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## A Brief History of Foskers

Bernard Fosker grew up on the outskirts of South East London. He had a passion for motorcars and motorbikes and started to learn his mechanical craft with an apprenticeship in his late teens and early twenties.

In the 1960's he took his knack for tuning V12 engines combined with a very keen ear for engines and began to work towards fulfilling his dream of working with the sports cars he loved. He started working with a prestigious Lotus and Maserati specialist and set up a small workshop attached to the family home. By the late 1960's the workshop was well established and Bernard was working on various sports cars including Lotus, Maserati and Ferrari.



Bernard in 1986 with a client and his 288 GTO

In 1970, a friend and fellow sports car enthusiast, Ron Biggs (not 'the' Ronnie Biggs), bought a white 246 GT and let Bernard take it for a test drive. This is where the Fosker love affair with the Ferrari really began. Bernard was captivated by the car and immediately placed an order for a brand new Rosso Corsa 246 Dino Spyder. Ron, not to be outdone, bought exactly the same car in Nero. Both cars were collected from Maranello on the same day in 1972 and both Ron and Bernard became regulars at Valence Hill Climb, Bodiam Hill Climb and the Brighton Speed Trials, invariably accompanied by a young Jeff and Colin.



A young Colin in 1974 with the Dino at Brighton Speed Trials

Bernard's reputation as a perfectionist had been spreading by word of mouth and he was becoming well known amongst the local Ferrari aficionados, which meant that, eventually, he was able to concentrate on Ferraris alone.

A few years later, Bernard sold the Spyder and his beloved Vincent Black Lightning motorbike to purchase a Daytona. Bernard and Ron enjoyed their driving trips more than ever now, as the fastest police car at the time could do 98mph, whilst the Daytona's top speed was 174mph! Both Colin and Jeff began working for Bernard as his apprentices in their late teens, initially working on Dinos and Daytonas before moving on to 400s, 365s, and 512s. Jeff was 18 when he drove his first Ferrari, a 246 GT, registration OPD 153L and Colin's first drive was a 246 GTS, registration SKN 215M. We were lucky enough to see this car again recently, as, in June 2008, it was sold by Foskers and is currently in the process of being exported to Australia.

With all three Foskers working together, the limitations of the small workshop became apparent and the business was moved to larger premises at Wrotham, in Kent, where the restoration and servicing of Ferraris continued. Bernard retired in the 1990's and, in 1997, Jeff and Colin moved the business to the current location at the Paddock Entrance, Brands Hatch Racing Circuit in Kent.

Colin and Jeff also looked after a Formula 1 car, a Tyrell, participating in the Thoroughbred Series. This was the actual car, driven by Patrick Depailler, which won the Monaco Grand Prix in 1978. One of our clients, who owned a Ferrari 288 GTO, drove it in the Thoroughbred Series that season.



Team Fosker in 1996 with the Tyrell F1

In the late 80's, Bravo TV asked Foskers to provide a 246 Dino for a studio photo shoot at the re-launch of The Persuaders with Roger Moore and Tony Curtis. It was a truly memorable meeting and both brothers were lucky enough to chat and have pictures taken with the two iconic stars.



Tony Curtis in 1997 with the Fosker 246 Dino

Over the years, Jeff and Colin have been on many classic car rallies in Ferraris together and, more recently, with their respective partners. Colin recalls the most memorable being returning through the mountain passes in the Alps from Bratislava, in a 246 GTS, driving through the night with a co-driver to Calais. The roof was off, but the heater turned on full, creating the snug warmth that you only seem to get in a GTS Dino.

In the mid 90's, Colin and Jeff attended the launch of the Ducati 916 and it wasn't long before they both had a 916 SPS on order. Although not keen to take the bikes out on British roads, they have travelled many

miles through Europe. Both brothers went on to own an MV Augusta F4-1000 and 750 F4 and continue to collect rare Ducatis and MVs. As their skills developed on two wheels, Jeff and Colin both participated in European track days, which is how they met Foskers current Sales Manager Tony Glynn, himself a keen motorcyclist and Ducati aficionado.

We have been lucky to have worked on two extensively damaged 288 GTOs, one of which was fire damaged, the other had been involved in a substantial accident. Throughout the years, we have restored several GTOs which have had extensive crash damage and neglect, presenting us with substantial challenges. We have also been involved in the sale and regular maintenance of two very special Dinosaurs, one which was previously owned by George Harrison and the other by Ronnie Scott.

In 2008, Colin and Jeff, along with their fellow biking entourage, flew to India to ride Royal Enfield Bullets up the Himalayas, a lifelong ambition, which was no easy task. They managed to have a bike break down on them whilst climbing up to the highest road in the world. The engine was simply and neatly taken apart and repaired at the side of the road!

## **Jeff & Colin**

In their younger years, Colin and Jeff had a love of a different car marque, Alfa Romeo. In their early twenties, they both raced Alfa Suds in stage rallies, hill climbs, sprints and on a variety of track days. Colin won the SE Sprint Championship whilst Jeff won the SE Hill Climb Championships. They spent every spare minute away from the workshop tending to the Suds, trying to improve their cars to make them look better and, more importantly, go faster.

Colin and Jeff have spent many days trackside with clients, offering technical assistance. One that stands out was at Castle Combe in the mid 1980s. Several well known people were in attendance, including Sir Sterling Moss, who was the only person drinking tomato juice in the bar! One of the guests, who had obviously made good use of the bar, pulled out onto the circuit going the wrong way! When he was eventually turned around to face the correct direction, he wrote the car off at Quarry, the first bend! The co-driver, the owner of the car, was the driver's bank manager! To this day, neither Colin nor Jeff are keen to act as co-drivers for clients when they have seen them in the bar previously!

Colin and Jeff have attended a variety of events looking after Ferraris and other race cars throughout their careers. They went to the Targa Floria, a historic race in Europe, looking after a Ferrari 250 LM and have spent many days at Brands Hatch, most memorably looking after a Ferrari 330 LM and P3.



A younger Colin at Jeff in 1987 at Brands Hatch working on a 250 LM