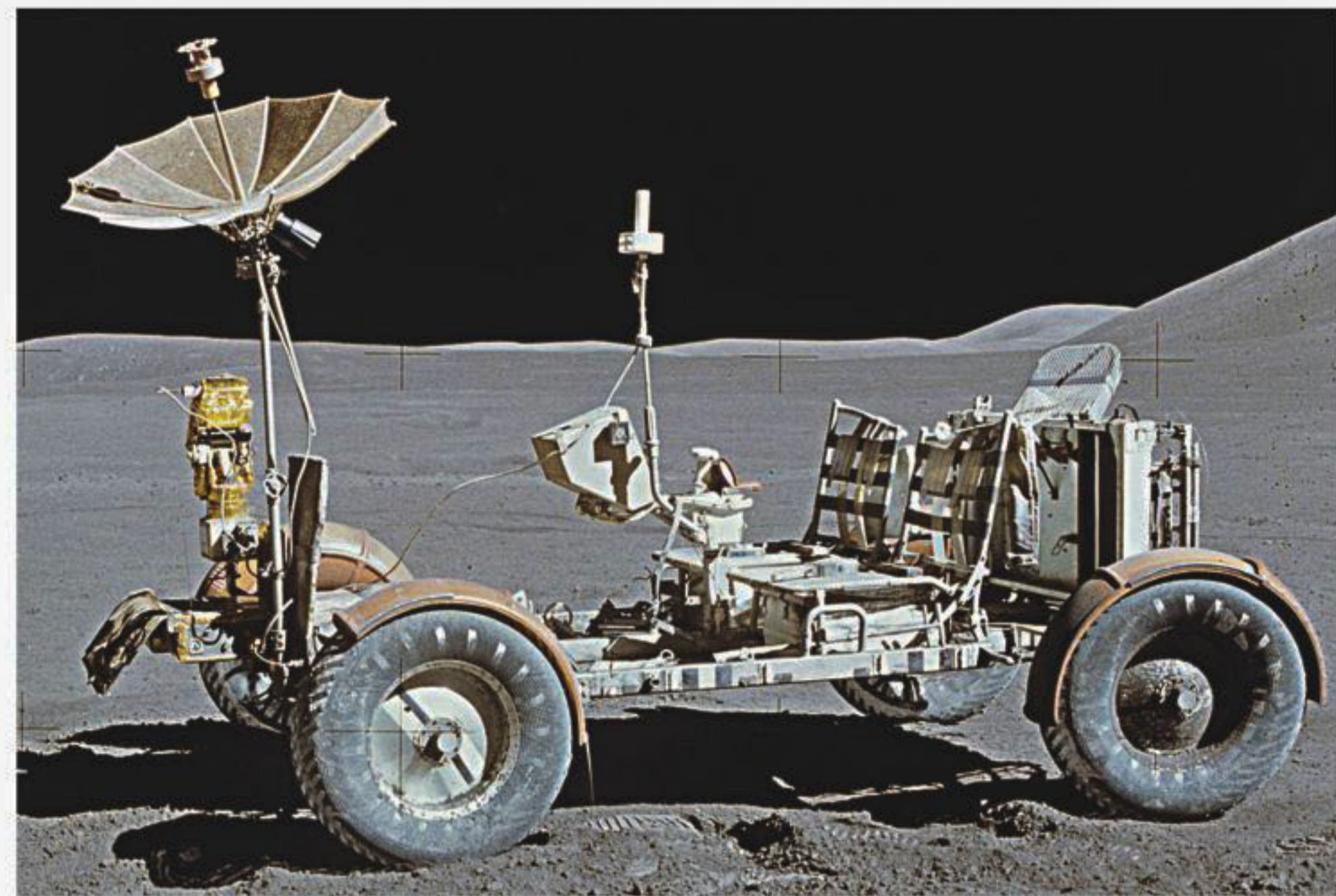


When automakers are bored of building cars, they build...

Porsche makes sunglasses, Ferrari will sell you cologne and Mercedes Benz has a line of furniture. When it comes to odd things to make as a car manufacturer though, one needs to move out of vague merchandising and marketing gimmicks to really strike gold. Here's what we found.



The Lunar Rover by GM

You know what they say—it's easier for a company to stay afloat in space instead of in financially troubled economies. Actually, no one says that, but for American giant General Motors, it's quite apt. GM was brought in to design the chassis and suspension of the Lunar Rover that accompanied the NASA Apollo missions that landed Neil Armstrong on the moon. Why they went with GM is everyone's question, since they made some of the worst cars on the planet at the time and almost went under several times since.



The M1 Abrams tank by Chrysler

Win on Sunday, sell on Monday. No one specified whether it's winning at the track or in battlefields of far off foreign lands, fighting for whatever reason the government cooked up. Chrysler took that to heart it seems—since they were hopeless at making actual race cars that did little more than turn left, they took to winning the battlefield with one of the most formidable main battle tanks to have ever roamed the Earth. Military strategists still call the Cold War era, turbine powered M1 Abrams a formidable foe.

The Winter Olympics bobsled by BMW
BMW has built motorbikes, bicycles, luxury cars, city cars and sports cars. What no one expects them to do is design and build a high-performance bobsled for an Olympic team. Capable of a staggering 90 MPH without the assistance of wheels, a BMW designed bobsled took the US team to victory in the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. Sadly there's not enough room (or the need) for a complicated i-Drive system.



The Tri-Motor airplane by Ford

While automakers like Honda and Mitsubishi frequently design airplanes, for Ford it was a single model affair that looked equally clunky and cool thanks to the trio of propeller engines that gave this early airplane its name. 199 were built between 1926 and 1933 because Henry Ford saw a market for air travel, which was quite the luxury at the time—early Tri-Motors carried only 2 crew members and 8 passengers. The aluminium bodywork earned it the nickname "Tin Goose".

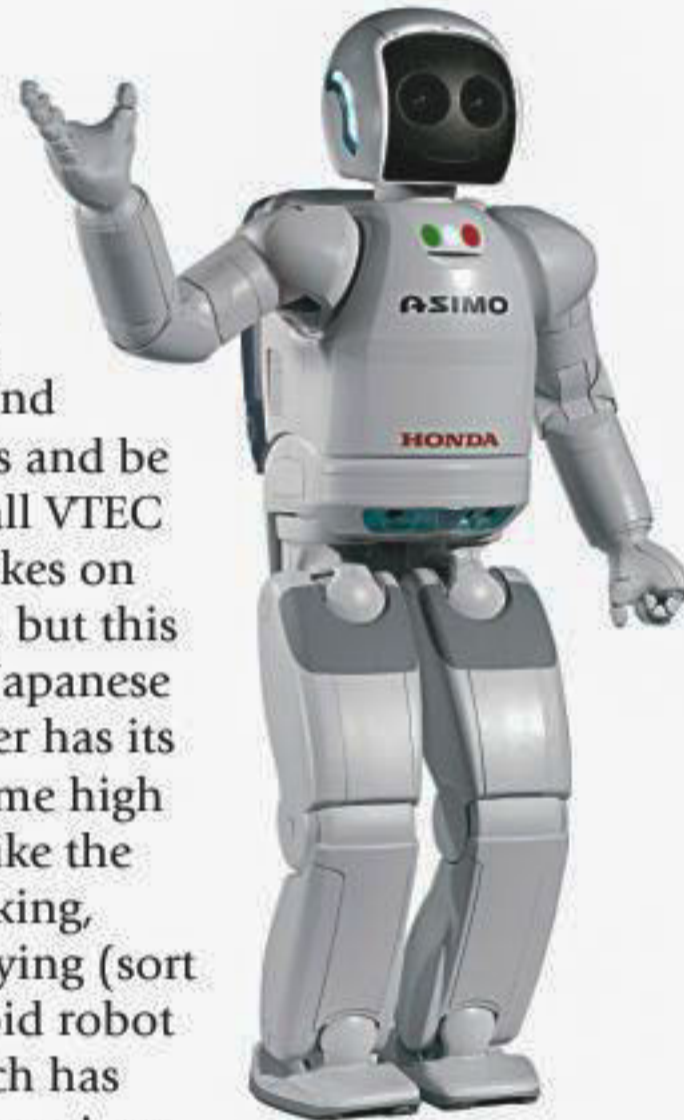


The bullet trains by Hyundai

Hyundai has had a rail transport division right from the beginning, and has played a significant role in South Korea's excellent public transport system since 1977. They've since moved on to hyper-fast bullet trains and are supplying them to other countries, ranging from Turkey to Canada. Next time you're at the wheel of your Elantra, know that this company makes hyper-fast bullet trains as well. Although it might not be evident.

The Asimo robot by Honda

Honda might build generators and lawnmowers and be the butt of all VTEC and Civic jokes on the internet, but this pioneering Japanese manufacturer has its hands in some high tech stuff. Like the walking, talking, football-playing (sort of) humanoid robot Asimo, which has undergone continuous development for nearly a decade. What purpose does it serve other than a flexing of tech muscles? Nearly none.



The ships by Mitsubishi

You might think the agile, AWD rally rocket that is the Lancer Evolution would be Mitsubishi's hottest selling product, but you'd be wrong. Because who wants to slide around in dirt and mud when you can cross great swathes of ocean carrying everything from people to oil to containers? Mitsubishi's shipyards have made everything from luxury cruise liners to rough and tough transport ships, and they make way more money.



The ketchup and sausage...by Volkswagen?!

Okay this is just plain weird and not worthy of elaboration, other than...Oktoberfest?

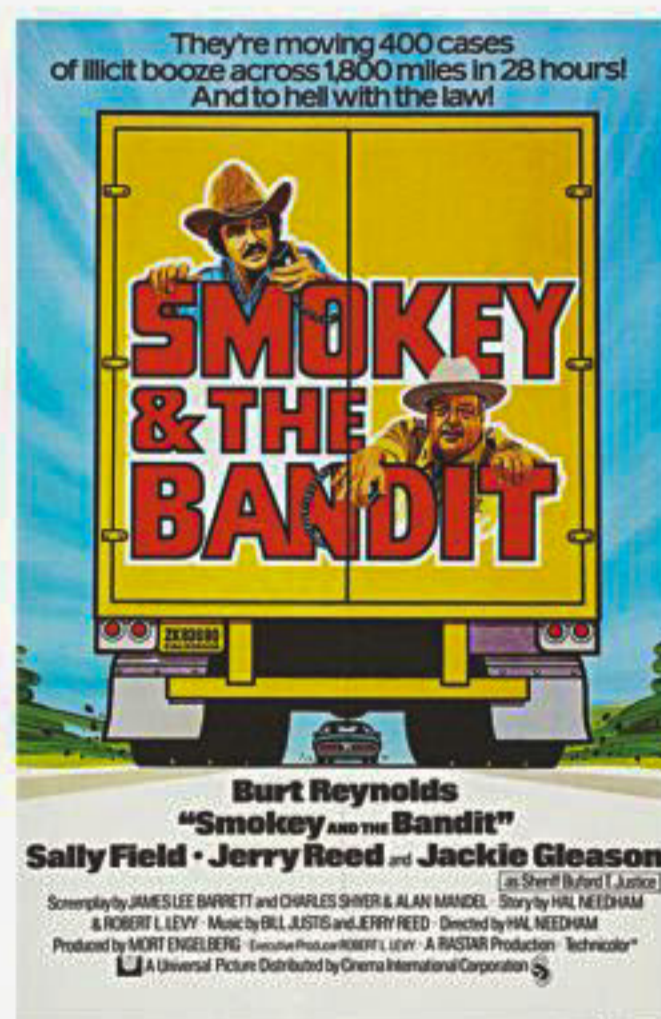


WORDS: SHAER REAZ



The boats by Toyota

They say you can find parts for a Toyota literally everywhere. With Toyota's Marine products you can test that theory to the extremes. Nothing beats trying to find a spare head gasket in the now dead Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Australia. If you're concerned about the dying reefs, fret no more—Toyota makes hybrid boats. Priuseas, we call them (and not entirely meant to offend their owners).



Long live the Bandit

The height of American road-trip films in the 70s saw such cult classics as *Vanishing Point*, *Two-Lane Blacktop* and *Gone in 60 Seconds*, but towards the close of this great decade of mediocre plots balanced with over the top action comedy, a certain mustachioed man took Hollywood by storm with a story composed of daring chases and cheesy one-liners. Burt Reynolds as Bandit in *Smokey and the Bandit* made the Pontiac Firebird a cult classic and a household name, long before *The Fast and the Furious* franchise made its billions.

like *Gator*, *The Cannonball Run* and the TV show *Hawk*, his role as Bandit and his run-ins with the law (in the form of the brilliantly named Sheriff, Buford T Justice) are forever cemented in the hearts and minds of gearheads, especially for the wild stunts and lairy chases in the iconic gold-and-black Pontiac. Burt Reynolds' influence on more recent action film heroes is unmistakable—while only the original can rock the Burt-'stache, there are unmistakable traces of him left in the likes of Bruce Willis, Jason Statham and Vin Diesel.

For his role as Bandit and his involvement in other car-chase filled action films, Burt Reynolds takes his place in the list of actors who are revered equally by Americana geeks, cult classic B-movie lovers, as well as automotive enthusiasts. Rest in peace, Burt—but long live the Bandit.

COLLECTIBLES Scale Bandits



Some cars start off famous for handling, looks or for catching on fire without any reason. Others go on to star in movies and become legends. The Pontiac Firebird Trans Am did it several times. Once as *Knight Rider* and before that, as Burt Reynolds' trusty sidekick in *Smokey and the Bandit*.

Our tribute this week features the Bandits in every scale. Starting small, you get multiple versions from Greenlight in 1:64 scale. Greenlight recently re-released both 77 and 80 cars in 1:64 scale. Great paintjob, decals and engine detail for such a tiny thing. There is, however, one glaring issue. None of them have the correct snowflake wheels or the short lived turbine style. Even Hot Wheels released a version with real riders but the proportions are off and the wheels are completely wrong. Prices range from taka 700-1200.

Going for a larger scale, Greenlight offers a better detailed 1:24 (costing Taka 2.5-3.2k) and 1:18 scale cars. The 1:18 is from their Artisan collection and features properly hinged doors and a well detailed carpeted interior. Prices go all the way up to Taka 7k.

WORDS & PHOTOS: E. R. RONNY

AUTO NEWS

Audi's "World Luxury Car 2018" coming to Bangladesh

Audi's flagship luxury sedan, the A8, was declared to be the "World Luxury Car" of 2018 at the New York Auto Show on March 28, 2018, and is to be available in Bangladesh from December 2018. The A8 will be launched in Bangladesh by and sold through the local Audi dealership, Progress Motors Imports Limited.

Progress, authorised representative of the Audi brand in Bangladesh, has not given out any details on pricing and trim levels of the A8, but one thing is for sure—the A8 is at the very top of the

luxury automotive chain, with the flagship setting new standards for emotional appeal, passenger comfort and safety, as well as driving performance. The fourth generation A8 features innovations such as the HD Matrix LED front lights, 10.1/8.6 inch infotainment system, improved passive and active safety, as well as one of the most advanced automated driving tech seen in production so far. Parking pilot, garage pilot and traffic jam pilot are expected to make an appearance on the latest A8, although only in certain markets.

