



# SHOP TALK

GLOBAL ISSUE—WINTER 2009 Vol 15 Issue 2

**FORGET STOCKS!  
BUY CLASSIC CARS!**



There's been talk about how the values of Classic Cars will change as a result of the recent Stock Market activity. Some investors are looking for alternatives to the depressed stock market values caused by the global credit crunch. Together with gold, diamonds, and fine art, sought-after classic cars will soon be in demand as tangible assets rather than the abstract value of what is trading on the world markets.

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## **15th Annual Spring Open House** Saturday, May 23rd, 2009 9 AM – 4 PM

All Antique and Classic cars are welcome to visit our shop and meet with the staff of Ragtops & Roadsters. We will also have staff from Pollock Auto Restorations available to discuss American and European Classics.

Our Open House is held as part of the Perkasio Olde Towne Celebration. Again for this year the theme will be "Hot Ribs/Cool Jazz". There's a barbecue rib cooking competition and Jazz music throughout the day! So bring your appetite and the whole family! For more information please go to [www.perkasiooldetowne.org](http://www.perkasiooldetowne.org)



## Ragtops & Roadsters Acquires Pollock Auto Restoration

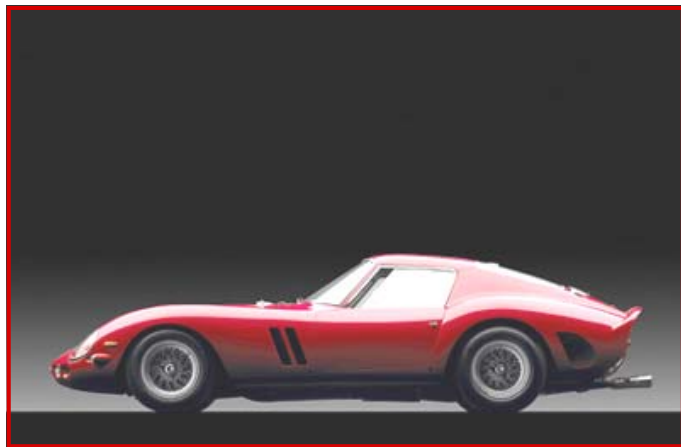
Michael Engard, founder and president of Ragtops & Roadsters Inc. in Perkasio, PA is pleased to announce the acquisition of Pollock Auto Restoration in Pottstown, PA. Pollock is the premier restorer of brass era and classic pre-war automobiles in Eastern Pennsylvania.

Pollock Auto Restoration is located at 70 S. Franklin Street in Pottstown, PA. For more information call (610)-323-7108. Our website is [www.pollockauto.com](http://www.pollockauto.com)



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Throughout 2008 the classic car auctions have seen increased activity as well as an increase in the value of the cars being sold. We've seen recent sales of \$4,500,000 and \$5,000,000 (1961 Ferrari 250 and 1960 Jaguar E2A respectively) and I think that we will



continue to see increased sales with the high-value cars like Gullwing Mercedes, Ferraris, Duesenbergs and Jaguars. The well-heeled collectors will continue to operate in this higher market. The rest of the Classic Car market will be pulled up along with these exceptional classic cars. As a result all antique and classic cars will rise in value, especially for people who hold and maintain the cars they currently own. Like the overall market advice; now is not the time to sell, it's the time to buy. It's also the time to hold onto the cars that you have and watch them increase in value. By holding onto the cars that you own as well as judiciously adding to your stable of collectibles you are ensured of certainly not losing ground financially, and almost assuredly gaining value.

Now, you could just store them away and wait as the value slowly creeps up. But, at the same time the condition will deteriorate until the cost to maintain the cars becomes more than the appreciation that you were waiting for.

To make that value as high as possible, the car needs to be in good condition. How good that is can be determined by the effort you make now. Proper storage is discussed elsewhere in this newsletter as well as on our website <[www.ragtops.com/articles\\_winter.html](http://www.ragtops.com/articles_winter.html)>

At Ragtops & Roadsters we encourage you to maintain your car in top condition to preserve the value that is already there. Fix that noisy exhaust, that shaky front suspension, that leaking transmission. Maybe it's time to repair that scratch on the door, that tear in the driver's seat, the rear window that you can't see through.

At Ragtops we pride ourselves on being able to handle every phase of service and preservation of your classic British Car. From the smallest running and tuning item to major component rebuilds, body rust repair and paint refinishing, we can manage every aspect of the job with care and discretion to help maintain the assessment of your treasure at the highest point possible. Plus you'll get to enjoy using the car while it's value goes up.

# The Jaguar XJ220

A Modern Classic – by Matt Winkler

How is it possible that the Jaguar XJ220 is already 15 years old? How can a supercar with such exclusivity, power, and contemporary styling already be a “classic”? Hard to believe but true, it’s actually been 16 years since the first XJ220 rolled out of Jaguar’s purpose-built factory in Bloxam, England.

From its inception in 1988, the car was to face criticism and controversy on a number of fronts. The design group responsible for the car had originally promised an all wheel drive car with a Tom Walkinshaw-sourced quad-cam 6.2 liter V12 and scissor-type doors, designed to compete with contemporary supercars such as the Porsche 959 and Ferrari F40. Alas, emissions concerns, design costs, and other compromises would result in a far different production vehicle. The production version was rear wheel drive, and powered not by a V12 but a purpose built twin-turbo V6 (also developed by Walkinshaw), and the doors opened in the traditional outward fashion. Add to all of this the exceedingly high cost overruns that increased the bottom line price for the vehicle to over \$600k, and trouble was imminent.

Early clients who had offered huge deposits were furious. Critics didn’t like the decidedly un-supercar sounds emanating from the hyperactive V6. It was overweight. Prices were just too high. Jaguar could not unload the intended 350 models, ending the run at 281, and lawsuits abounded.



Photos by Dave Hutchison

Lost in all of this upheaval was the fact that Jaguar had managed to produce a car that, at the time, was the fastest production car on the planet. Sandwiched in between the Bugatti EB110 (1992, 216 mph) and the legendary McLaren F1 (1994, 231 mph) the XJ220 spent one glorious year atop the list, reaching 217 mph in testing, just three miles per hour short of the speed the factory promised by naming it the “220.”

Jeff Sturgis of Newtown, PA owns Jaguar XJ220 #54, built in 1993. Jeff, a “semi-retired” businessman who also has a home in Florida, has an eclectic collection of vehicles including a Noble M400, a Kremer K3 Porsche, and a Rolls Corniche convertible among other equally desirable toys. Dave Hutchison of Ragtops & Roadsters and I had the opportunity to visit with Jeff recently, just days before Jeff and the Jag were headed south for an extended stay.

With just 281 produced, the XJ220 is certainly an exclusive ride. Add in 15 years of attrition and the limited number fully federalized for sale in the U.S. and now you’re in uber-exclusivity land. Sturgis



estimates there are less than 40 road-going XJ220s in the States, which makes the fact that Jeff found his example quite by accident all the more interesting.

“About two years ago, I was at a dealership in Atlanta, preparing to buy a new Rolls Royce Phantom,” Sturgis tells us as Dave and I snap dozens of photos of the car outside Sturgis’ home. “I looked down a line of cars on the lot and saw just the very tip of the nose of this car. I was curious, so I walked down to it, looked it over and said ‘I’ll take this instead.’” A deal was struck and Sturgis went home with the Jaguar instead of the Rolls.

In person the car is massive, gorgeous, and in showroom condition. It is fantastic. Any memory of all that noise 15 years ago is lost. The styling was so well done in ‘92 that it looks contemporary even today. Only a few styling cues belie the XJ220’s age; the louvered look of the rear end and the parts bin dials in the dash are the only real indicators that this thing didn’t roll off the line last week.

Admittedly, the engine does not hum and growl like a V12, but the metallic industrial roar of the V6 is equally intriguing and visceral. At 84 inches wide, yes, seven feet, the big cat barely squeaks out of Sturgis’ garage. With ground clearance nearly like that of an F1 car, it is prudent to have Jeff back it down the driveway and into the street.

Before letting us loose with his baby, Jeff reviews a number of important facts: This is a race car. It has no power steering. It has no power brakes. It has a 90 lb racing clutch that has no middle range, no feathering. The twin-turbo V6 cranks out 549 horsepower, and those turbos kick in with little warning. I ask if the car is tail happy. Jeff confirms that we should be careful not to have the turbos kicking in “if the front wheels aren’t straight.” I cannot imagine that we’ll be going fast enough on Newtown roads to test this particular trait, but the thought remains.

We promise to bring it back in one piece, and Dave and I head out. At 6’1”, my first impression is “Hey, I fit!” This is good news, as being uncomfortable in my driving position would not bode well in a car with so much power! The big steering wheel assists in slow-speed steering. The brakes require a heavy foot. The clutch is indeed very heavy and it snaps your foot back with every release. It takes some getting used to.

After a few minutes of stop signs, minivans, and other expected interference, we finally see some open road. By now I am comfortable with the clutch, the steering, the brakes. The superbly balanced chassis and the excellent road feel from the suspension inspire confidence. I am settled in. OK let’s see what this thing can do.

WOW! This is without question the angriest snarling beast of a vehicle I have ever had the sheer pleasure to drive. The acceleration is literally breathtaking. Once launched, we cannot possibly stop in time for the rapidly approaching traffic light. Ahh, but those massive brakes dig in and drag the car back down to sanity with aplomb.

Light’s green! WHOOSH off we go again. The car eats up lengths of road faster than anything I’ve driven. Dave and I take turns at the wheel and alternate between backroads, downtown Newtown, and the wider, faster conditions offered by the Newtown bypass. All of it is a joy. We’re both pretty much speechless, amazed laughter suffices.

We do, however, come to the conclusion that this car is really not designed for the overcrowded life of Bucks County. Yes we had more gawkers per mile, both male and female, than we can recall in any other car. But this car belongs on the track, or at least the freeway, preferably at about 4:30 am when you could really see what it can do.

We realize as we are headed back to Sturgis’ house that we haven’t even run the car to half of its potential speed. It boggles the mind.

Jeff agrees that Bucks is no place for the Jaguar and is looking forward to returning to Florida where longer, faster stretches of road abound. Jeff has also spent many hours on the track with this car and assures us that nowhere is better for the XJ220 than a fast road circuit. I can only imagine.

Dave and I would both like to extend our sincere thanks to Jeff Sturgis for his generosity and enthusiasm. It was a day we won’t soon forget, and the bragging rights will last a lifetime. For all its controversy, the Jaguar XJ-220 is one “modern classic” that definitely does not disappoint!

# A TIRE PRESSURE MONITORING SYSTEM



## FOR YOUR CLASSIC CAR OR TRAILER

The United States Department of Transportation (DOT) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has developed a Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard that requires the installation of tire pressure monitoring systems on new cars. Maintaining correct tire pressure saves you fuel, extends the life of your tires, protects against tire wear, and guards against dangerous loss of traction. Keep track of your tires in real time with a tire pressure/temperature monitoring system.



The four or five sensors transmit the tire data to a cockpit display, saving your hands from getting dirty every time you want to check your tire pressures.

**Note:** The remote sensors replace the valve stems in your vehicle's wheels. These systems can only be used on tubeless tires. Proper installation, tire replacement, and wheel balancing should be performed by a professional mechanic. Ragtops & Roadsters can assist with fitting a TPMS to your classic car.

## STORAGE WITH RAGTOPS & ROADSTERS

When it comes to Classic and Antique Automobiles we feel that the best storage is to not store your car. **Drive Your Car** as much as possible to preserve it in top condition and you can enjoy it all year. Whether you believe in Global Warming or not, there's no denying that even during January and February there are weekends with bright sunny skies and beautiful conditions for getting in at least a short ride in your favorite car. And we encourage you to do just that—get out and enjoy your car! It's good for you and your automobile.

However, we also are aware that there are times when it is necessary to put your car up for several months for a variety of reasons. R&R can provide indoor, heated storage for your Classic and Antique cars and motorcycles in Perkasie or Pottstown. Our buildings have security alarm systems, a full fire suppression system and we are fully insured. We would be happy to take care of your special car for any length of time that fits your needs. We can also offer any level of maintenance that you feel is appropriate for the time your car is staying with us. This includes putting it into storage, protecting the car while it rests with us and preparing it when you are ready to put it back into regular service in the spring.

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If you'd like to learn more or visit the facility please contact Dave at 215-257-1202.

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## RAGTOPS & ROADSTERS 15TH ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE MAY 23, 2009 SATURDAY 9AM TO 4PM

