



# Gateway Relay

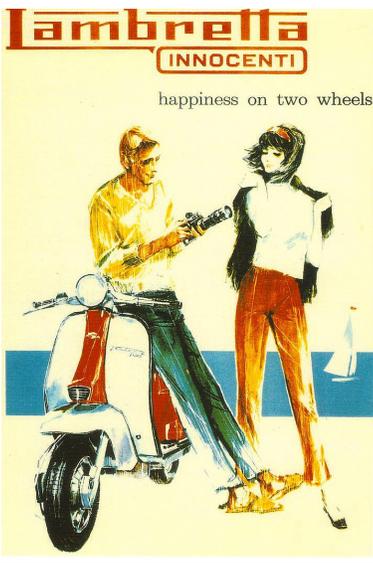
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St Louis Sports Car Council

March 2015

## Council News & Notes

- We're running about a week late here at StLSCC Central for various reasons, our apologies, but be of good cheer: the weather continues to improve, the temperatures continue to climb and the event calendar continues to expand with plenty of great opportunities coming up to show and/or drive the car.
- By now everyone's heard about the changes at this year's Horseless Carriage Club of Missouri's Forest Park Easter Concours, driven by the rebuilding of the Muni's upper lot. While club participation's limited this year only to 10 cars, it should still be a good show...albeit with more walking required than normal. We'll run photos next month and plan on a regular club turnout at next year's event.
- Finally, concerning the ad below, no, StLSCC isn't going two-wheel and no, we haven't had any Italian clubs join the Council, two, four-wheel or otherwise. Just thought we'd do something different this month, see the feature inside, which originally appeared in the Gateway Healey Association's *Side Curtain News* a couple of years back.
- Drive 'em!



## Up & Coming

- 26 Mar 2015—RUMP** (Retired or Unemployed Member Persons) lunch, hosted by the Gateway Healey Association. Fourth Thursday of every month. At the Triumph Grill/motorcycle museum, 3419 Olive St, St Louis at 11:30 AM. Please RSVP to Tom Evans at [tom@judyandtomevans.com](mailto:tom@judyandtomevans.com) so he can get an accurate head count.
- 27 Mar 2015—Friday Night Cruise at the Kirkwood Sonic**, sponsored by the Outsiders Car Club, Kirkwood and Big Bend, 5-10 PM. Every Friday night through October, predominately rods and American heavy metal, but always highly entertaining.
- 28 Mar 2015—Coffee, Coffee & Cars**, 8:30 AM at Just Jags, 7113 N Hanley Rd, St Louis. Last one of the series for this year.
- 4 Apr 2014—Annual Gateway Healey Association Wash-Up/Tune-Up**, 11 Keith Bester's garage/backyard, 115 N Sappington Rd, Kirkwood, 8 AM to 4 PM. Still on despite the changes to this year's Forest Park Concours, you never know who or what will show up; last year, Not The Stig even made an appearance! Monitor <http://clubs.hemmings.com/gatewayhealey/>.
- 5 Apr 2015—54<sup>th</sup> Annual Forest Park Concours/Easter Car Show**, in the Muni upper parking lot, Forest Park, hosted by the Horseless Carriage Club of Missouri. Information at [www.hccmo.com/](http://www.hccmo.com/). The event includes the **7<sup>th</sup> Annual MG-Triumph Challenge**; monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/) and [www.sltoa.org](http://www.sltoa.org) for details/preps/scurrilous language and thinly veiled threats.
- 18 Apr 2015—Cars & Coffee returns!** Westport Plaza, I-270 and Page, 8:30 AM.
- 18-19 Apr 2015—Annual Missouri Endurance Rally**, hosted by the MG Club of St Louis, details to follow, monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/).
- 19 Apr 2015—Start of the Boeing Sports Car Club autocross season**, Family Arena, St Charles. Show about 9-9:30 for tech inspection and course walk, \$35 for six runs, AM and PM sessions. Any questions or to get on the email event listing for future autocrosses, contact Racer Steve at [sshab@yahoo.com](mailto:sshab@yahoo.com).
- 20 Apr 2015—Tech Session** hosted by MG Club of St Louis, at British Cars Restorations & Services, 2338 N Lindbergh Blvd, StL, 7-10 PM. Tech talk/demo on "the fine art of joining metals."
- 25 Apr 2015—Benefit Car Show for the St Louis County Police Welfare Association**, 8 AM to 5 PM. 50/50 raffle, 31 car classes, at Mehlville High School, 3200 Lemay Ferry Rd, info (314)229-4360.

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**Note:** Some club driving events restrict participation to club members only, primarily for national/chapter insurance reasons. If interested in joining in on a drive or other event, we recommend you contact the club's event coordinator in advance for details.

## In Print



Rampant Minis grace the cover of February's *Classics & Sports Car*, inside is a comparison of six different models – a Mk I Cooper, Mk II Cooper S, 1275 GT, ERA Turbo, Rover Cooper S-Pack and John Cooper LE S Works. The issue also features a road test of Jaguar lightweight E-Type 4WPD and buyer's guide for the XK8/XKR.



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- 25 Apr 2015—Breakfast Cruise at Letty Lou's Cafe**, 505 Strecker Rd, Ballwin 63011 (636)273-9317. Hosted by the Wildwood Car Group, 8:30 AM. For more info, contact John Gagnani at [jgrag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jgrag@sbcglobal.net).
- 2-3 May 2015—Fling in the Spring**, hosted by the MG Club of St Louis. Nice leisurely morning drive to Giant City State Park & Lodge, Makanda (south of Carbondale), stay the night, Sunday brunch at the lodge. Please RSVP if you plan to be there for lunch, (314)580-3133 or (314)428-9335, monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/) in the meantime.
- 2 May 2015—Lafayette Renaissance Car Show**, at Lafayette High School, 17050 Clayton Rd, Wildwood 63011. Pre-register for \$10 prior to 23 April, \$15 registration on the day of the show, all proceeds benefit the Lafayette Renaissance Program, which rewards academic excellence. Music, food trucks, drinks available, trophies for best classic car, best contemporary car and people's choice. For info and registration email [lafayettecarshow@gmail.com](mailto:lafayettecarshow@gmail.com).
- 2 May 2015—15<sup>th</sup> Annual Classics on Wheels Car Show**. In Elsberry, MO 79, \$15 registration from 9 AM to noon, awards at 3 PM. Multiple classes, awards for best of show, mayor's choice and peoples' choice, on Broadway next to the park. Fun drive, fun show.
- 9 May 2015—BSCC Autocross No. 2**, Family Arena, St Charles, 9-9:30 show time. For info contact Racer Steve at [sshab@yahoo.com](mailto:sshab@yahoo.com).
- 15-17 May 2015—BMWCCA St Louis Chapter "The Weekender,"** overnight trip to New Harmony, IN, on the Wabash River. Historic town with plenty of opportunities to visit antique shops, art galleries, gardens and restored historic buildings. For more information contact Amy Bradford at [mikebradford@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mikebradford@sbcglobal.net) or Barbara Flushing at [bvfrog@gmail.com](mailto:bvfrog@gmail.com).
- 16 May 2015—Cars & Coffee**, Westport Plaza, I-270 and Page, 8:30 AM.
- 16 May 2015—MG Club of St Louis Rally**, plans coming together, keep an eye on [www.stlouismgclub.com](http://www.stlouismgclub.com) for details.
- 16 May 2015—BBQ Cruise**, Wildwood Cruise Group, Alta Shelter, Babler State Park, 12 noon until whenever. More details to follow, for information contact John Gagnani, [jgrag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jgrag@sbcglobal.net).
- 17 May 2015—3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Gear Head Grape Stomp Classic Car/Truck Show**, at Cedar and Main in Washington, MO. Registration 8 AM to 11 AM, \$20 per car, awards at 2 PM including class and special awards. Car show held in conjunction with the **34<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Fair & Wine Fest**, all proceeds benefit Grace's Place Crisis Nursery. Info at [www.gracesplacecrisisnursey.com](http://www.gracesplacecrisisnursey.com) under the events tab.
- 20 May 2015—British Invasion**, hosted by the MG Club of St Louis. Sports cars making an ice cream run, details to follow, monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/).
- 28-30 May 2014—4<sup>th</sup> Annual British National Meet**, in Hot Springs, AR. Large number of events and standout vehicles, this annual event draws cars and LBC enthusiasts from all over the US. More information is available at [www.britishnationalmeet.com](http://www.britishnationalmeet.com) and on the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/All-British-Marques-The-National-Meet/201070176584388>.
- 30 May-7 Jun 2015—British Car Week**.
- 31 May 2015—MG Club of St Louis Wine Tour**, details to follow, monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/).
- 6 Jun 2015—26<sup>th</sup> MG Heartland Regional**, Kansas City, hosted by the Kansas City MG Car Club. Host hotel and other details TBD, monitor <http://heartlandmgregional.com/>.
- 7 Jun 2015—Annual St Louis European Auto Show**, Plaza Frontenac. Monitor <http://stleuropeanautoshow.com>.
- 12-14 Jun 2015—Annual Midsommar Meet**, hosted by Gateway VCOA in Hannibal, MO. Events will include a Friday evening social event, car show downtown, Saturday evening banquet and Sunday drive along the Mississippi River bluffs on MO 79. Details to follow, monitor <https://sites.google.com/site/gatewayvcoa/>.
- 19 Jun 2014—11<sup>th</sup> Annual Hazelwood Baptist Car Show & Festival**, 6161 Howdershell, 9 AM to 5 PM. Over 500 cars, live music on two stages, free food for registered car owners, attendance prizes and a dinner/awards banquet afterwards. This is a fun show and is growing every year, monitor [www.hazelwoodbaptist.com](http://www.hazelwoodbaptist.com) for info and registration details or call Deni Cary at (314)731-2244.
- 20 Jun 2015—Cars & Coffee**, Westport Plaza, I-270 and Page, 8:30 AM.
- 20 Jun 2015—Driven to Shop Antique Tour**, hosted by the MG Club of St Louis. Over 21 antique shops in and around Franklin County, will meet for lunch and perhaps dinner. Watch for more details at [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/).
- 20-28 Jun 2015—Hemmings Motor News Great Race 2015 – Get Your Kicks on Route 66!** This year's event starts in Kirkwood and will finish in Santa Monica, at the west end of US 66, on 28 June. Stops planned at several Mother Road icons including the World's Largest Rocking Chair, Cadillac Ranch, the Wigwam Motel, the Petrified Forest and the Santa Monica Pier. Great opportunity for St Louis special interest car clubs to give them a proper send-off, keep an eye on [www.greatrace.com/news/great-race-2015-get-your-kicks-on-route-66.html](http://www.greatrace.com/news/great-race-2015-get-your-kicks-on-route-66.html) and monitor the club web pages.
- 27-28 Jun 2014—High Performance Driving Event** at Gateway Motorsports Park, hosted by the St Louis Region Porsche Club of America, BMWCCA St Louis Chapter will participate. More info to follow.
- 27-28 Jun 2015—28<sup>th</sup> Annual Route 66 Festival & Car Show**, Waynesville, sponsored by the Cave State Cruisers. At the Waynesville City Park downtown on US 66/Business 44, class and special awards both days, \$20 covers both days: 8 AM to 4 PM Saturday/8 AM-11 AM Sunday. Group drive planned along the original and 1941 US 66 to Devils Elbow Saturday afternoon. Free event t-shirt if you register prior to 1 June, contact SCS President Don Doan at (573)433-5586.

**St Louis Car Shows and Cruises:** <http://clubs.hemmings.com/clubsites/lakerscarclub>.

## Roadwork—Viva Sprite!

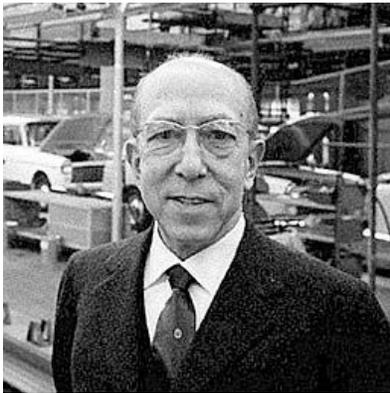
Fortunately for those who love small, classic British sports cars, the immortal Austin-Healey Sprite remains common, with a good assortment available if one's willing to look around. For example, a recent search of *Hemmings Motor News* turned up nine Mk I "Bugeye/Frogeyes," a single MK II, three MK IIIs (one at \$75,000!), five Mk IVs (one of the cars "...used only for off-road racing"), plus a full-blown Mk II racer, with tube chassis, fiberglass body, discs all around and 140hp available from the somewhat modified (!) 1275cc engine.



One for sale, albeit not quite suitable for the morning commute...Photo via Hemmings.

However, there's another Sprite which rarely appears at car shows or for sale: the license-built variant of the car, produced by Innocenti of Milan, Italy. Sold as the Innocenti Spyder, the car was in production from 1961 to 1968.

Ferdinando Innocenti, a native of Pescia, Italy, founded the company which bore his name in 1926, in Milan, Italy. Originally trained as a blacksmith, he later attended technical school and moved into the production of iron and steel tubing for construction and scaffolding. With expansion into Rome in 1933, Innocenti started the production of irrigation plants under the title *Fratelli Innocenti Società Anonima per Applicazioni Tubolari in Acciaio*.



Ferdinando Innocenti. Source: Lambretta Watches.

By the end of the decade, the corporation turned out gates and fences, scaffolding, water system pipes, thermoelectric plants, gas cylinders, automotive components and gun carriages.

Like most Italian industry, Innocenti converted to war production towards the end of the 1930s, starting with 150 and 250 kilogram bomb casings and following up with bullets. However, Allied bombing pretty much destroyed the factories. With the end of the war, Innocenti met with his surviving workers and came up with a plan to rebuild, resume



Lambretta L1. Source: PicsAuto.

metal component fabrication and develop "...a low-cost vehicle for the working class."

The result was the Lambretta scooter, named for the Milan neighborhood along the Lambro River where the factory was located. Within short order the rebuilt company started building body parts under contract for several vehicle manufacturers, including Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Lancia, Ford and Volkswagen. During the late 1950s, Innocenti took the next step and entered into an agreement with British Motor Corporation to license-build entire vehicles in Italy. The first examples debuted in 1960 in the form of the A40 Farina, produced in four-door saloon and three-door hatchback styles; the latter, the *Combina*, constituted BMC's first-ever hatchback.



Innocenti-Austin A40 Combina. Photos: tuninpp.com.



In 1960, Innocenti introduced its first sports car, the Ghia Spyder 950. Based on the Sprite Mk I, it had the same 948cc engine but offered roll-up windows, a glove box, heater, lockable trunk, tube shocks in the rear instead of the Sprite's lever-arm shocks and no kidding curved windshield. Italian Veglia gauges replaced the Sprite's Smith gauges while tube shocks replaced the lever-arm shock absorbers at the back end. Interestingly enough, the front end of the Ghia-designed car displayed styling cues which later appeared on the Triumph TR4 and Honda S500.

Introduced at the 1960 Turin Auto Show, the Innocenti Spyder was a hit but was still overshadowed by new designs from Italy's larger manufacturers, including the Alfa Romeo 2000, Alfa Romeo Giulietta SZ, Ferrari 400 Superamerica cabriolet, the Lancia Flavia and the Pininfarina "X" (a story in itself; the car featured single wheels fore and aft, two wheels amidships and a futuristic body which resembled a rocket ship. Appropriate for the time, what with the space race well underway). Still, the car sold reasonably well; 624 went out the door using Sprite Mk mechanicals, followed by an additional 7166 built from the Sprite Mk II while retaining the original small engine.

In 1963, the renamed Innocenti S received the 1098cc engine from the Mk II, along with some styling changes and a revised interior; the company built a total of 2074. Finally, in 1966, the Innocenti C coupe debuted, built on the Mk II (478 cars) and Mk III (307) chassis and mechanicals. However, the new coupe retained the 1098cc engine and was never offered with the larger 1275cc motor found in Sprites and MG Midgets.

Unfortunately, in 1965 Commandatore Ferdinando Innocenti died at age 85. With his passing, control of the massive corporation went to his son Luigi...who doubly unfortunately, didn't prove quite up to the task of managing his father's industrial empire. Above and beyond the Sprite-based sports car, the

(Continued on page 4)

Introducing **Innocenti S**



BODY BY GHIA  
Distributed in the U. S. through The British Motor Corp. (London, Inc.)

company still turned out the old Austin A40 variants, as well as the IM3/IM3S, a modification of the Austin/Morris (and later MG) 1100. More importantly, in 1965 the corporation started production of the Austin Mini.

However, in the face of strong competition from Fiat, financial troubles and the onset of problems with its

unions, Innocenti went into decline. The old A40/A40S design went out of production in 1967, followed by the Spyder/S in 1968 with a total of 7651 built. The 1M3/1M3S ended production in 1970 and in 1972, British Leyland acquired Innocenti for £3 million (about \$4.7 million). Despite BL's best efforts, production and sales never improved and the 1974 introduction of the Innocenti Regent, based on the Austin Allegro, pretty much put the proverbial final nails in Innocenti's coffin. Back home in Britain, the Allegro was roundly considered one of the worst cars ever foisted on the car buying public (a poll conducted by *iMotormag* in 2008 rated it as the "worst car in Britain"). According to one source, the Italians begged British Leyland not to build any more in Italy as it was damaging the nation's reputation.

The situation at Innocenti continued to decline after British Leyland's nationalization by the British government in 1975. BL pulled out of the Italian market and sold the company to Alejandro de Tomaso, who renamed the business Nuovo Innocenti. Production of the Mini continued with a new body styled by Bertone. The vehicles remained popular in Italy but BL –

for proprietary and sales reasons – squashed further Innocenti exports to France, Germany and the United Kingdom. In fact, in 1982, British Leyland suspended delivery of 998cc and 1275cc engines in 1982; de Tomaso turned to Daihatsu for a 3-cylinder 993cc engine and later added a turbocharged variant. Otherwise, the factory kept busy producing body components and final assembly for cars such as the Maserati Biturbo, Maserati Quattroporte and the legendary (?) Chrysler TC.

The end effectively came for Innocenti in 1990, with de Tomaso's sale of the company to Fiat. The latter, undergoing its own financial problems, closed the Milan factory in 1993 but kept the company name alive for three more years through badge-engineered Yugo 45s (based on the Fiat 127) and Brazil's Fiat Elba. The Lambretta scooter which started the entire process some 45 years earlier? It went out of production in 1971; an Indian company now owns the rights to the name.

As for Innocenti Spyders, the Sprite's Italian cousin, approximately 30 remain in the United States with reportedly three or four actually running. And, they occasionally come up for sale; a Hayward, CA, dealer offered an immaculate black '65 in 2011 and last year another Spyder sold in Wallingford, CT (last October Bring a Trailer – <http://bringatrailer.com> – featured a 1986 Innocenti-de Tomaso turbo in Vancouver BC, but that was an entirely different animal.

But let's say you found one. While replacing body panels and trim could prove daunting, the Sprite running gear would be easy enough to maintain. In fact, once finished, the biggest issue you'd undoubtedly face is this: would you "get in the door" at the ABCCS (probably) and who would you park with during the annual Plaza Frontenac European Auto Show? GHA or over there in the Italian section?

Ah, decisions, decisions...

Sources: Conceptcarz.com; inno-mini-world; innocentispyer.com; AROonline.com; mmlambretta.com.



Innocenti Spyder, interior and exterior. Source: ConceptCarz

**In Print** (Continued from page 1)

The **Mini** connection continues in the March issue of *Classic Motorsports*, with the ninth installment of the magazine's series on the restoration of a '67 Mini Cooper S. Elsewhere, an article on the late Al Moss' 1948 **MG** TC – now owned by Moss Motors – tech tips for the **XK120/140/150**, a short feature on the Triumph **Spitfire** ("Modest Prices, Maximum Fun") and a brief test drive article on a 1964 **E-Type** roadster. *Car & Driver* for March contains a road test of the **BMW i8** ("...a BMW from a sci-fi set") as well as a brief Q&A with BMW Head of Design Benoit Jacob concerning the interior of the **i3**. More BMW in March's *Road & Track*: a comparison test between an M5 and the Chevrolet SS.

Over in February's *Octane*, a track test of the surviving Jaguar XJR-9, winner of the 1990 Daytona 24-Hour race. Regular readers should also take the time to read Jay Leno's "The Collector" column about non-car people. Elsewhere, one page articles on Standard-Triumph's Sir John Black and Harris Mann, designer of the Triumph TR7 and multiple late-model Austins.

Finally, January's *Thoroughbred & Classic Cars* touts the "1950s Sports Car Shootout," a comparison test between an Austin-Healey 100, HRG 1500, Morgan +4 (flat rad, yee-haw!) and Triumph TR2. All good material for the LBC faithful in the crowd.

## Featured Events contd

**Missouri Parks Drive**  
Jaguar Assn of Greater St Louis—  
14 March 2015



“KMOX reports a traffic jam at Bee Tree Park!”

**Tech Session @ All British Car Repair**  
MG Club of St Louis—16 March 2015



*Photos by Andy Ackerman*



## Featured Events



## Tech Session at JML Audio StL Chapter BMWCCA—8 March 2015



## Sunday Drive No. 1

St Louis Triumph Owners Assn—8 March 2015



Photos by John Maneke



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BMW Car Club  
of America  
St. Louis Chapter

