

Dolomites in the Alps



We, Kurt (red car) and myself (racing colours), have been Triumph fanatics for more than 30 years, both of us owning several different Triumph models to play with.

My Dolomite is a LHD 1974 and has a very low VIN number. The story is that the Swiss importer had taken 10 yellow Sprints in 74 to convert into race cars. As far as I can tell, all of them went to private racers and were supported by the importer. All of them were painted like mine.

Sadly, the chassis numbers of these 10 cars are unknown and unlike the UK, the plates do change here with every new owner. (I presume he means the licence /registration plates, and not the car's chassis plate, Ed)

Anyway, my car is from 74, yellow paint underneath, has vented front discs (period conversion), rear roll over bar (fitted in period) and a factory limited slip diff. In addition, it has been fitted with a pair of 40ies Weber carbs, a conversion offered by our importers as well!

I've had it for maybe 20 years and always kept it on the road until 7 years ago when I'd hit a rock in the snow on a Golf court in Austria during a winter event. It had snowed all night and we were the first car in the morning to do the stage - with half a meter of fresh white it was simply impossible to see that rock....

The car was bent, the front RH longitudinal member pointed downwards a couple of cms. The steering rack gone, the subframe gone, the exhaust damaged and even the prop center bearing got torn off the floor!

For a long time, I didn't feel like doing anything with it until two years ago when I decided that it's too sad to let it go. All the damage was properly repaired, incl. some rust issues and then I've taken it for a first drive.

After only ca. 20kms, the engine started stuttering and rattling. To my surprise, I could see one of my spark plugs moving up and down with the engine idling! Whaaat?! It turned out, that I should have carried out a proper engine service before test driving - my own fault. One of the spark plug tubes had filled with oil and this caused the isolator of plug number two to break and all the ceramic has found its way into the combustion chamber. Engine dead, spring 2021.

Before Christmas I decided to attack the thing again. Quickly ordered a new fast road cam with Kent Cams, took several of my Sprint engines apart to find a good one, rebuilt this and fitted it. This time I've lightened the flywheel a little (1.4kg), up-rated my clutch release shaft with a Woodruff key, to overcome the problem with the weak bolts that hold the fork in place, and used one of my flowed heads that I had prepared years ago.

The pics are showing my Sprint on its first outing after the engine rebuild, 15.01.2022, playing in the snow. With a set of proper winter tyres and the LSD, the cars are almost unstoppable! We've had situations where modern 4x4 SUV's got stuck and we made it - sideways. With a set of chains, there is no limit really – unless you hit a rock on a Golf court....

My friend Kurt's car, a much later model, used to be a normal road car without modifications until about 10 years ago, when he decided he needed some little upgrades to keep up with mine when we take them for winter fun drives and rallies. We had the engine rebuilt with a fast road cam and fitted a roll bar. Not much more was needed as it had a LSD fitted from new as well.

Needless to say, we always protect the cars with Dinitrol before winter use and they get steam washed top and bottom afterwards! No one allowed to think we'd destroy them in the salt, we just enjoy them all year round.

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