



E-type to Provence

Maikel Lemke brings us the concluding part of his memorable trip around France and Italy

Stage six comprised 110km from Orange to Mont Ventoux and back. Yet again, it was another splendid day with blue skies and zero wind. In these conditions, there is only one thing to do to make it perfect – the other reason why we are here is to climb the well-known Mont Ventoux, which is not only known by all cyclists around the globe but also by those who watch the hardest stages of the Tour de France. I've been up there on my bike several times and on each occasion it was breathtaking in two senses.

It was only right to show Janna this unique place. We left our residence at 11am and approached the foot of the mountain at Malaucène. You can occasionally see the summit and get an idea of what it is all about when you enter the village, where are plenty of cycling shops and even more small restaurants. From Malaucène, the climb is about 25km and the summit is at just above 1,900 metres. Basically, it is always going up, with breathtaking views if the sky is clear. All the way up, you are overtaking plenty of cyclists, but also keep in mind that many of them will be coming down very, very fast. Bear that in mind when overtaking a slow Ferrari or overheated Porsche.

About 5km from the top you reach the first



- Top: Janna and the E-type pause at the top of Mont Ventoux. Maikel has been up there on a bicycle, which sounds like much harder work!
- Above: not far to go! A quick stop just short of the summit...



summit, where you take the next turn for the last 5km, which are the most spectacular of all mountains I know – especially the last 3-4km, which evokes a lunar landscape. No trees, only stones – and it all looks white. You see the tower and you do not realise you are driving because it all seems so surreal.

Finally you reach the top. It is something unique and special. After spending some time at the summit, you eventually have to start your descent. Our car is an automatic and, in L gear, there was not much need to step on the pedal because of engine braking. In manual cars, you need to be cautious not to overheat your brakes!

Our descent was towards Bédoin and after a few kilometres we stopped at the memorial stone for Tom Simpson, the cyclist who died here in 1967. Further down, we recommend stopping at Chalet Reynard and enjoying the other people passing by. Arriving at Bédoin, we stopped for some food at one of the many small and good restaurants. Back at the farm a little later, we were still impressed and speechless. An exciting day, never to forget. That evening, we drove to Orange for another nice dinner.

Stage 7 – 350km, Orange-San Remo

This stage was more a transit than a sightseeing tour. We knew that the coastline at the Coté d’Azur is very time-consuming, so we planned to get there by motorway and have more time along the coast. A smooth drive from Orange to the Cannes exit was the start of what tuned out to be a very long day but with a relaxing end.

The motorway in France is fantastic, with no roadworks and only little traffic, at least in that region of Provence. Just like in northern France,

Maseratis, Ferrari and other luxury sport cars slowed down next to us just to escort our E-type for a mile or so at a modest 130kph before giving a thumbs-up and disappearing into the distance. Very nice indeed.

The joy of seeing the sea at Cannes only lasted a few miles. It was a Friday afternoon and a one-lane road in each direction. Delivery trucks were blocking the road, pedestrians crossing every 50 metres, parked cars on each side of the road, 40 degrees C outside and no air-conditioning. The traffic was so dense and progress was close to walking speed, so we decided to leave the



- Top: the hotel in San Remo had a beach just across the road and what we’re sure you’ll agree wasn’t a bad view out to sea
- Above: arriving at Via Sasso in Cannobio, very near the Italian-Swiss border

E-type to Provence



coastline at Nice and drove the upper road to see Monaco from the top. Sadly, the road had a stone wall about one metre high and we were in an E-type! The view was limited and we drove on to Menton towards the border to Italy. On the SS1 we continued all the way right into San Remo. Our Hotel Lolli Palais had the perfect location and the beach just across the street.

The only problem was the parking because the hotel garage was full and the public parking along the beach did not tempt us. Good thing we found a private 24-hour guarded garage right next to the market square. The price was about €20 for 24 hours.

If you have never been to San Remo, you have to go. It's basically a maze full of restaurants, bars and shops. It's extremely cosy and relaxed, and we extended our stay for another night and will definitely go back there. It was also good to leave the car unseen for a day after the exhausting coast drive, which in retrospect we would never do again. In Italy, you also have the scooters, which obviously have only one rule in traffic: 'If there is the smallest gap, go through it regardless of the direction.'

San Remo is wonderful, especially when you are travelling with your wife. Plenty of small boutiques, the market on Saturday morning is huge and it is impossible not to buy something. In the evening, we went to the best pizza bar we have ever been to. We were sitting outside in the street in a narrow pedestrian zone, and the *cameriere* told us that the pizza would take 40 minutes, but we were fine waiting. Sure, the service was stressed because

• Above: parked up in a rainy Cannobio
Below: driving through heavy rain and tiresome traffic en route to the San Gottardo Pass and (right) arriving at the hotel in Cannobio





plenty of other people were queuing for a place, but that is always a good sign!

Stage 8 – 350km, San Remo-Cannobio

We left the hotel and stopped again at ‘our’ bar Crikkot, and would recommend anybody do the same rather than having breakfast at the hotel. We continued to pick up the car, but we did not really want to leave. Arriving at the garage, the guards recognised me and I did not even have to show my pass. I guess these extras have all been included in the E-type since 1961.

We drove around the market square and there it was, the most impressive moment for Janna. It was warm already so we had the window down, and a young mother with a baby

in her stroller and a son of about five years old were standing at the traffic lights. I was focused on the traffic when we were approaching this young family, and Janna noticed the young boy pointing at us with open mouth and eyes. When we drove by, I could hear him calling: “Jaaaguuuur!”

Janna was speechless. How could such a little boy know

• Above: more rain, more traffic!

Below: Maikel and Janna were delighted to discover that the Via Tremola was open. The historic winding route still features a cobbled surface





PORTER PRESS INTERNATIONAL

FREE SHIPPING

to UK on orders over £85 - code: UKFREE

to Europe on orders over £170 - code: EUFREE

Available now!



£30
(plus p&p)



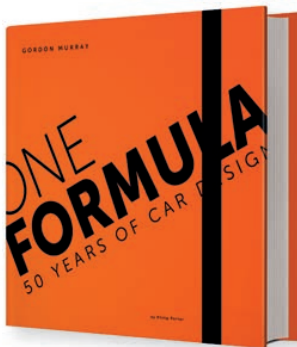
Maserati 4CLT

The remarkable history of chassis no. 1600

By Cristián Bertschi

An insightful new book in the 'Exceptional Cars' series on the Maserati that set Fangio on his way to five world titles.

Profusely illustrated and including many previously unpublished photographs.



One Formula 50 years of Car Design Gordon Murray

By Philip Porter

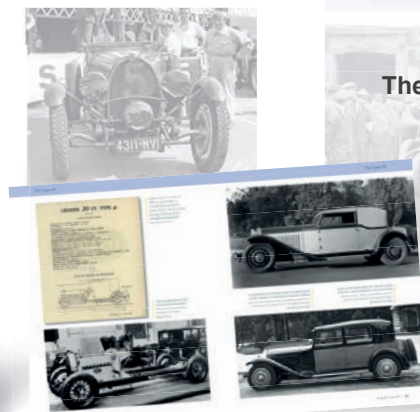
In this fascinating book, legendary designer Gordon Murray looks back over his incredible 50-year career and gives an in-depth analysis of each of his cars.

Please email expressions of interest to info@porterpress.co.uk

Register your interest



Available now!



Bugatti Type 50

The autobiography of Bugatti's first Le Mans car

By Julius Kruta and Mark Morris

The fascinating story of 50177, and the Type 50 in general, is told in this brilliantly researched and superbly illustrated new book in our acclaimed 'Great Cars' series.

Classic Edition (signed): £60
(plus p&p)

Visit the Porter Press International website to sign up to our email newsletter to receive latest news, special offers and more

+44 (0)1584 781588 info@porterpress.co.uk
www.porterpress.co.uk



- Left: despite the cold, Maikel and Janna had to stop to take a few photos during the ascent of the Via Tremola, including one 2,091m up at the misty summit of the Gotthard Pass



what car we were in? I was smiling, because that little lad is like me 45 years ago. I explained that to Janna and I think since that moment she understands me even better than before. That young lad was our advocate for our passion.

From San Remo, there was a long distance to drive and the motorway came in handy so we went in the direction of Genoa and turned towards Lake Maggiore where we booked a room in Villa Sasso, at Cannobio. It was a Sunday, there was little traffic and we arrived at Cannobio at 4pm. We parked the Jag and went to a bar to have a light meal and watch the final of the cycling world championship.

Two hours later, we arrived at the villa, got dressed and went for dinner. We've been to Cannobio before and we simply love this cosy place. We discovered a nice restaurant, which was not in the piazza but a side road. Best decision of the day. Without recommendation, probably nobody would get there. It was

delicious and relaxed, and had more locals than tourists.

Stage 9 – 530km, Cannobio-Leinweller/Pfalz

The next day it was raining, as predicted, so we packed up and went to the piazza for coffee. Then we drove off towards Locarno and onto the motorway towards San Gottardo. The plan was to cross the Alps on the historic Via Tremola, but the weather forecast had predicted light snow in the mountains and we had to see if the road was open or not. Of course, we did not want to use the 14km tunnel.

The rain was very heavy at the start, which made progress slow. It took us two hours to do 50km to reach the motorway, but from there on it improved and stopped raining. We came off just a little south of Airolo, passed through the village, and yes – the pass was open. It was not clear if the old Via Tremola was open, so there was a little bit of worry until we took the exit and

E-type to Provence



there we were.

There are cobbles from the old days, and the slope is minimal because horse-drawn carriages used to go up and down this path. On this day, Monday 2 October, there were no other cars on this route and we had plenty of time to take photographs. This route is so historic that, even in an E-type, you feel modern. Here and there we stopped, and further up it became colder and more windy. On top it was blowing and we could hardly stand the freezing wind. The Jag was nice and warm inside but the scenery was so surreal that we had to take some shots outside.


The descent was easy and the scenery dramatic. At Andermatt, we stopped for a Swiss coffee and little later we were back on the motorway towards Germany – our last night on this extraordinary tour. Janna was sleeping while I was driving; what a pleasant drive. I still remember the comfort of the car: outside it was five degrees Celsius; inside, very silent, the heating on and just cruising along.

Our last stay was in the wine region of Pfalz, and in autumn the colours are spectacular.

Golden-brown and yellow, picturesque as the entire tour. We stopped at a family-run hotel with a restaurant that uses only local products. We enjoyed again the typical German cuisine, relaxed from an extraordinary day – and a lucky one because of the San Gottardo being open.

Stage 10 – 479km, Pfalz-Osnabrück

The final stage was straightforward, almost identical to the first. Lots of roadworks, heavy rain and five hours' driving. We arrived home safely after having covered 3,700km in rain, hot sunshine, motorway, coastal roads, and the mountains of Provence and the Alps. We stayed in castles, villas, monasteries, farms, and we had some of the best wine and food you can find in Europe, but what made this trip so special for me and Janna is that we did it in our own E-type, which was built 50 years ago and still gives so much pleasure, not only to us. I cannot think of a stop where someone didn't come up and talk to us. The car not only served us for the trip but very often it served for a photo or a little communication.

It's my duty to show the car on the road, to create desire and memories, and to make young kids dream – just as it did when I was six years old. 

The average fuel consumption was 11.5 litres per 100km (24mpg), and the only mechanical issue was that the fanbelt needed to be replaced during the trip. Details of the car's restoration can be seen at www.etype2plus2.com



- Top: the dramatic descent, complete with scenery like something out of a James Bond film
- Left: homeward bound – pressing on through the wine region of Pfalz