

Robert Carroll's Mangusta is just like
TREASURE

**Dear PI,**

I bought my Mangusta through PI Motorsports. I took the car home in March of 2004. When I bought it, it had 24,500 miles. Since then, I've put about 1,500 miles on it - at least according to the odometer (which reads about 20% high).

At the time, I had actually been looking for an early Pantera. I had never driven one, or even had a close look, but they had always intrigued me. While searching various resources (eBay, AutoTrader, etc.) I stumbled on a Mangusta. It was love at first sight. After digging deeper and discovering how rare they were, I knew I'd be happier with a 'Goose than a Pantera. I've always been a sucker for the rare and unusual - especially when they are so stunning to look at.

You see, for me, the cars worth collecting are rolling pieces of art. While I do enjoy driving them, I get just as much pleasure looking at them. I also enjoy sharing them with others. It's sort of like my own personal rolling art gallery. And, I've found that while the traditional classics - like my 1969 Vette and 1967 Camaro RS Convertible - get a lot of attention and positive comments, the more

rare and exotic they are, the more excitement they seem to generate. And, the 'Goose does attract a lot of attention.

It's easily recognized as a late sixties or early seventies vintage car (I think the chrome rear bumpers give it away), but most people can't identify the 'Goose for what it is. I'd say less than 10% of the people who comment on it have never heard of a Mangusta. Some mistake it for a Pantera, but most people ask if it's a Maserati or Ferrari. I make sort of a game out of letting people try and guess what it is. Invariably, people walking by work their way around to the rear of the car so that they can read the one and only set of nameplates, and even then they don't seem to recognize what it is. On the rare occasion that someone recognizes the car, it's a treat for both of us. They get to see some-

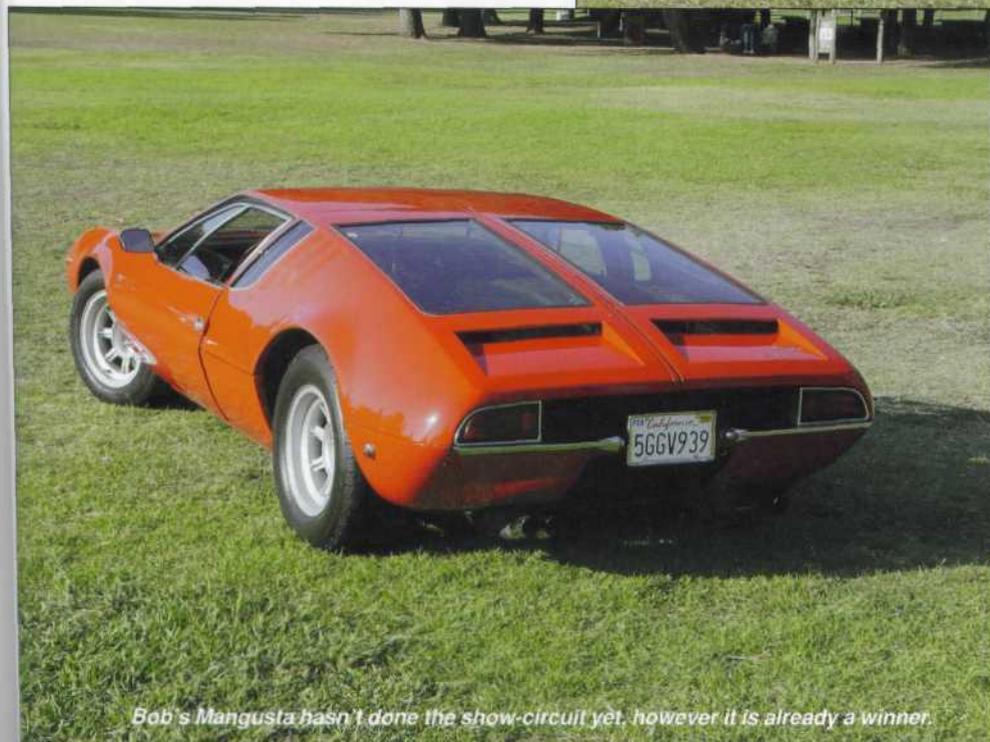
thing they either never got to see in person or haven't seen in ages, and I get to share my treasure with someone who can truly appreciate it.

This Mangusta is in pretty much the same condition it was when I purchased it. At some point, the engine was overhauled and massaged. I have no records of what was done, but externally, I can see that it's had an Edelbrock Performer intake manifold and 650 Holly installed. It has also had a solid lifter cam installed that generates a healthy dose of torque and a telltale lobe at idle.

The interior was also redone at some point. All the components are original and have been recovered in black leather with red piping. I have to say that I'm really not crazy about the red piping, but overall the interior condition is very good.

The body is in very good condition with the only noticeable blemish being in front of the

Bob's Mangusta is a 1969. His experience with the Mangusta has been favorable.



Bob's Mangusta hasn't done the show-circuit yet, however it is already a winner.



Bob's rare Camaro RS convertible is shown with his Mangusta.

passenger door. This is a common problem with the Goose. It seems that the door extension restraint is rather weak and a prior passenger swung the door open and it extended beyond its limit and dinged the body.

Overall, its condition is far above average for a car of this vintage. However, there is a lot that I will eventually do to get it into the condition I consider appropriate for a car of this pedigree and rarity. However, my modus operandi is to spend a year or two enjoying a new acquisition while I work the bugs out before I really tear into it. I learned from my first "quick and dirty paint job" that turned into a 2 1/2 year restoration (down to bare metal inside, outside and underneath with every fastener, grommet and wearable item replaced) that my obsession with perfection means that once I really get started, I'm going to go whole hog on a project before I consider it done. So, I make sure I know everything it needs and collect as much as I can before I get started on a restoration.

Driving the Goose is an experience. There's plenty of torque and enough horsepower to please anyone but a serious performance nut. But, performance is not this car's endearing trait. Unfortunately, it doesn't live up to its great looks. At lower speeds (city), it's ponderous. The lack of power steering combined with a slow steering ratio makes maneuvering strenuous at best. But, the ride is firm and handling in sub-50 MPH driving and the cornering is flat and predictable. However, at highway speeds, the handling could best be described as "squirrely". Suddenly, the formerly ponderous steering feels twitchy. The handling does improve once you get above 90 MPH as the suspension seems to settle in a bit. I've not yet had it above 110 MPH, so I can't comment on its high-speed handling.

Dips and bumps require your full attention because the suspension's recovery - coupled with the flex in the rear chassis - may cause a diversion from the chosen path. Also, the low ride height causes an involuntary cringing affect when bumps and dips appear because there's a distinct possibility that the bell housing is going to contact the road. A similar event sometimes occurs when entering/exiting parking lots when their driveway aprons are relatively steep. At least one Goose owner has gone as far as to fabricate a skid plate to protect the bell housing and oil pan from such episodes.

Ergonomically, it's not the best car around. It didn't take too long to get used to the steering wheel and pedals being canted to the right. However, the windshield's height and rake means that someone of my height (just under 6 ft) sits with the windshield just a couple of inches away from my forehead. In fact, I have to flip the sunvisor forward to keep from rubbing my head against it.

Since I've had it, the only real work I've done is related to improving the cooling. It tends to run hot - particularly at highway speeds. I've had every component inspected thoroughly and there was nothing wrong - unless you count the seemingly senseless Y connections and hoses that actually circulated hot coolant back into the engine. In an effort to combat the heat, I've replaced the water pump with a high-volume Edelbrock unit, added a billet aluminum coolant recovery tank and upgraded the electric fans. When that didn't bring the temps down enough, I added a Deraile oil cooler with integral fan and dual oil

filters. This did help to bring the coolant temp down a bit, but the real problem seems to be that there just isn't anywhere for the air passing through the radiator to efficiently exit the vehicle. Short of cutting vents in the hood, I see no way to improve the situation any further, so I'll have to settle for restricting my highway driving to days where the ambient temperature is under 80 degrees.

Some of the interesting oddities of the Goose include:

1 Manual dash-mounted switch for the electric fuel pump - which is powered directly off of the battery. This means that if you forget to turn off the fuel pump, it will still be running (or the battery will be dead) when I come back. It also means that if you forget to turn it on, you'll "run out of gas" about a quarter mile down the road. I've added a relay that triggers the circuit off of the ignition, so I don't have to worry about turning it off, but I still have to remember to turn it on.

2 Manual dash-mounted switch for the electric radiator fans. This one is only powered with the key on, but the car was not originally equipped with a thermostatic switch for the fans. After forgetting to switch them on a few times I added a thermostatic switch.

3 The suspension rides almost

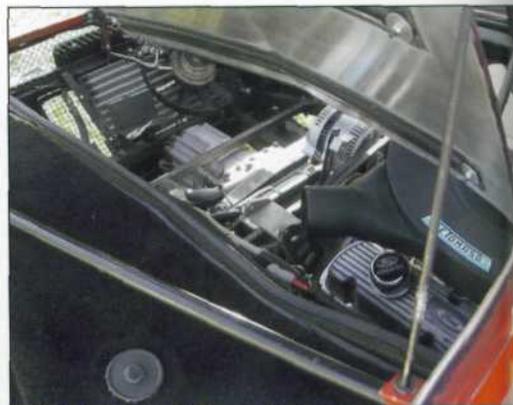
entirely on heim joints rather than rubber or urethane bushings. While this is a solid Formula-1 style configuration, the joints do not have any zerk fittings for lubrication. So, (as far as I can see) the only way to properly lubricate the suspension is to disassemble it. I guess that's what those formula one pit crews do to keep themselves busy between races.

4 This Goose (like all Mangustas) was imported and sold without mirrors or seat belts. I've added temporary mirrors (using two-sided tape on the fixed side windows) until I can find just the right ones to use on this car. I bought four pairs of NOS Talbot mirrors, but none of them worked well enough or matched the lines of the car well enough to justify drilling holes in the body. There was an old four-point harness on the drivers side, but I've replaced it with a seatbelt/shoulder harness arrangement and also outfitted the passenger seat.

I've fiddled around with all forms of mechanical motivation since I was old enough to hold a wrench. I built my own bicycles from scrap parts when I was as young as 12 years old. I maintained and rebuilt my own motorcycle (several times) from the age of 14. Since owning my first car at 15, I've continued to do as much work on everything I own (including an airplane) as I can. At this point, the only automotive work I outsource is anything having to do with transmissions. I've not yet repainted an entire car, but I have done my own body work and



Engine has upgraded manifold and carb



Above: Most dramatic view of a Mangusta

repainted sections of cars when necessary.

My first classic car purchase was my 1968 Austin Healey Sprite which I bought in 1985. I restored it over a 2 1/2 year period from 1987 through early 1990. A year later the transmission locked up (the only part I didn't rebuild myself), so I parked it for ten years before doing a second restoration in 2001 using a 5-speed Datsun transmission and several engine mods.

Since then, I've purchased several other cars (all of which are now on www.midlifeclassics.com). Here they are in the order in which they were bought:

- 1968 Austin Healy Sprite - Bought from an in-law in 1985
- 1969 Chevrolet Corvette T-Top Coupe - Bought via an Internet (AutoTrader) ad in 2001
- 1967 Chevrolet Camaro RS Convertible - Bought via eBay in 2002
- 1968 Mercury Cougar - Bought via eBay in 2003
- 1970 Opel GT - Bought via eBay in 2003
- 1970 Opel GT - Bought via eBay in 2003 as a parts car (decided to restore it someday)
- 1969 DeTomaso Mangusta - Bought via an Internet ad in 2004
- 1973 TVR 2500M - Bought via eBay in 2004

1986 TVR 280i - Bought via eBay in 2004

1990 Buick Reatta - Bought via eBay in 2004

After restoring the Sprite (again) I realized how much I missed working on cars. Then I realized I could afford an old Vette and decided that it would make a good project. Well, that just led to an obsession. I justify it as a retirement plan. Actually, I've stopped my "normal" retirement contributions and have been redirecting those funds to the car collection. The way I see it, properly chosen classic cars will always go up in value. When I combine that with my hobby of working on and restoring cars, I'm able to increase the value of my "retirement plan" through exercising my hobby. Who could ask for a better deal? And, how many people get to play with their retirement plans?

All of these cars (except the Opel parts car) get driven on a regular basis. My daily commute is only 23 miles (north Valley to Santa Monica), but it takes me through two of the three worst interchanges in the country. So, I make the best of it by driving a different car every day...well, most days. I recently bought a new Infiniti FX35 so that I'd have a "real" car that I can use for more formal occasions, long trips and/or when I need

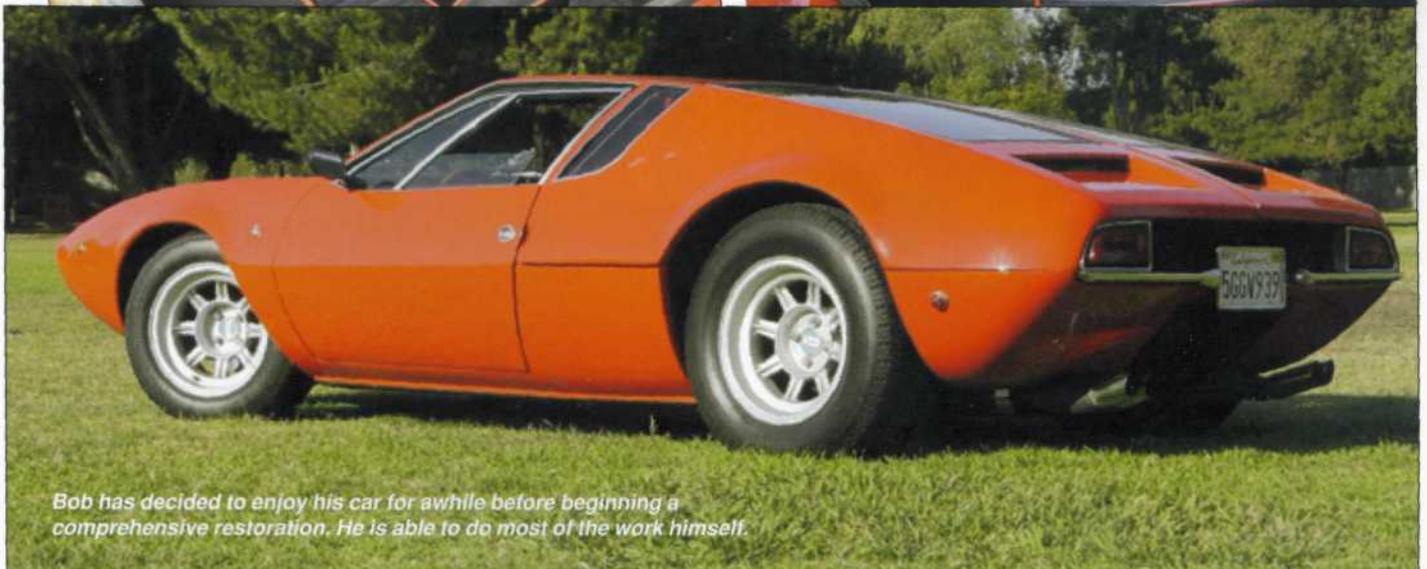
to haul multiple passengers.

I've had the Goose at a few cruise nights and at a recent local car show (took 1st place in the foreign sports car category), but I spend so much time working on the cars (it *is* what I love doing) that I haven't taken much time for shows or meets. As you can see, I don't know how to write just "a few" words. But, this should give you plenty of information for your article.

Regards,
Bob Carroll

PI

Below: Interior is in terrific condition but Bob doesn't fully approve of red piping. Steering wheel is half wood and half leather.



Bob has decided to enjoy his car for awhile before beginning a comprehensive restoration. He is able to do most of the work himself.