

The Power and the FURY

Fury Sportscars



Kitcars don't get any better than a Fury, regardless of whether you prefix it with Sylva, Fisher, KCW, BGH whatever you like. As Steve Hole recently discovered there's plenty of life left in it yet...

This feature on the Fury is special for me for several reasons. Firstly, I tip my hat to the kitcar designs of Jeremy Phillips, of Sylva Autokits, as anything hailing from his crayon set is a classic kitcar and go, stop and turn, like no other!

Secondly, the Fury has always been one of my favourite kitcars, a top ten would definitely feature at least four Phillips-penned designs.

Finally, current Fury custodian, Steve Hughes, is a genuinely nice bloke and has a very long association with the model, dating back to when he worked for Mark Fisher at Fisher Sportscars, after the erstwhile Kent-agent became manufacturer of the project in the early nineties. Indeed, Steve has built loads of examples of the model.

The fact that there have been well over 900 Fury kits sold over the years is proof enough that it's a goodie.

When Mark Fisher moved on to pastures new, in the early noughties, the project passed to his agents, the Kit Car Workshop, run by the affable, Martin Bell, before returning again to Kent and Brian Hill of Type 9 gearbox specialists, BGH Geartech. Ironically, this is where Steve Hughes was working at the time and it was rightly thought by Brian that Mr H's implicit knowledge of the product would pay dividends, for its continued development.

When Brian decided that he should concentrate on his gearboxes, Steve squared-off the circle by forming Fury Sportscars in 2010 and taking on the project himself. Oh, and he carried on trading from BGH's base in Cranbrook, behind the Murco petrol station, although the 'gate guardian' Sherman tank has disappeared, sadly.

We could actually conclude this feature now really, as the Fury is quite simply brilliant and under Steve Hughes, and his right-hand man, Barry Taylor, there's plenty of life left in the old girl yet.

I've been nagging Steve for ages, since he took over, in fact, to let me do a feature, but he doesn't do things on a whim and for whatever reason we couldn't get it on. Therefore, when I saw him at this spring's Detling kitcar show, with a strong four-car stand, I figured that at least one of them must be available for test, so seized the bull by the horns.

So, I'm delighted that this is the first Fury Sportscars 'works' feature to have appeared in any magazine since 2010, and certainly the car pictured here is ultra deserving.

It belongs to Cranbrook resident, Ed Bates, who loves his Fury, regularly undertaking trips to his retreat in the Pyrénées. Although she looks all nice and shiny, it turns out that the car was originally built, with doors, and no 'screen, way back in 1997, although it wasn't green then, either.



This is one Fury that is a survivor and clearly enjoyed a spectacularly good level of build when new. Ed has owned the car for around five-years and has carried on the good housekeeping and commissioned the installation of a 2-litre Ford Zetec accompanied by Omex ECU set-up, Raceline water rail and fuel pump with Jenvey throttle bodies, which is a good ensemble in any car and a cracking one here with 170bhp. Sure, it's a £2500 outlay when all is said and done but what a result.

Thankfully, my test coincided with the week in mid-April when the temperatures rose a little and, unbelievably, we had sunshine, and I have to say that the MG Rover MGF-spec British Racing Green metallic paint with the addition of an orange band contrasted with gold pinstripes, looks great, perhaps not an obvious choice, but one that works nonetheless.

As mentioned, this Fury is now doorless, although it's an easy task to hop over the cockpit side and into the deceptively spacious cockpit. Remember, this was originally a Jeremy Phillips-design and all of his interiors look petite and bijou but are in some way, somehow linked with the Tardis when it comes to space awareness (did you see what I did

there?! - Ed).

I like the high-back GRP seats with minimal bright yellow padding in places, which gives good support. I find the clutch to be Popeye-strength and it gives my left calf a serious workout, although I don't find it un-palatable. Actually, there's something weirdly reassuring about a stiff clutch pedal much like, for me a barbecue is not a barbecue unless there's a six foot flame and it's fuelled by constant addition of lighter fluid!

The engine takes a mile or three to warm-up and is a little highly-strung until it does, but once it does, by crikey, it really is a sweetheart. At 170bhp I've driven cars with a claimed 100bhp more that haven't felt this potent and it's a killer. There's no funny business, or traction struggles, and it feels to me like a Zetec that's been breathed-on, which is handy because that is exactly what it is.

I share Jeremy Phillips' view, thrashed out over a few pints of Batemans one evening, that the very purest Caterhams, Westfields and yep, Sylvas, are powered by humble Ford Crossflow engines, which are jewel-like in their operation enabling perfect harmony between pulling the best out of the suspension parts and chassis, for a pure motoring experience. I think the Zetec could be



considered the natural successor to it.

Although 170bhp in a car weighing just 620kg, equals a very healthy 271bhp per tonne, it manages to remain user-friendly not giving the impression that it's going to bite you at the earliest opportunity.

Talking of suspension, the Fury always handles like a deity and this one is no exception, a beautiful driving experience. Ride is on the firm side, but clearly is set-up for the owner's liking and it's not unpleasant, this car corners for fun and on rails and I love that.

A dork in a ratty white Transit, complete with ladders on the roof, thinks he's the holiday camp comedian by catching me up and glue-ing himself to my rear end. This is on a lovely B-road close to Sissinghurst in Kent, which is well-surfaced, quiet and twisty.

He gets my attention and I decide to make him look silly by simply driving away from him with a 'cheery' wave. This wasn't really down to my driver skills, but all due to the car's ability. This Zetec gives elastic power and keeps going and going.

Seeing him roll into a few bends in the distance behind me makes me smile. Me? I'm stroking it home, back to Fury's workshop in Cranbrook. Not big, not clever, but immensely satisfying all the same. I dislike tailgaters with intensity.

Anyway, I reckon that the Fury has been quiet for too long and as I mentioned when I came in, it remains one of the very best kitcars, nay sportscars, with a retro slant, that you can buy.

Sign of the times means that the days of putting one together for six grand have gone, but value for money is always relative and Steve reckons that to do a decent job, with a car you'll be proud to see parked outside your house, you should allow around £9500. If you wanted to cut a few corners, you might just save £1000. My view? If a job's



worth doing; do it right. To replicate the car here, you'll need around £12,500, which is still excellent massive bang for the buck.

These days, unless you've got access to a pile of Ford Escort donors (I wish - Ed), you'll use Sierra IRS rear end rather than live axle. Of the 900 or so made some 60 per cent have doors, although most of them are early cars, as in recent years the trend is to do without and just hop over the side.

There are also two bonnet styles to choose from: classic 'big bulge' or Le Mans style, with the latter the more popular, although the original flat bonnet is no longer available, Steve tells me.

The Fury was also one of the leading kitcars for bike engines and Steve tells me that from 1999 to 2003, just two were fitted with car units such was the popularity of the Fireblade and R1, but this has since switched back to predominantly car engines supplying the power. Of these around 30 have been built with Rover V8 units, which always seemed like a jackhammer to crush a



candyfloss to me, although a signed-up fan of the V8, I definitely am. With this car, less is more, in my view.

A Fury is a great road car, although it'll love trackdays, while the 750 Motor Club's various race championships feature hundreds of the breed, with a semi-works version driven by Stephen Dean in the garage on the day of my visit. That's out in the RGB series this season.

Kit prices start at £2055.67 inc VAT for the basic bare chassis kit, with the body pack at £2151.16 inc VAT. From there you can buy every part for the car from Fury Sportscars, over and above the essential stuff, or you can go your own way. If you prefer, fully built Furys are available, while the company can help you with certain aspects of the build. Contact them for details.

So, there we have it. The world is a better place. The Fury remains an essential example of the kitcar art. Long may that remain.

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