurismos on the Autoroutes of France or comes back with what looked like half the mud of southern Ireland on its flanks (smelt like it too). But of course, it wasn't always like this.

When we first saw #026 in the winter of 2007, had come as Steve says from a UK collection where it had sat dormant for the previous five years. It looked broadly similar to how it looks today, with its American body restoration still holding up well but mechanically, while it did run, was a disaster.

Our preliminary inspection noted a few small points that turned into huge projects. One was the crack in the rear screen, top to bottom (which more later). The other was the antifreeze stain on the side of the engine block, a leak from the middle of nowhere.

While we could have plugged the hole temporarily, Steve has always taken the long-term view and that meant pull the engine and strip it down. It was a good job we did, as the porosity in the block (as it turned out) was the tip of the iceberg. A previous engine rebuild had obviously included a new crankshaft but the crank had been incorrectly dimensioned and was gently kissing the base of the liners as it spun. This in turn had





MICHAEL WARD PHOTO

cracked the liners. In addition, various other items were cracked or broken and soon we were into a full-scale engine build around another new crankshaft, made here in the UK.

The bottom end of the 5000 GT engine is an amalgam of the in-line six Maserati engine and the later V8. You can almost feel the progress that Alfieri made from one to the other. Today this means that just about everything is bespoke – so new rods, liners and pistons were also commissioned.

Everywhere we looked, the engine had minor issues. One of the cast inlet manifolds had something like seven separate cracks in it that required welding. Even the distributor drive housings had broken lugs. Our aluminum welder had never been so busy.

While the engine work got underway, we turned our attention to the rest of the car. The crack in the glass meant a new rear screen, something that was probably not even on the spare parts

list when the car was new. Having removed the screen, the reason it had cracked became obvious. It was already a replacement with too much curvature and was therefore always stressed until the inevitable happened. Making a new one today was a good demonstration of how difficult it must have been to make this kind of glass back in the early 1960s. Without a good original pattern, we were forced to make an aluminum buck to fit into the aperture, from which a wooden former could be made and then a new piece of glass molded. A laborious process but one that did at least give us the option of making spares! We still assume that all of the Allemano-bodied 5000s had the same glass but then again, assumptions have got us into serious trouble in the past...

By comparison, overhauling the rest of the car's mechanicals was straightforward, though comprehensively done. We did make a change to fit a dual circuit brake master cylinder for safety reasons and when making a new wiring loom added



a whole bank of extra relays to take the strain off the fifty-year old switchgear.

The deadline for our first event was the International Maserati Rally at Goodwood in 2009, being held by the UK Maserati Club. Steve was already an enthusiastic member of the club, but this was his first big event. The engine only went back into the car the month before the event and the car was far from finished testing before we set off for the south coast.

Once the engine had been built, we made a few pragmatic decisions. The first was to fit electronic ignition instead of the CB points. The 5000 is unusual as it uses two Lucas distributors (similar to Rolls Royce V8s such as Silver Shadow – though they only use one!) and we decided that having had good results with the in-line six engines, we would convert the 5000 as well. The second decision was to fit an electric fan ahead of the cooling radiator to help with town traffic. Lastly, we converted the original 'push cable' throttle to a more conventional pull cable, which is much easier to use and more reliable (as your publisher, Mr. McMullen, will attest from a previous experience driving a 5000 GT with me!).

Steve's first ride in the car was on the track at Goodwood with me driving (tough job). He was more than a little apprehensive, which seems quite amusing now. The car went well and the noise was tremendous, but there was still a long fettling list to do, which kept us busy that winter.

In early 2010 we took the car on a magazine photo shoot for the UK magazine Classic and Sportscar, where it was pitted against a Ferrari 500 Superfast. We had been running the engine in while Steve was back in Australia enjoying his summer and the article was

a good test for the car. It would be the first of many 'appearances'.

Later that year, Steve went on the International Maserati Rally, which was his first major drive in the car. Along with myself and other members of the UK club, we crossed by overnight ferry from Harwich on our east coast to Esbjerg in Denmark



and then drove across Denmark and up into Southern Sweden. I worried a lot on the way there, hoping the car would be reliable. But Steve started as he meant to go on, using the car as a means to go touring. He arrived at our destination hotel very late having taken the scenic route; completely relaxed though, and so his adventures with the 5000 began.

Since then, as you have read, #026 has been used to tour Europe on a number of occasions and with only two failures. That first, of the fuel injection system, meant fuel in the oil and disappearing oil pressure. This was discovered

early, before serious damage resulted and we modified the fuel injection to use the later Mistral-type return system, so avoiding any possibility of fuel in the sump. Since restoration, the car has always run on a Bosch fuel pump, with a Lucas one retained as a back-up only and the injection system hasn't missed a beat.

The second breakdown was due to overheating in Spain. We were on hand to diagnose a blown head gasket, as McGraths were the support team for the entire event, and it was obviously not a fix to be done on the side of the road. Taking this in his stride, Steve continued on the event in a hired car and the 5000 was transported to the docks for the ferry ride back to the UK. It did result in my running up and down the Spanish docks looking for a 'lost' 5000 GT. Again, I was probably worrying more than Steve. Since then the car has been completely reliable – I have relaxed and as I said at the beginning, stopped worrying about it!

While the car has been used extensively over the years, it has simultaneously been doing the Concours Queen bit as well. The RAC Club in London was a great honor. Salon Prive and Silverstone Classic, as well as various Maserati Club events, have garnered a number of trophies for Concours and the Centennial Gathering Concours for Maserati in 2014 in Torino was a high point. However, in the autumn of the same year, having starred on



the UK Club stand, the car was voted 'Car of the Show' at the largest Classic Motor Show in the UK, making the front cover of the National Classic Car press. This, in a way, is even more special as it was not voted for by just Maseratisti.

I guess other restorers feel this too, but cars that live with you for long periods become part of your family (though as Steve will no doubt point out, he is still the one paying the bills!). The familiarity does mean you start to forget how rare the car is, but actually it means that we all, Steve included, just treat the car like a car – to be used, not put on a plinth and admired. And by doing that, ironically, we all now know just how special a Maserati 5000 GT really is.

Andy Heywood
Managing Director
McGrath Maserati
Unit 8, Claggy Road
Kimpton, Herts,
SG4 8QB, UK
PH: 00 44 (0) 1438 832161
www.mcgrathmaserati.co.uk

