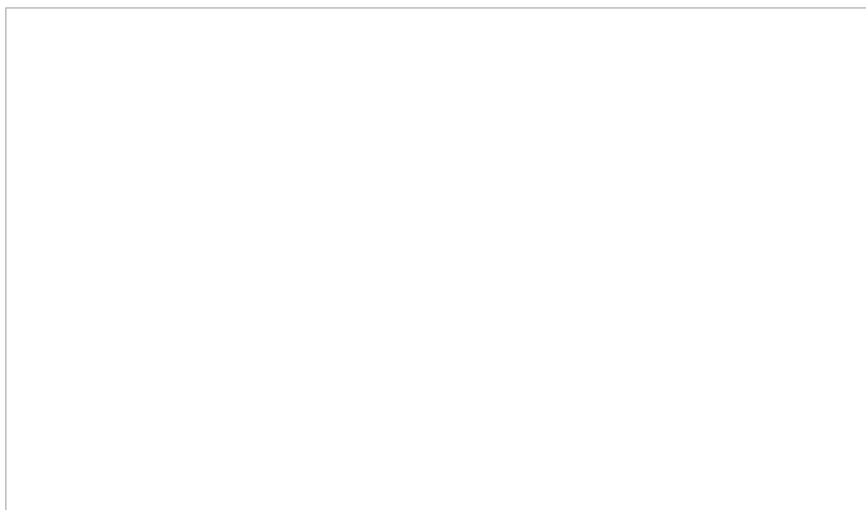


# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Aston Martin meets James Bond's 'Goldfinger'



Press reception - it's a hard life!

**The May Issue of ['Cars for the Connoisseur'](#) contains the first part of Mike Ashley's story of how a DB5 Aston Martin was chosen for the James Bond film - Goldfinger - 'Forty Years On'. Rolls-Royce having turned down the opportunity of using a Bentley. Ashley, then an employee of Aston Martin, had the onerous task of taking the DB5 to each film premiere, literally 'round the world'. The attendant celebrations, publicity stunts and adventures make for a highly entertaining read. We should all have revolving number plates! The following is an abbreviated extract from the second part of his story in the June issue - a free sample of May being available to Classic Driver readers at the address below.**

"Now, into the night from Germany to Switzerland in a driving snowstorm, and into Lugano for a day off. Gert Frobe had invited me to dinner at his villa that weekend but I advised him I had a prior arrangement with Alice Carraciola [*the widow of legendary GP driver Rudi Carraciola - Ed*]. We settled for cocktails and he and his great wife from Berlin would take me up to her villa. We were an hour late of course only to find when he rang her doorbell that they were great friends, and were dining as well. The villa had an all-glass front overlooking the lake, the left was also glazed, and looking over to the mountains the right wall was all curtains which I hinted would be open for a 360-degree view. At midnight, Gert made a nice welcome and thank-you speech, and asked Alice to open the curtain for their distinguished guest. It was a wall covered with every trophy Rudi had won racing - not only that, the jewellery glass top cases held in them so many items - including all the three star Mercedes pins he had won with diamonds for 1st, emeralds and sapphires for 2nd and 3rd.

"This was an incredible sight and a magnificent moment of awe and privilege that frankly moved me to tears of joy, magic and the moment itself. She also presented to me her signed copy of a book of his life and racing.



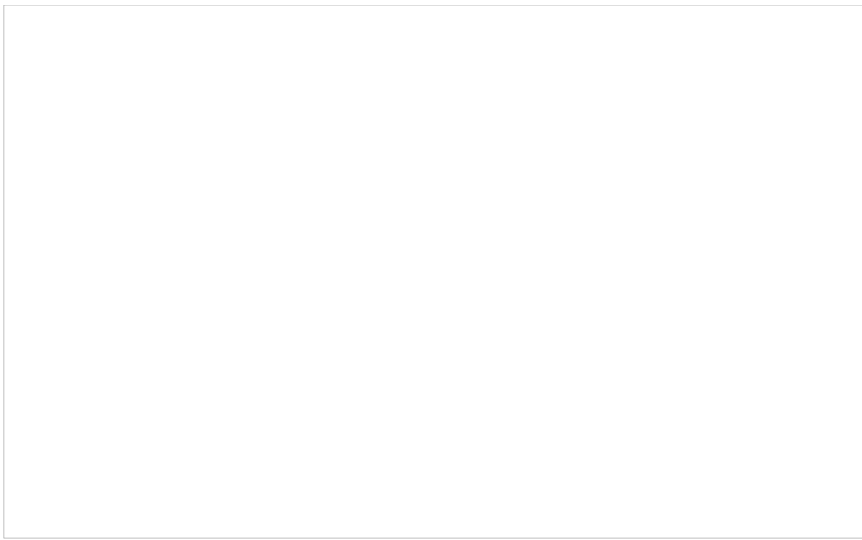
"Onwards to Zurich, including a press reception at a beautiful private estate, a drive down the main Bahnhof Strasse where we triggered the smoke screen much to the amazement of pedestrians and traffic and local police! It was all over the papers. They then arranged to put the car on display at the Globus store for 5 days. This became packed with shoppers and the chairman arranged for me to go to Andrea Badrutt's Palace Hotel in St. Moritz, giving me skis and gear to go for a break. The Bob Sleigh Championships were on with many Brits competing and we made the Cresta Ball. What a wonderful break before driving on to Italy."

*Mike then recounts how he drove into Italy and over the border to France via Monte Carlo (taking in that year's Rally) and up to Paris -*

"Driving on to Paris at 120 mph through a 30 mph village, I saw the Gendarme too late. Sure enough, they were waiting for me 18 kms ahead (2 cars and 1 motorbike). I flipped the switch that changed the license plate from UK to Swiss. I remember the guy saying "Non, c'est voiture Suisse non Anglais" and I was on my way!"

*After filming near Paris for the next Bond epic 'Thunderball' Mike is on the move again, this time to the USA -*

"We appeared in most US magazines - attended the New York Auto Show having a splendid time being introduced to Manhattan by elegant East-Coaster Tony Brown and his wife Leelee, whose parents, Hank and Wynne Dolier, had an Aston Shooting Brake. We visited the '21' Club, El Morocco, the Brook Club and Southampton. Then on to the Chicago Auto Show where we were joined by girls from the Playboy mansion. A visit to Miami where, as I was on a pallet being taken off by a fork lift, we turned on the engine coming out of the plane and triggered the smoke screen. The press thought the car and plane were on fire - a real mistake but great press photos."



The smokescreen is activated...

*Heading West, Ashley finds himself at Laguna Seca race track, near Carmel -*

"...where the DB5 was the Pace Car. I acquiesced to a mightier driver, namely Jackie Stewart, but had to remind him to beware of left-hand bends because we had the tyre cutter sticking out of the rear wheel. I got a great Kodak 8 movie of him driving while I was in the back seat. The US market responded well. We had a wonderful return to the UK for the DBS launch at Blenheim Palace with some 400 Astons and owners present. The English do things so well."

*So what was the 'Goldfinger' car like to drive? -*

"It was slower than most, and heavier due to all the equipment; the radar screen inside with tracking beeper, the ejector-seat that was activated by a button on top of the gear lever and the scanner with three spoons inside the wing mirror!...We never used the nail-spray from the dropped rear tail light but did use the oil-spray in the movie. The smoke screen were Italian fireworks cartridges you inserted in a slot down the tailpipe so the exhaust would carry it out...The tyre cutter was a knock on wheel nut with chrome extension pipe out 24 inches with the cutter welded on..."

*Mike Ashley later moved to Houston, Texas to be in charge of two Burmah Oil subsidiaries, followed by ten years with Taylor Woodrow as director of several divisions in oil/gas/coal engineering and construction. He has now retired to Florida.*

Editor, Charles Harbord has generously offered subscribers of Classic Driver a FREE sample of the May Issue. Those interested should telephone his 24 hour hotline : +44(0)1747 830 755

Or e-mail him at: [charles@carsfortheconnoisseur.com](mailto:charles@carsfortheconnoisseur.com) - mentioning classicdriver.com.

For further details on how to subscribe to 'Cars for the Connoisseur' please [CLICK HERE](#)

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