

Terry Larson's 30-year love affair with this storied Jaguar C-type

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Remi Dargegen Photography

When the Arizona-based Jaguar expert Terry Larson discovered and bought this Jaguar C-type in 1987, he had no idea just how attached to it he would become. Over three decades, 100 races, and countless memories later, 'XKC 017' is the crowning piece in Larson's fabulous collection of big cats...

As we depart Terry Larson's underground workshop in the foothills of Mesa, Arizona, the slowly setting sun reveals the mass of dead flies caked onto the bonnet and the delicate windscreen of XKC 017 - a garage queen this Jaguar C-type is most definitely not. And it's been that way for most of its life.





In fact, no sooner had Sterling Edwards, the car's original San Francisco-based owner, taken delivery than it was doing battle on the racetracks of California. From Palm Springs and Pebble Beach to Riverside, Laguna Seca, and Torrey Pines, XKC 017 was raced and shown extensively in the Golden State throughout the 1950s and early 1960s by a raft of owners, with great success.

In addition, the car - fitted with triple Weber carburetors - clocked 155.97mph at Bonneville in 1957, beating an exotic new Mercedes-Benz 300SL. It was in 1970 that the C-type was given a well-deserved rest. It was stored for 17 years before Terry Larson, then a fledgling Jaguar specialist whose reputation was growing by the day, discovered and bought XKC 017 in 1987.



"When I first saw that car, I had no way of knowing how attached I would become to it," recalls Larson, fondly. "But C-types do tend to have that effect on people..." In the three decades for which he has owned the car, Larson has enjoyed it on countless tours, including the C- and D-type tours he's organised for over 20 years now, and raced it more than 100 times in Arizona, California, and Nevada. "

As fabulous as the storied C-type is to drive and to look at, it's this Jaguar's rich and local history that has struck a real chord with Larson. "Whenever I take my car to race meetings, I always hear stories from people who have either worked on it, taken period photos of it, or know of its history," he explains. "I think it's because the brake scoops, which were fitted by Lou Brero in 1953, make it easy to recognise."



"While racing at Buttonwillow in California, a man approached me who remembered the car from its first race when he was just 10 years old. His father, who was with him, sent me a photo of the race programme from that day. That same year at the Monterey historic meeting, I qualified on the front row alongside Phil Hill in another Lou Brero car, a Ferrari 375 MM, and was wished good luck by the daughters of both Brero and Ray Scher, who also owned 017."

On another occasion, at a Jaguar Club banquet, Larson listened as Dutch Mandel, the editor of Autoweek, spoke of how his mother would send him to sleep by taking him for a blast in the mountains in XKC 017. "Years later, I arranged for Dutch and his father Leon, who owned the Jaguar in the late 1950s, to be reunited with the car for the Copperstate 1000."



This C-type drips history and the memories XKC 017 has provided its raft of owners, those lucky enough to have encountered it, and Larson himself over the past three decades make it worth far more than the sum of its material parts. "Past owners are, after all, part of the history and the 'heart and soul' of these cars," the self-effacing Larson concludes. "We don't really own them - we're merely their caretakers. I have so many memories of this C-type, and I hope there will be many more to come."

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