

The Blitz Centerfold

My Chubby-Thighed Little Princess

By Don Michaelson

Alright. Enough with the GTs already. In the last issue of the Blitz I counted 52½ pictures of Opel GTs (the ½ being the nose of the Berkeley.) What is the attraction? They put a fancy dress on the Kadett and sold 'em like hot cakes.

As an alternative to and relief from the GT I would like you to consider my chubby-thighed little princess and her story. Her owner before me bought the car, a 1975 Ascona Sport Wagon, new at the Cadillac/Buick dealership in Corvallis, Oregon. Princess spent the next 20 years towing a little fishing boat to local lakes. We all grow old as did her owner, and he was banished to a rest home for the rest of his days. The Cadillac/Buick dealership (now just a Cadillac dealership) bought the car back for the owner's son. His son said, "cha, right. I'm not gonna drive an old station wagon!" So on the lot it went for \$1450. That was back in the last century, 1995. The white shoe polish stating it's price on the windshield had hardly dried by the time I had gotten the check written and was walking out with keys in hand.

She wasn't a princess back then. In fact she was pretty plain, in that sensible economical Opel sort of way. But that was OK because for many years to come she'd be my daily driver. Cheap, handy, dependable

transportation, hardly the stuff of princesses. But then, one night, in one of those magazines, a hotrod Manta with a 2.2 and a 5 speed. That was all princess-to-be and I needed to know.

The plan was to get the Manta home, swap engines/transmissions, and sell the Manta for pretty much what I bought it for. That part worked just fine, it was moving the Manta's engine into Princess that proved to be a real stinker. It's the old.... might as well do this while the engine's out, might as well do this while the car's not moving. Yadayadayada.

The transformation started out with so much promise. The nice man who would build her motor did roundy-round engines so he must know his stuff, right? He did the machining and assembled the motor, then I took it home and installed it. Next, a little gas, a turn of the key, and what followed was the most expensive 20 seconds of my life. You'd think a roundy-round engine guy would know how to time a cam.

Princess was hurt, but the nice man promised to fix everything, and did, and the motor went back in the car, but under the valve cover what did I see, but a big ass braze between numbers 2 and 3. Not - a - nice - man.

A replacement head was found through an OpelGT.com contact (TGSI) and after a near-eternal Toddian delay it was back, installed, and the car ran,

Name: The Wagon

Born: 1975

Birthplace: Rüsselsheim, Germany

What Moves Me: 2.25L Opel CIH motor, big-valve 2.0 head, Weber 38 DGAS, Getrag 5 speed.

Best Features: My chubby thighs and sparkly eyes.

Turn-ons: A fine vintage synthetic and copious amounts of 91+ octane.

Turn-offs: Eating in the car (crackers in bed).







for 200 miles.

Princess was pissed. The head had warped concave down and the block concave up. Cylinders 2 and 3 were open to the air. All along I has thought the rough running was due to the DCOE 40s so I sold them. Live and learn.

It would be a while before the motor could be repaired but eventually it was and it has been running strong for over 25,000 miles.

But Princess is Princess and one day she decided she

didn't like her back seat, so I built her a dandy storage area to take it's place. And then she wanted a set of Recaro seats so I got her a pair out of a VW Golf. Without asking I customized her Lenke venter console, but then she demanded a Momo proto-tipo wheel to go with it. At least now Princess was happy.

Then one day one of her fancy BMW turbo wheels took flight and messed up the left front fender. To make it up to her I flared all four fenders. The 13x5.5 wheels were lost in all that new room so she got some new Sumitomo 215/50 tires mounted on 13x8 Rota wheels. Princess was happy again.



Once again the car is my daily driver. With the exception of periodic maintenance I haven't had to do a thing to it in 4 years. Lately, however, the transmission has been doing a lot of grinding and it's been making Princess cranky. Now she's asking for a Rally Bob turbo manifold, to be lowered a bit, for 4-wheel disc brakes and coil-overs, even a roll bar? What the heck does she need a roll bar for? She's a daily driver! Wait, is she thinking of cracking my head?