

PROJECT CARS



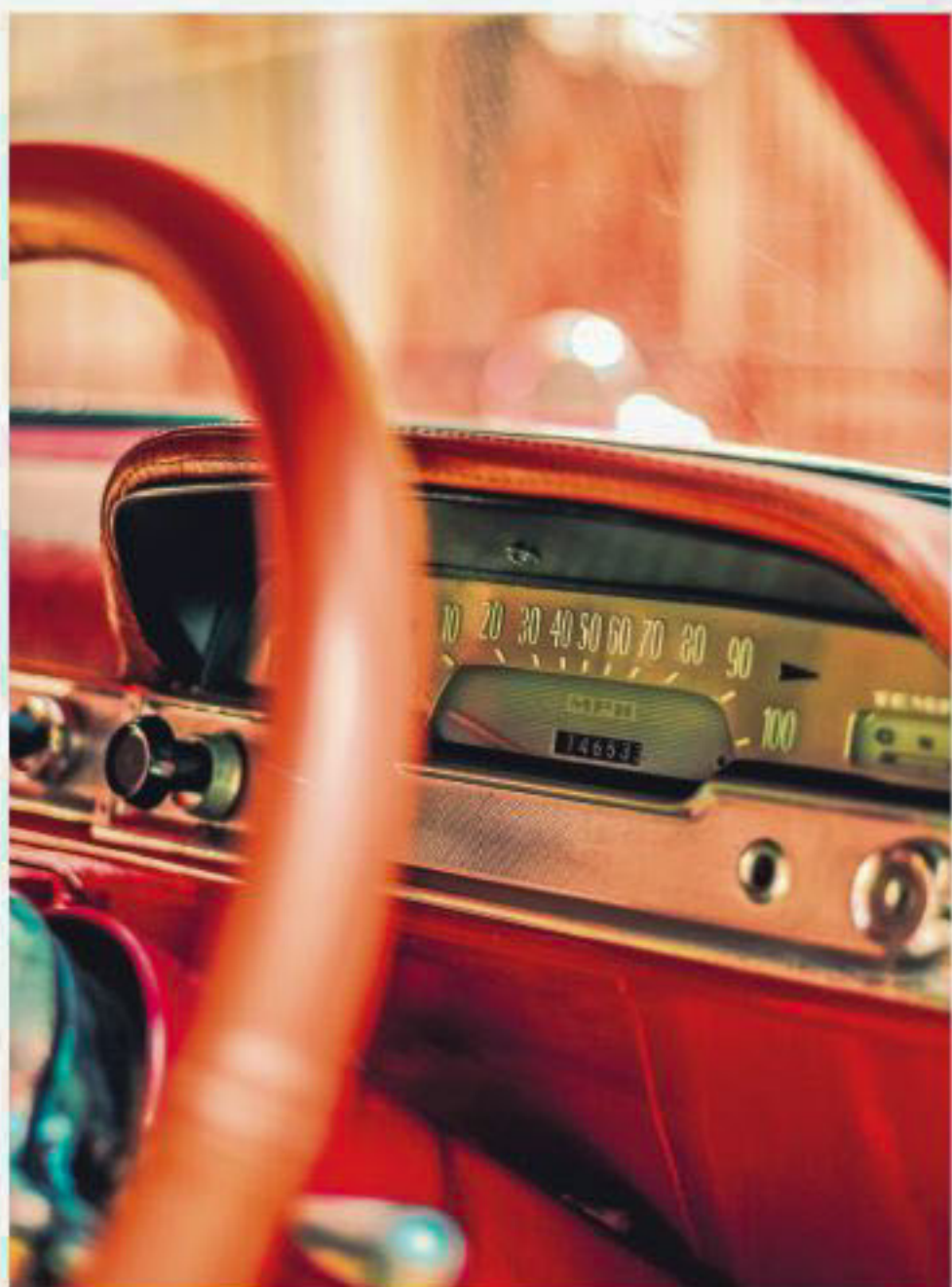
The art of restomod

1959 Ford Zephyr Mark II

The Ford Zephyr was a British Ford product that spanned the onward and upward decade of the global auto industry in-between 1950 and 1972. For three generations, the Zephyr and its variants blended European packaging and efficiency with distinctly American design into a car that was lapped up by executives and company managers all across Britain. For its size, comfort and six-cylinder efficiency, the Zephyr and its luxury variants, the Zodiac and Executive, were often the choice of cars for diplomats on foreign missions—embassies, consulates and field offices in far off countries often got a handful of Zephyrs in service.

The Zephyr Mark II you see this week was bought from Old Dhaka in a neglected but running condition by E.M. Faruq—a name that will be familiar with anyone interested in classic cars. Over the past six-seven decades, Mr. Faruq has positioned himself as the preeminent collector of classic cars, with cars from the early 20th century all the way through to recent history. With no descendants to pass off his extensive collection to, Mr. Faruq has slowly begun offloading a select few items to worthy owners to restore and drive. That's where Abrar Musa comes in.

"I love driving. When I work on a car I want to make sure I can enjoy it, drive it everywhere. I've never wanted a garage queen, and that factored into the restoration of the



Zephyr," says Abrar.

While it may seem odd to pair the words 'daily-driven' with 'vintage car', it's not unheard of elsewhere—with brands like Singer, Icon and Guntherwerks essentially crafting new cars from the bodies of older vehicles, restomodding is a dream come true for people like Abrar. That's essentially what this '59 Zephyr is—a prime example of



what restomodding can accomplish, even in Dhaka's relatively in-hospitable environment. Under the hood is a second gen 1JZGE six-cylinder motor lifted from a Toyota. While the displacement of the 2.5 litre straight six VVTi 1JZ may match the original Ford motor, the power figures are vastly improved (197 HP and 185 lb-ft torque, as opposed to the 86 HP of the original), as is top-shelf Toyota



reliability. It stops better too, thanks to modern disc brakes up front, hiding behind the mirror finish hubcaps sourced from Ebay. "The biggest challenge was the rubber seals for the windows and trim. The odd shapes and super tight spacing meant that it was either find original rubbers, or modify rubber mouldings which are locally available. We tried the latter and failed miserably. So I had

to source original rubbers from the UK," says Abrar.

The Zephyr is smooth and quiet. Sitting on original suspension, cold air blasting from the neatly integrated air-conditioning unit, obscure underground hip-hop ("Blessed" by Third World Don—give it a whirl) streaming in from the Pioneer speaker/Nakamichi subwoofer combo; you get the sense that this car was built to the needs of the owner, naysayers be damned. The soft brown leather seats sink in beneath occupants, while the brown suede headliner and plush maroon carpets combine to create an environment that relaxes and pampers, even while the rest of the world outside do double-triple-quadruple takes when passing by the two tone vintage.

Abrar Musa's Zephyr may not be original. It may not be restored to concourse winning status. But it stands out, and embodies everything that is cool and hip about classic cars, minus the major inconveniences even when driven daily. Abrar's other cars (an FJ Landcruiser and a Benz G-wagen, plus an American pony car) have a bright future ahead—this Zephyr is just proof.

For more photos check out our online edition at: www.thedailystar.net/shift

WORDS: SHAER REAZ
PHOTOS: AHBAAR MD. & SHADMAN SAMEE



Automophiles Bangladesh Meet

This meet was arranged by Automophiles Bangladesh, which was formed by Senett Rahman, Mushfique Elahi, Samir Sakir, Al Shahrar Rahat, Merajur Rahman Noyon, Xavier Gomez, Zaif Arian, Sahil Kabir, Ahnaf Nur, Abid hoq and Fardin Rithvik.

The crew worked hard for their debut meet and it paid off, with a wide variety of cars showing up including a tasty selection of Toyota Celicas, Mark IIs and one slidey KE70 Trueno.



From sport compact to compact utility

The Ford Puma is back! And...it's a Compact Utility Vehicle, or a CUV. But why? Wasn't it a slightly under-appreciated, technically capable and aesthetically pleasing sport compact from Ford Europe just a few years ago? The ones you'd see pasted across the covers of British tuning magazines like Max Power and Fast Car, wearing garish body kits and iridescent paint?

The original Puma might have attracted the young and tasteless, but it was a high point for Ford of Europe at a time when little else aside from the Focus and Mondeo was going right. It cemented Ford's youthful image for the 00s, and helped boost sales even when the recession hit. Now, they've thrown that away chasing some silly idea that SUVs and CUVs are the thing to be building.

They're not alone. We're constantly hearing

how SUVs are sure to boost sales and that's what works in the market now. Mitsubishi thinks so too, with their entire range of sedans axed in favour of small hatchbacks, slightly larger CUVs and mid-size SUVs. They even revived the Eclipse nameplate for the mid-size EclipseCross, which we tested and, surprisingly, loved. Apart from the badge, which we still associate with Paul Walker's bright green Eclipse GSX from The Fast and the Furious.

Millennials and Gen-Z'ers are quickly becoming a force to be reckoned with. Gone are the selfish and impractical ways of what previous generations thought was cool—if you want to be cool now, you need to be able to pack your friends and your luggage and gluten free groceries into a feasible space and have the option of (but never avail) the ability to experience the great

outdoors. Unfortunately, two doors, big wings and flared arches tick none of those boxes. SUVs do, but they're too bulky and too expensive. CUVs, with their small engines (the Puma is powered by a 1.0 litre Ecoboost putting out 152 HP) and the occasional hybrid powertrain (Puma has that too) are easier on the wallet while providing largely the same benefits of bigger cars. It makes sense, and market analysts show that to be the case, with cold hard numbers pointing to rising demand for cars like the Puma and the EclipseCross.

We just wish they'd stop dragging up mildly iconic names from the past into the present. How much does it cost to register a new badge anyway? Umm, don't answer that.

WORDS & IMAGE: SHAER REAZ

When did these become these?!



1997 Ford Puma

2006 Mitsubishi Eclipse



2019 Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross

2020 Ford Puma