

Driving Impressions

I lay awake for ages last night trying to come up with a theme for what I intend to write about with reference to being a GT40 replica owner and my driving impressions but finally decided to sit down and wing it as I wrote.

I suppose the best way would be to have a tape recorder set up in the car as it is being driven and to give a "Top Gear" type report, but with the beautiful sound of that lump of American V8 muscle sitting a few inches from your head pumping out mechanical noise and a ferocious exhaust note it may not be such a clever idea. A sound so unique to the GT40 that only a few very lucky people will ever hear it and that is the interior noise! When it comes to the roar that emanates from the exhaust for the consumption of the public it is something that makes men grow weak and at the same time is like having a shot of adrenalin in the blood stream. Since the tranquility of the neighbourhood was rudely interrupted with the introduction of my car there are a few people who have a different view but we won't go there.

I completed my CAV GT40 replica in December 2004 and have so far covered 4000 miles of essentially trouble free motoring. To date I have yet to take the car to a race track mainly due to work and time restraints but intend to in the very near future so from a race car perspective I am unable to offer any comments. From the point of view of a petrol head who loves all forms of motor racing, I can put forward few personal thoughts on driving this incredible machine. I have always thought that the GT40 is the most aggressively sensual sports car ever made since they first came to my attention in the seventies. I was too young to enjoy their winning ways in the sixties but its timeless presence has stayed with me over the decades. When the opportunity to build one arose I jumped in with gusto. The first drive left me in a state of euphoria and I look for any excuse now to take her on the road even if only to pop down to the local convenience store for a re-supply of bread or milk. There are faster cars out there today but none quite capture the seat of the pants driving which epitomizes the sixties era of racing. Having said that it can still hold its own against many of the top marques of today which I can personally vouch for having embarrassed more than one in the last year including a Porsche 911 Cabriolet and some red Italian sports car.

I fly Boeing 747's freighters all over the world for a living and have had some very interesting moments. The most comparable to the GT40 though is the rush experienced on light weight ferry flights. Its acceleration on take off is impressive enough when it is full and weighing 379 tons but empty and tipping the scales at 180 tons it is phenomenal! To the point that it feels like the monster is only marginally under control.

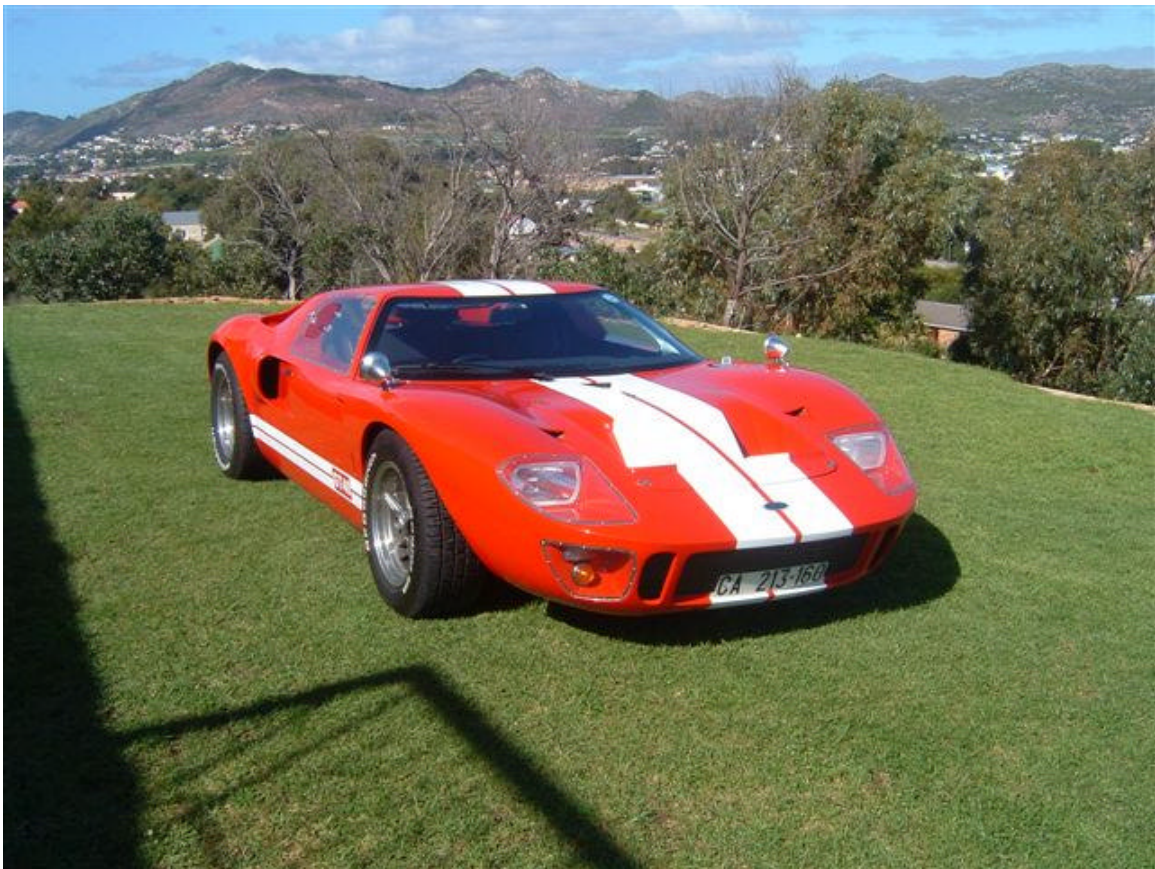
My GT40, whilst only 1/300 th the weight of the 747, has the same sort of white knuckle acceleration. With no driver aids such as traction control or ABS like many more modern sports cars, things can get away from the driver very quickly if you are not prepared for its brutal power. Its race bred suspension and ideal weight distribution does however allow some latitude for the over zealous driver if things do start to go wrong in the traction and grip department.

It certainly is not a practical vehicle for everyday use. Two seats, no trunk or storage space, no spare wheel, very heavy on fuel, noisy, awkward to climb into or out of and I have stopped wearing shoes due to the cramped position of the pedal assembly. The ground clearance of five inches means speed control humps can be very tricky to negotiate and rough roads are definitely out of the question if you have a heavy

accelerator foot unless you wear a kidney belt. In spite of the admiring glances the car gets from the general public, in this day and age it is not politically correct.

But who cares? I feel I have re-captured my youth and the frequent adrenalin rushes that I get from driving the beast can only be beneficial to my health although the permanent grin I have when driving the car must have people wondering whether I am the local village idiot or just someone having a good time with his favourite toy.

Geoff Hurrell



Geoff's Car on his front Lawn



Geoff Hurrell (barefoot on the left) & Paul Roos – Both CAV GT Component Program Cars