

CLASSIC DRIVER

Holman Moody 1964 Ford Fairlane 7-litre at Goodwood

Lead

This car is a rare sight in the UK. Turn the clock back, though, and you'll see an original, Holman Moody-built Fairlane Thunderbolt being tested by Alan Mann at the West Sussex track in 1965. We recreated that scene this summer, bringing a similar GT40-beating saloon to a blustery.

Classic Driver readers will be familiar with the grey car's prodigious performance and its stellar record in recent years, winning the Nürburgring Oldtimer Grand Prix Historic Marathon and finishing second overall in the Spa 6 Hours.

The Ford Fairlane Thunderbolt was a homologation special sanctioned by Ford with the aim of putting the largest possible engine (a 427c.i. from the big Galaxie, as used in the Ford Mk IIs) into a small — by US standards — bodysell.

The NASCAR welded-in roll-cage, adjustable suspension and front disc brakes are all homologated in period.





Nowadays, this car carries FIA-sanctioned HTP papers and runs in the 'GTP' class against the fastest sports-racing cars; very much like the original did when stock-car specialist Fireball Roberts crossed the line second overall (behind AJ Foyt in a mid-engined Scarab) in the 250-mile American Challenge Cup race held at the FIA-sanctioned Daytona Continental meeting in February 1964.

The 'Daytona Beach Sunday News Journal' described Roberts' placing as a 'shock' – much the same feeling many drivers have today when the big three-box saloon comes up to lap them and then disappears into the distance.





With a 427c.i. side-oiler V8 (period original, and with many features such as cross-bolted main bearing caps unique to this type of engine), it easily swallows Goodwood's rolling straights. What's surprising, though, is how well it copes with the slower corners, including the famous Goodwood chicane. And, despite fears to the contrary, with judicious restraint on the throttle it kept to the circuit's strict noise regulations, too.

While Alan Mann's car (later owned and raced by Martin Birrane) is now lost to posterity, this faithful recreation was constructed by Holman Moody in 2002-2003. The famous North Carolina-based race shop built the originals, so it was logical to choose them to build up another, using all their expertise and comprehensive record-keeping to produce a correct facsimile of the 1964 original.





The German owners of this car have kept meticulous records of both its build by Holman Moody and the racing record of the original.

It has a history file like few others, and is the only one in the world sanctioned for historic racing — and likely to remain that way. So, if you get the chance, do try and see the car in action at the 'Ring or at Spa.

And for those GT40, Lotus, Elva and Brabham drivers tired of being humiliated by 'the fridge on wheels', you never know, it could be yours one day.

For now, do enjoy watching the video as much as we did making it.

Video and Photos: Simon Clay

Gallery

Includes video

Has video

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