



TFR 5

by David Pratley

I have known your President and Secretary for, dare I say it, nearly 20 years when, as an Englishman and Sprite owner finding himself working temporarily in Chicago, I received an Anderson style welcome after knocking on the door of East Euclid and introducing myself. Currently my wife and myself are living in New Jersey and recently Edie kindly sent us some back copies of your most excellent magazine. Since I still own a Sprite, albeit a rather special one, it seemed appropriate that I return the compliment and provide some photos and copy that members might find of interest.

My particular car is the 1967 Targa Florio coupe that was the fifth in the series built by Warwick for the great Sicilian road race: hence, TFR 5. In

that event it was driven by Andrew Hedges and Clive Baker, and was retired when Baker hit a spectator who was playing chicken and lost - fortunately not terminally! The car was then raced internationally in Europe later that year with several successes. Over the winter it was re-engined to the latest in cross flow head and Lucas fuel injection, and shipped out to Sebring to do battle for 1300 ccs prototype class honours in the 12 Hours of 1968. With Baker again and Mike Garton driving it carried the day in spite of a bit of bother with water in the fuel at one stage. After the race Healey's sold the car to Jim Baker of Atlanta and it was again raced with success in Florida in 1969.

TFR 5 then found its way up the East Coast to Massachusetts at some stage during the next few years and got itself converted into long distance racer for SCCA events. It was little used as such and it was in this form

that I came into its life in 1979 after seeing an ad in the New York *Sunday Times*. I bought it from someone in New Hampshire who was thinking about turning it into a road car. You will note the blue/white U.S. racing colors on the car in the before photo which was taken as it arrived in "old" Hampshire in the U.K. Fortunately, although chassis and aluminum bodywork had been knocked around a bit over the years, the original XSP dry sump engine and 5 speed gearbox were still intact and in reasonable condition.

Restoration was undertaken by a well-known race preparation specialist in England, and took over a year and many, many pound notes! We decided to restore it to original Sebring specification and I trust the photos do justice to the finished job. If anyone has a copy of 'More Healeys; Frogeyes, Sprites etc.' there are a number of photos in there of the car in both Targa and Sebring



guises for comparison. I raced the car gently in vintage events in England in 1981 and managed a few extra class wins to add to TFR 5's history. Interestingly enough, that year was the first time the car had been seen in public in the land of its construction. During the next season, TFR 5 was also reunited with a delighted Clive Baker at one vintage meeting, when Clive showed up as helper with a fellow (non-Healey) competitor.

To bring the story up to day; as I said we again find ourselves in the U.S. Alas, vintage racing here in the North East is confined to cars older than 1960 so TFR 5 has had to stay at home in the garage. In fact the garage is rather grand as the car is on loan to the Midland Motor Museum at Bridgnorth, Shropshire for display. Anyone going to England on vacation might contemplate a visit to this delightful Museum west of Birmingham on the A 458 Bridgnorth/Stourbridge road - after all, it's not that far from where TFR 5 was built at Warwick 17 years ago.!

