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Thursday, June 9, 2005

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Shoe designer puts the boots to Dad's old Jag

Shoemaker John Fluevog loved his dad's 1965 MK 10, so when it came to junk it or fix it . . .

Alyn Edwards

Special to the Sun

Friday, May 20, 2005

There will be one car that is sure to cause a fuss at tomorrow's All British Field Meet. The very proper display of more than 500 British classic cars at VanDusen Garden at 37th and Oak attracts the creme de la creme of vehicles, which are brought in for display and judging from all over the Pacific northwest. It remains to be seen if this 20th annual British car meet is ready for the "Fluevog."

The 1965 Jaguar MK 10, owned by internationally known shoe designer and retailer John Fluevog, looks more like a chopped and slammed late-'40s Hudson or Mercury. Creme de la creme? Well, it is definitely cream: Cream yellow and sage green, that is.

This Jag is so radically customized that it is only allowed to attend Canada's largest celebration of the British car by being placed in the "modified class." Its very presence is sure to draw gasps from some purists.

The 40-year-old Jag has been in the Fluevog family since John's late father purchased the luxury British barge in Vancouver's West End when it was a year old. He was a real car guy and had hundreds of cars, mostly oddball foreign cars that few people were interested in. Young John took his first ride in the car the day it was purchased. Riding in this Jag was like floating down the boulevard in an English drawing room, and young John Fluevog knew it was special.

But the years passed and, when John's father passed on, the old golden yellow Jag was like a big rotting banana sitting unused and partly in pieces in the Fluevog family garage. John was faced with a decision: Junk it or fix it.

John consulted with the threesome at North Vancouver's RX Autoworks -- a restoration shop that regularly restores world-class collectible and exotic vehicles. Mike Taylor, Rob Fram and Ian Davey wanted a challenge. So they cut the roof off and lowered it four inches. Then the designer in John Fluevog took over.

"In 1952, my dad opened a drive-in ice cream business on Kingsway at Gilley right next to South Burnaby high school called Luxury Freeze,"

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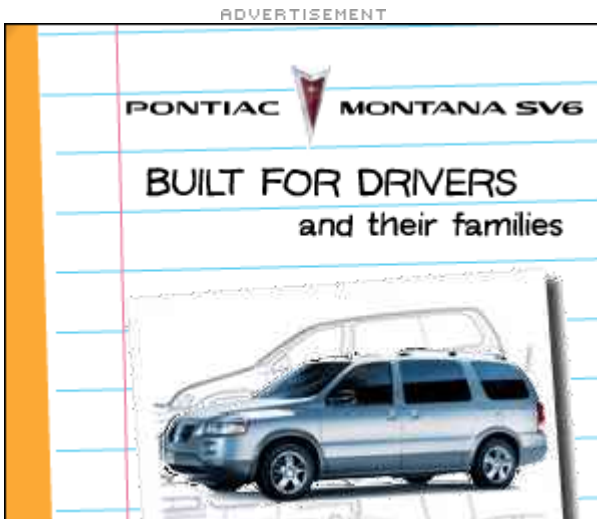
CREDIT: Ian Smith, Vancouver Sun

The customized Jaguar belonging to shoe designer and retailer John Fluevog.



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Fluevog recalls. "All the hotrodders and customizers would cruise in and I grew up with that."

Fluevog wanted the Jag makeover to reflect that era of '40s and '50s modified cars. After the roof was cut down, the front end was lengthened with peaks over the quad headlights and the recessed grille. The rear end was completely re-sorted with Jag XKE taillights mounted vertically.

The RX Autoworks metal meisters then smoothed the sides and rounded the wheel wells to get away from the original square flared openings. Fender spats (skirts) were added to give the car that slab-sided look. Air suspension makes the car super low.

To design the split on the sides of the car separating the cream and sage green colours, a member of Fluevog's shoe design team used a computer and projector aimed at the side of the car and "painted" the green on with the sculpted design. The line was then marked with masking tape. The final paint split is outlined in maroon stitching representative of the work the car's owner is involved in.

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Shoe designer puts the boots to Dad's old Jag

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An LT1 Chev engine nestles comfortably under the hood driven through a GM automatic transmission to the Jaguar independent rear suspension. Inside the car, yards of cream leather is offset by green crocodile-skin door panels, headliner and accents. The pedals are made from shoe soles with Fluevog imprinted on them. Hidden are all the power comforts and a killer CD system.

The throaty V8 sound of this boulevard cruiser is going to really turn heads when the Fluevog glides on to the grass at the All British Field Meet. "What is that?" people will whisper.

It's a Fluevog and, like its owner, there is only one.

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