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Carl: – So why do you keep an oversized amcar in Central London? Isn't it like bringing a horse to a stiff upper lip dinner party?
Burnt blonde: – The English are eccentrics at heart and like things a bit different. Try bringing a horse to a Swedish dinner party, it's not always a success.

Vanessa Fristedt is Pippi Longstocking (Pippi Långstrump), the only difference is that she is into cars instead of horses. She is also a graphic designer and artist living in London for the past 10 years. Even the police showed up when she did a burnout for Carl's Cars in the heart of East London. By the way; her other car is a '71 Mustang Cobrajet 228.
 – My Swedish parents bought the Oldsmobile new in Stockholm in 1976. One of the last, American muscle cars. I don't think they looked for exactly that car, but when they saw it they fell for it. I remember when we went to look at it in the showrooms. I was about eight years old, and next to the 442, was a bright red Pontiac with an «eagle» on the bonnet. And I wanted that one. Thank God my parents didn't listen to me that time. They definitely choose the right one. Later, for my «student» celebration, they gave it to me. A most fantastic present. Since then I just can't stay away from him. It's interesting how a material thing such as a car can bring you nostalgia and good memories wherever you are in the world.
 – Do you have any fun with this car, except from London's red lights and parking problems?
 – A boring, non-smoking train doesn't seem to take me out of London in the same way at all. Car meetings are excellent fun. There are a few outside London. But the absolute best ones are in Sweden: The yearly Västerås Powermeeting in beginning of July is the biggest in Europe. Anyone who enjoys an amcar simply must go there. If you do, you'll be hooked and you'll be back every year. Last year, there were over 15 000 cars, American beauties only. It's sort of surreal to see a normal Swedish town turn into a big loving car party. I don't usually like big social events, but this one is special. I usually go there with my great friend Wanda. The first thing we do at arrival is to hook up with our friends Stuart & Milton from London who owns Dreamcars, an American car firm whom import, export and restore. Their main customers are Swedes. We sit on top of the back seats and cruise with them for a while in their green 50's Cadillac. People swap and sell and cruise along the streets until late at night. Of course people drink loads, except the drivers, sit on the car roofs, bonnets etc. But there's never any fighting. The people have such an intense love for the cars that they can't be angry with each other.
 Another great meeting I enjoy is in Stockholm in August every year. It's Stockholm Midnight Cruising. A certain central part of Stockholm closes down and only amcars are driving around and doing burnouts when the police are out of sight. It's such a buzz and

the streets are crowded with people who want to help holding up the arse of your car. Smoke in the air, smell of burnt rubber, and great V8 sound everywhere.
 – How do Swedes react to the Olds compared to the British?
 – In Sweden the normal Svensson see this sort of car as a «raggar-bil» and me as a «raggare.» They think you are some sort of vandal like the bad boys from Hell's Angels. Someone who will rape, fuck, burp, drink and drive you over, but thank god, there are some few people in Sweden with a big interest and understanding for these beauties.
 In London, it's amazing. People of all ages come up to me and say: What a lovely car! Oaow! Is it from America? The Olds puts a smile on people's faces in the streets. A snobish looking couple in their 80's in Sloane Square came up to me and said: «What a wonderful car. What is it if I may ask? I like the design and the shape very much.» That sort of reaction is just fantastic. It means they look with their eyes and not with some Swedish preconceptual sheep brain.
 Pleasure for the eye, the ear and the feel, that's what I like. The British have a great car history too: Aston Martins, Bristols, Jensens, Rolls, Jags, MG's, Morgans etc. Compare that with SAAB and Volvo.
 – Why did you end up in London? What's wrong with Sweden and Monaco?
 – The old broad bean: The Queen is here for a start, and that's a big reason.
 And Monaco and Sweden bores me. Monaco is a very small country, 1,9 km2, just a bit bigger than Hyde Park which is 1,6 km2. So the population is tiny. As I love people you can guess what I feel. To grow up there as a kid is not the most exciting. Schools are very strict and catholic with loads of nuns everywhere. The French kids had to be in bed way before a kid from Scandinavia.
 At the age of 14, I finally went back up to my home country Sweden, after many years of begging my parents to put me in one of these boarding schools. But I was somehow disappointed by the people there too. I thought something was wrong with me. Is life just a big bore? The art colleges in Stockholm were dead and had no dynamism about them. So I got a good tip from my cousin to go to London where they do foundation courses in Art. It means you try out a bit of everything (architecture, fashion, design, sculpture etc.) for just a year, and we all had «private» tutors that helped us along to find ourselves and our specific interest. I found myself and Graphic Design.
 Basically I just loved London from the start. I'd finally found a place to like. People you've never met talk to

you here. Life's not taken so incredibly serious here. Do-mistakes and have-a-laugh sort of attitude. And if you don't do mistakes let's all laugh even more. There's no big jealousy thing over here. If you're a bit successful in Sweden, people get grumpy. Over here people share each other's happiness and success and failure in a much bigger scale.
 – How would you describe your art, and why are you doing it?
 – My «personal art» are photography and videofilming. I like walking or driving around London with a camera in my hand, and film people like mini documentaries. I am always curious about what people say and think. You can luckily never tell by the looks what a person thinks. People have many surprises to share. During the last years, I sometimes picked up people in the street with the car. I invited different people back to my place such as a tramp, a postman, a night porter, cab drivers, a business man etc. I filmed them and sometimes they filmed me. It was some sort of camera-seduction, I suppose. The reason why I do my personal «art» is vital. Without that kind of total freedom, I couldn't make my commercial art in the way I do.
 In my commercial work, I design a lot of brands, packaging design, and corporate identity and lately a few art books. I am doing an art catalogue as we speak. There are more unwritten «rules» in brand design, and you can spend weeks on just one single image. So I need a balance. A bit of strictness and a bit of freedom. The Swedish blonde on my business card is my identity. I want people to perceive me as a Swedish, busty, ridiculous blonde. It's advertising for Sweden, a boring country which needs a bit of fun PR.
 – You've described the Olds as your love, and the other cars that you've had as lovers: Do treat your love or lovers best?
 – No, I don't treat them differently. But my feelings for them are different. Love stays, lovers come and go. The lover cars are there to give you a new titillating pleasure. If you can always have a lover car that you change from time to time, what could be better? To have two cars which are different to drive make the differences between them more obvious and pleasurable. My lover Mr Mustang Cobrajet 428 from '71 has unfortunately got to go, and is now looking for a new loving «owner.»
 – Have you always been into cars?
 – It started with a big tractor-lawnmower which disturbed our neighbours in Ljusterö, our summer place in Sweden. At the age of 11, I started to «steal» the Olds in the mornings while Mum and Dad were asleep.



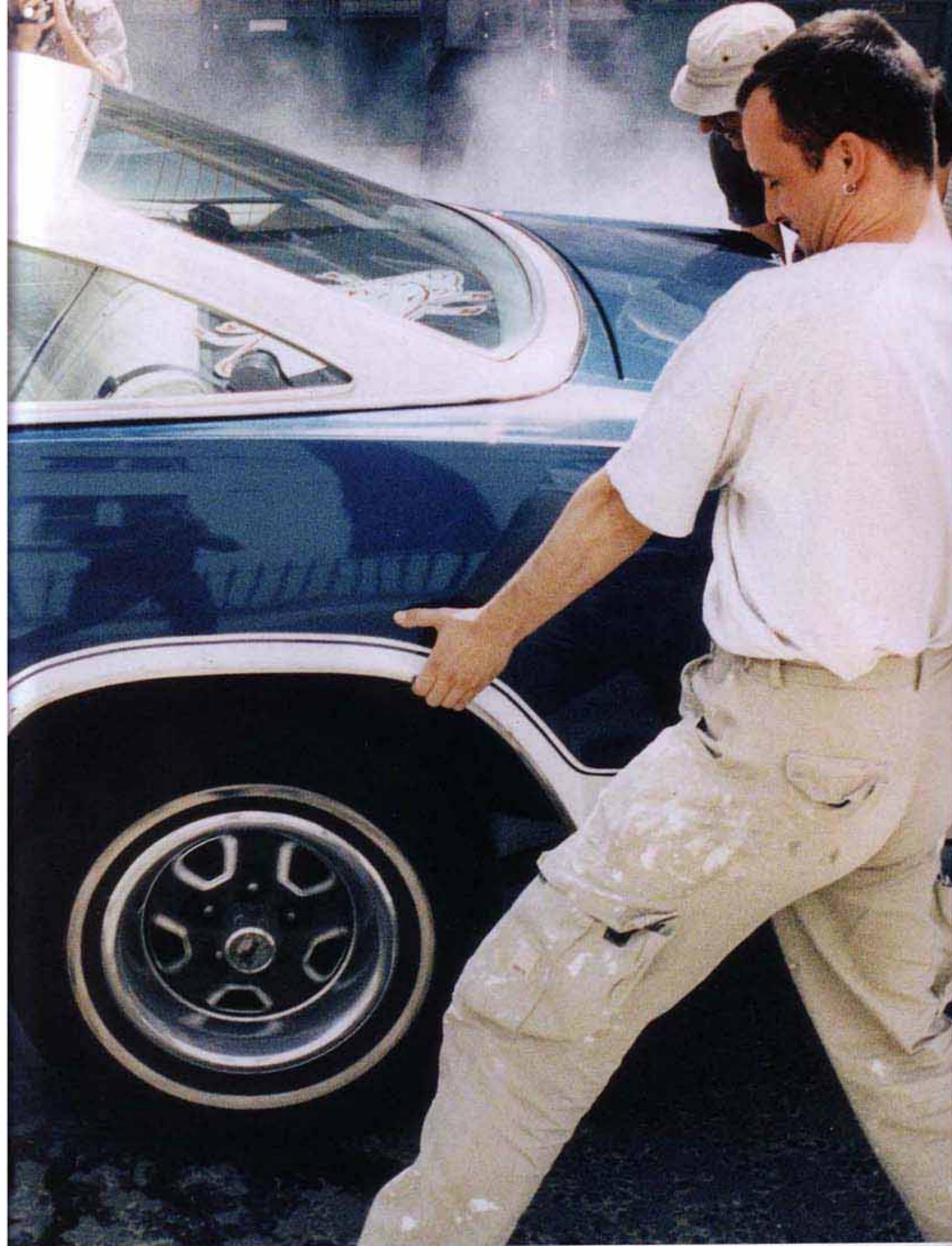
A year later, I did a wrong turn. There was no road. The water tank had broken, the chassis was a bit twisted and all the paintwork was destroyed because of the wire fence.
 Another buzzy experience was when I stole my parent's other car in Monaco, a Rolls Royce Silver shadow '76. I was about 13, and dressed up like an old lady with big hat, loads of lipstick and glasses. The electric seats were great because they could ascend a lot, so I looked very tall indeed. I drove to Nice and got stuck in a police control. Luck was with me, as they saw the Monaco plates and the «adult lady» and just waved me pass. This little drive to Nice became a frequent

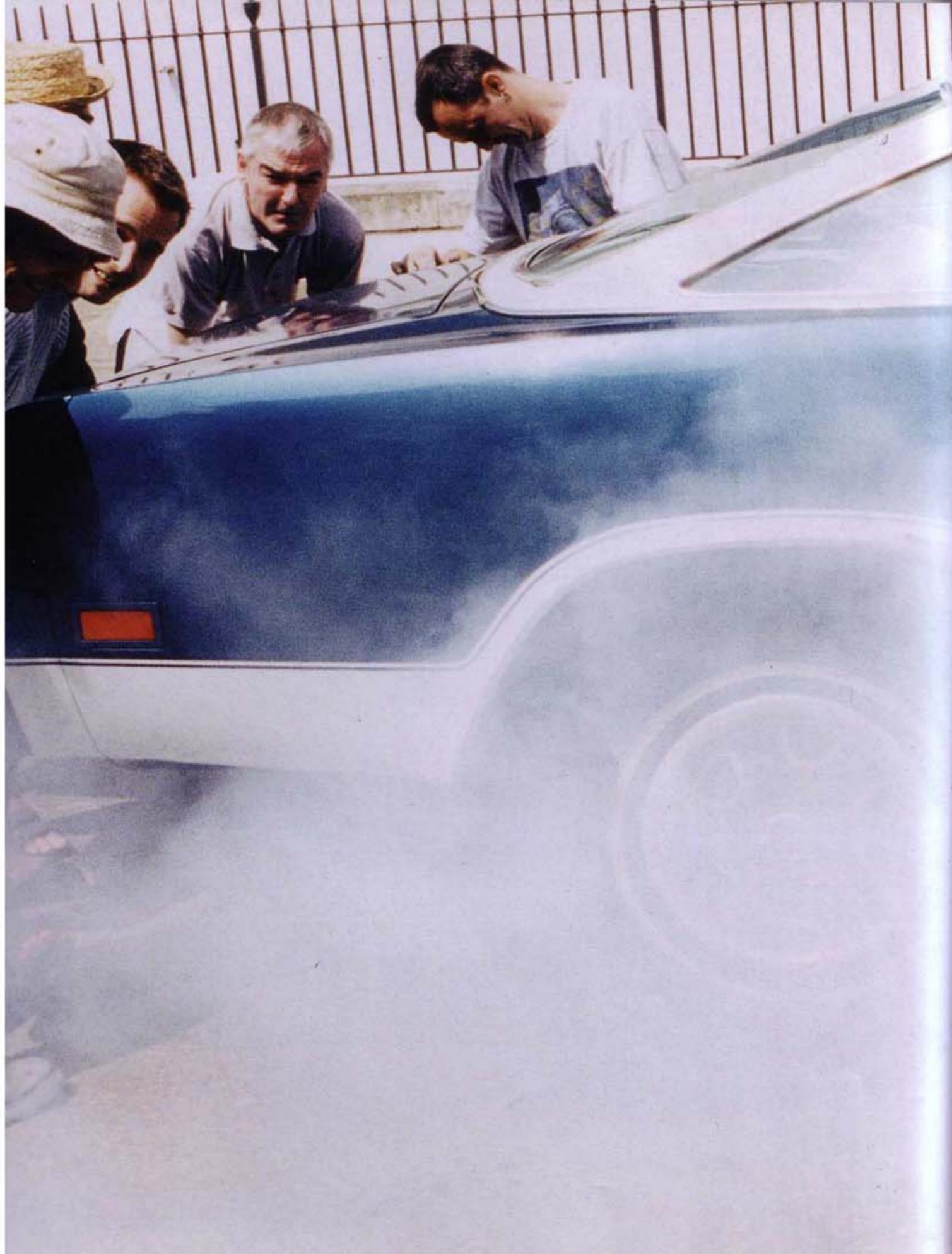
pleasure of mine.
 A funny meeting was when I passed my dad in his other car, an Innocenti. He saw me straight away, but I didn't stop.
 The most crazy experience was in 1978, on vacation in Ljusterö. I woke up very early in the morning from a loud sound coming from our outdoor garage. It was a crazy sight for a kid: Two men and the garage covered in shit. Human poo. The Olds was no longer white inside either. These guys had come to empty our vacuum septic tank (toilet tank). But they forgot to unscrew an important pipe inside the garage, which led to an enormous pressure that backfired.

– What do you do to preserve the car?
 I've had two cars for a while: One rests in the safe old garage in Sweden, while the other gets drive and vice versa. The key is to not overdrive them. I wild sometimes, but not all the time. Do regular check ups. This car has been with me for 25 years and hope it will for another 50.
 – Do you ever take the tube?
 – Yes, I still do from time to time. Since K Livingstone, yes Living Stone, became the first mayor of London, parking is forbidden in most of central London and especially Soho, which makes me use the tube occasionally and unwillingly.



- A successful burnout is about the equivalent of a hundred redneck barbeques. As ingredients I use four blokes and a bottle of beer. Pour beer under and around back wheels. Get the four blokes to lift the arse of the car. Press brake and accelerate loads at the same time. The car stays but the wheels spin at an alarming rate. When wheels, tarmac and beer get acquainted, a blue, black plume of acid smoke fills the air. Pour one more beer for optimum effect before dropping the beast and hitting the ground running. One more ingredient: A fresh pair of knickers.





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Like a snobish looking couple in their 80's in Sloane Square: - What a wonderful car. What is it may I ask? I like the shape very much.
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