

50 YEARS OF MOTORING IN SINGAPORE

Cars! Cars! Cars! I cannot imagine my life without them. My fondest recollection of family, relatives and friends is always anecdotal of a car related memory. This, to a large extent, has influenced and inspired my 1/43 scale model car classic collection of almost 400.

The predominantly European cars that took their pride of place along the driveways of my neighbourhood in Katong still form a vivid picture in my mind. Although much has changed since my childhood days, the motorcars of the 1960's and 1970's continue to fuel my motoring passion.

As a young child, I indulged in my passion by transforming the living room carpet in my home into a busy street scene, filled with delightful traffic from my Dinky and Corgi Toys. And it was always the everyday relatable road cars that I found desirable, rather than the Aston Martins and Lamborghinis of that time.

All my relatives and family friends knew my obsession, and fed my constant cravings. Even to this day, the mere recall of my childhood excitement of shopping for Dinky Toys at CK Tang, Robinsons or Katong's Tay Buan Guan Shopping Centre still warms my heart with a sweet sense of 1960's nostalgia!

Every single car in this collection has special significance, purely because I know someone who has owned one, or I've been driven in one or best of all - I've had the privilege of driving one! By the time I turned 10, I had driven that many number of cars. While most young boys were playing football and catching spiders, I mastered the art of driving a variety of cars, including those with column gears.

The cars that were owned by my father, uncles and aunts and even my school teachers - like the Morris 1100s and the Ford Cortinas are in my collection, along with the unusual Borghward Isabella stationwagon that my school bus driver once fetched me to school in when his BMC Minibus broke down

Forgotten cars like the Chrysler 2 Litre that were sold here in the mid 1970's, the Morris Marina that was marketed with the Malayan Motors' tag line "beauty with brains behind it" and the Russian Gaz Volga that once cruised our streets as taxis are also fondly remembered..

The late 60's witnessed the gradual invasion of the reliable and fuel efficient Japanese motorcars. Although ridiculed by some as "recycled Milo tins", popular models like the Toyota Corolla and Datsun Sunny soon relegated European marques to a minority status on our roads.

As a child, it was the little Mini that impacted me the most! It was simple yet sporty. It was small, yet big on charm and personality. It was the only car I wanted to own when I grew up! Few cars back then had the lure of the signature Cooper 'S' and the 1275GT.

As a young teenager, the BMW became my ultimate fascination! My first ride in one was my uncle's brand new 1974 BMW 3.0 saloon. Though very rare on our road then, that brief initiation into BMW performance turned me into an instant convert. Notable examples like the 2002Tii Baur Cabriolet and the 3 Series were my favourites.

My Mercedes-Benz saloon car collection features significant models of the 1950's to the 1980's. The 220S is fondly remembered as the car that Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew drove back in the 1950's.

Road race cars - like the Datsun SSS, and the Ford Escort is inspired by my many visits to the Thomson Circuit with my father in the late 1960's to the last of the Grand Prix races in 1973. The sight of fast cars, the sound of roaring engines and the smell of racing fuel always thrilled my sensors!

In many ways, this classic motorcar collection is both a reflection and a celebration of our changing times – like remembering the old days of Monochrome TV or the sound of Rediffusion emanating from coffee-shops.

4 decades on, my model cars still evoke a deep sense of nostalgia – reminding me of the important places and faces that continually inspire everyday of my life.

Enjoy the cars and the special memories!

David Christie,
Model Car Enthusiast (*since age three!*)