



SHIFT

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CLASSIC

RESTOMOD RED BARON MERCEDES BENZ 280E W123



The first time I came across a 280E was at the age of six. My eldest cousin was getting married, and as a student of architecture, he felt a strong inclination towards beautifully designed objects. His wedding would need a garnish that conveyed his passion, and one of his friends who shared similar interests, graciously lent him his bright red 280E, very similar to the one you see here.

Having drooled over a 280E at such a young age, the Three Pointed Star always had a special place in my heart. Zaem Aziz might have felt something similar, going by the attention to detail with which his Merc has been restored to former glory.

The Benz takes on an approach that is very familiar thanks to the internet and people vaguely interested in European car culture will find a comforting connection to the machine, although it's not a very familiar sight when seen without a digital medium in between. When you see it in front of you, its finishing that is so surprising, because all you can think about is the incredible level of craftsmanship that went into the restoration of this Benz. The paint is glassy smooth, the panel gap non-existent, the body returned to a state in which it left the factory. The front end has the classic Mercedes look - an imposing fascia composed of massively wide headlamps and a crate grille with impeccable chrome contrasting brilliantly with the bright red paint. The overall fit and finish is a clear example of how much Bangladesh has progressed since the days of wavy body panel fixes and orange peel paint - the bodywork done by Motorwerks, so not really surprising.

The stance comes about thanks to genuine H&R lowering springs mounted on genuine

Bilstein shocks, leading to an astonishing 40mm drop and copious amounts of negative camber front and rear. The cambered wheels themselves are a joy to behold: original BBS wheels, 8.5j at the front and an eye-popping 10j at the rear, which when combined with the suspension package, makes for a squat and mean stanced classic Merc. All the major suspension components (and the brakes) have been replaced by newly minted original parts, all shipped in from Germany.

The interior has redone carpeting and was largely unblemished even before the restoration began, so the main focus in Zaem Aziz's plan for the car was outside and in terms of performance. The thin dash is very 80's with a lavish helping of "Zabrano wood", but has a distinct look that does not make it look as aged as it actually is. The instrument cluster features three huge dials, with a centered speedometer, RPM on the left and a massive clock on the right. The placement of the clock on the instrument binnacle is a theme that Mercedes follows to this day. The seats are comfy and you don't much sit on them, you disappear into them, aged foam and black leather welcoming your journey ahead. You sit very low, and the view out the front is dominated by the three-pointed-star at the end of the infinitely-long-but-not-really hood.

Under the hood is a stock 2JZGE, graciously donated by a Toyota. The 3.0 litre inline six may attract haters concerned with originality, but it makes a whole lot of sense going for it because it has the torque to provide the thrills and the reliability to keep running for years on end. The inline six is mated to a Toyota auto transmission, and the factory Mercedes gear shifter is retained so that the near-sacrilegious

(to purists) internals of this magnificent Benz is not given away at first glance.

You expect it to be slow because of the Toyota engine and the slushbox driving it? Hah. Empty stretch of road, pedal to the floor, the Benz is turned feral. Not an STI-Evo X kind of feral, no. To get the idea of what it feels like to be doing 160 km/h in what appears to be a clean and well-maintained but positively ancient Benz, think of a bulldog with a British accent, a top hat and an impeccable Saville Row suit. It looks all smart and classy and toned down, but when push comes to shove, British accent gives way to mad growls and spit flying. The front end of the Benz rises as the rear end squats, the raucous custom exhaust burbles, and the speedometer needle makes jumps it was never designed to make. Its all contained drama that puts a smile on your face.

And that's with "just" a 2-JZGE (with "just" 220HP and 215 lb-ft of torque). Zaem tells us he's looking into bringing in a E55 AMG supercharged 5.4 litre V8 (with 469 HP and 531 lb-ft torque) from the UK, so he can swap in a "proper" Merc engine into his restomodded beauty. While the effort that has been put into replacing every seal, every rubber channel and every malfunctioning part with original parts might be lost on the so called "purists", the car is not lost in a crowd at all. The careful selection of tasteful parts and careful application of the mods have given this 280E a fresh lease on life, and haters be damned.

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AUTO NEWS

Hairdresser chic: Range Rover Evoque Convertible

In 2012 Land Rover revealed a working concept of a Range Rover Evoque convertible at the New York International Auto Show. Time was the only determinant whether the model would actually make it to the production line. Earlier in November 2015, Land Rover has finally confirmed the world's first premium compact SUV convertible will go on sale in 2016 by releasing a unique underground testing film. The launch of this convertible is another twist to the already dramatic Evoque story- a complete different take on the spirit of freedom and adventure.

The 2016 Range Rover Evoque Convertible will be offered only in higher Dynamic and Dynamic HSE trim levels, powered by either the new 178bhp 2.0-litre TD4 Ingenium diesel or the 237bhp turbocharged 2.0-litre Si4 petrol engine. A nine-speed automatic transmission will be standard, and the fabric soft top will deploy in 18 seconds at speeds of up to 30 mph. The \$50,475 vehicle comes standard with all-wheel drive and seats four adults, with a convenient pass-through tunnel from the interior to the rear trunk. Despite the reinforced monocoque chassis, it also has a rollover protection system that will release two aluminum bars across the top of the car if it flips.



MAHBUB HUSSAIN



Iconic Ford turned into Icon Bronco.

The idea of restomodding gives old car owners an essence of rejuvenated vigor. Because restoring to original is either mainstream or arduous, many resort to Frankenstein-ing their rides. But they're butt ugly and we at Shift have got nothing to do with that. Conversely though, some old cars are meant to be taken to heights surpassing their glorified past. It gets better- they are also for sale.

Icon Bronco - Handmade in a large factory at Los Angeles, Icon is perhaps the best SUV makers in the planet. They take any vintage SUVs, be it a Ford Bronco or an old Toyota FJ or CJ Jeep and turn them into retro modern units of expensive off-roading machines. Founder and Lead Designer of Icon, Jonathan Ward's intention is to reengineer hi tech chassis and timeless aesthetic together to create unique daily drivers. Stupid,

strong and simple- that's what he wants his reworked Ford Bronco's to be like. The retro beast has a 4.6 litre quad cam crate motor with a rebuilt automatic, 4WD system off Dana transfer case and Cragar steels with off-roading tires. Icon Bronco's unique exterior coat comes from remade aluminum trimmings, matte metallic grey all over wraps and its devilishly overexposed glossy black all new mandrel bent chassis frame. Off-roading in style.

Singer 911 - No, not all Porsches are the same. Take a look at Singer 911. Singer Vehicle Design at California takes 1990-1994 Porsche 911 964 models be it targa or coupe and goes on a re-imagination spree. Once a customer takes his 964 to SVD, a multitude of options are laid on the table for some serious decisions to be made- as that's what creates these bespoke 911s. Customers probably drive themselves off the wall deciding from a choice of three motors and two transmissions, a variety of exterior and interior customization, exhaust, suspension, body rigidity mechanism, body panels, trims and accessories. This particular Singer 911's shell is a full carbon fiber unit with wasabi green exterior and an Ed Pink Racing 4.0 litre near 400 HP flat six engine. With a 6 speed LSD transmission and Ohlins sourced all over dampers, drivability and handling is pristine. The Helen of Troy level of intricately detailed interior is all leather stitched- not only the buckets but also the safety roll cage.

RESTOMOD CARS YOU CAN BUY

MAHBUB HUSSAIN



There's a reason they are near to \$350,000 each.

Eagle Speedster/Low Drag GT - The British company that has a reputation of taking prehistoric beautiful Jaguars and not only making them look even more beautiful, but also a lot more oomph- Eagle. Jeremy Clarkson of Top Gear reviewed both the soft top Speedster and hardtop Low Drag GT, which are reincarnations of 1960s E type Jaguars. These timeless machines are hand built to exact Jaguar spec body details, but with a 4.7 litre twin cam fuel injected straight six engine and a 5 speed Manual transmission producing 345 HP and 170 MPH top speed, which is way faster than the old E type. The impeccable attention to detail is bewildering- for instance, the wheels look like they came off discount stores but they're actually hand built magnesium units to reflect the antique element of E types. All that is certainly pricey- 840,000 GBP.

CORRIGENDUM

On the special supplement of Shift titled "Zero Mileage", printed on 29th November 2015, the Mercedes Benz C200 horsepower rating should be 184 HP. On the same issue, the image used for the Mercedes Benz GLC300 is of the 2014 model and not the current, 2015 model. Also, Dewan Sajid Afzal is the General Manager of Executive Motors Ltd, and not the Managing Director.

