



Mr. K with the 1968 Pacesetter Datsun 1600 Roadster (Jerry Mason's original BRE Z car in the background)

There is one thing that all racers and racecar builders have in common. It is a true unbridled love and passion for cars. It could be the design, the fabrication, the restoration. It could be the handling, the driving, the racing. Or maybe it's just the history, the events and the people that surround the industry.

Meet Barry Brown. A person who's life revolves around the very thought of motorsports. Living and breathing cars, taking every opportunity to share his experience and to help nurture anyone else who feels the same way he does. As a personal friend of the Datsun community (he builds cars with Brock Yates, Mr. K loves his Datsun 1600 Roadster AND he's a personal idol of both Jim and Craig Maw), I had definitely heard stories of the "infamous Barry Brown". But it was nothing in comparison to what I learnt about him the night I was lucky enough to catch him at home for a TrackSide Interview. The following are only highlights...

Barry has a long history of building and working on cars. His passions lie in the restoration of vintage race cars – replicating the beauty of when they were originally raced. Historic significance, true-to-form and mint condition are common words that feed his personal visions. Barry joined Riter Vintage Automotive Specialists, based in East Rochester, New York back in 1988 and has dedicated his efforts to his vision ever since. He began as a manager and after gathering a significant number of dedicated clients, quickly moved to partner and soon to full owner. Now, Barry Brown's Riter's specializes in vintage restoration, motorsports, car customizations, appraisals and hot rods.

Barry's work on cars instantly stands out. At an Eastman House car show, Barry was introduced to Brock Yates. Barry was complimenting Brock on his beautiful car and his reply was that there was one other car that he thought deserved higher accolades. Brock then pointed out an astonishing red Ferrari Testarosa – a car that proudly displayed Barry's handiwork! A fast friendship was formed and was the beginning of many projects to come.

Barry was introduced to another soon-to-be big fan – Mr. K – at the Z Convention in York Pennsylvania. Originally planning on showing his 1978 280z, plans were changed to Barry's Datsun 1600 Roadster when the Z car was seriously damaged two weeks before the show. During the show Mr. K spotted the beautiful roadster – the deck of that car now carries a sealed signature from the master himself!



The 1978 280z that was unfortunately destroyed only weeks before the Z Convention in York Pennsylvania

by Diane Dale



Allan Robbins' 1972 Bob Sharpe 240z – the first Z that Barry restored

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1956 Duffy Livingstone Eliminator Special, Class Winner at Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance

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Another good friend of Barry's is Dr. Allan Robbins (you might remember Allan mentioned as a participant at SVRA's Zippo Grand Prix in a past Zedline issue – check out his beautiful collection of Datsun cars at <http://zhome.com/History/sharp.htm>). Barry helped restore Allan's 1972 Bob Sharp 240z (the one Sam Posey and Paul Newman raced) and it made its secondary racing debut at Lime Rock in 1992. Other racecars that Barry helped Allan with included a



Ford Eliminator Special, Class Winner at Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance vintage Datsun 510 that was found with a fibreglass front end – which isn't legal to race in any vintage series. After meticulously hand fabricating and moulding a new front end out of steel, SVRA still didn't want to consider the car eligible - how on earth could someone restore the front end so perfectly? It couldn't be real. A detailed inspection proved that in fact it was – all due to Barry's fantastic restoration – and so began that 510's racing re-debut.

Barry's restoration projects have won awards at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance and have been on display across the country. His motorsports projects have won multiple class trophies with SVRA and vintage racing in the United States. He even managed wins at the 2003 Grassroots Motorsports challenge with a supped up V-8 Ford Ranger. At Pebble Beach, Brock Yates won the Hot Rod Road Racing class with his 1956 Duffy Livingstone Eliminator Special. Barry spent hours getting this car back to "period correct as raced" condition, including correct aircraft fasteners, gauges, hoses, hose clamps, tires, wires, brake lines and more. At Amelia Island, Brock (with Barry's assembly and fabrication) entered and won with a more modern "second generation" Eliminator - the Eliminator Special – originally a 1934 Ford Roadster frame with a 1997 Viper V10 engine! And there were more projects... a 1979 Datsun ZX GTU Car with Jeff Beckenbach and Bob Leitzinger, a 1967 Datsun Roadster 1600 with Jim Fitzgerald. And too many more to list.

But Barry is not just a builder – he's a racer as well. In 1990, Barry and his long time friend Sam Turner decided that it was time to race cars. They become racing partners and hunted for the perfect car. They found a beauty in the rough – a local racer's 1968 Pacesetter Datsun 1600 Roadster – fixed it up and started the fun. Autocrosses, lapping days, significantly more track time and eventually SCCA racing schools to get their licenses. Next up was Lime Rock, Nelson Ledges, Poconos, Watkins Glen, New Hampshire... and more! Barry is also not afraid to step in and lend a hand. He's crewed with quite a few teams including Brock Yates, Jeff Benson, Dr. Allan Robbins



The 1979 Bob Leitzinger 280z – more of Barry's incredible work

category but was a pleasure to drive. His personal advice to Z car owners is to follow your passion. Because the street value of a Z car isn't that high (i.e. you're not likely going to restore a Z and get a million bucks for it), you should have fun with it – personalize it and do the modifications that make you happy. Improve that suspension, hop up the carbs, and put on those shiny rims – do it up right. Or keep it in its glorified original condition – whatever pleases you more.

Where will we see Barry next season? Touring with his soon-to-be restored Datsun 510 (to the Mopars of Carlisle show, the Syracuse Nationals, the Grassroots Motorsports \$2005 Challenge, the National Z Convention), touring with Brock Yates and just about anywhere else that you'll see his customers' cars.

I asked Barry what his wish list was for the future. He calmly remarked to just continue what he's doing now. He told me that he felt so fortunate to be involved in so many projects with so many

beautiful cars. Barry may consider himself lucky, but if you ask me – we're the lucky ones, honoured by his commitment and dedication to restoring and racing vintage cars.

Barry Brown can be found at:

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(585) 385-4151

More information on Barry Brown and his projects can be found at:

www.ameliainlandconcours.org
www.theconcours.com/s.htm
www.streetrodnerweb.com/rodtests/0402sr_yates/
www.onelapofamerica.com/WhatsNew/WhatsNew0068.htm
www.caranddriver.com/article.asp?section_id=4&article_id=7374



Jim Fitzgerald's 1968 Datsun 1600 Roadster – Barry's current racecar

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