

Sabrina

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE TRIUMPH SPORTS CAR CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA

VOLUME 51 no. 2 - October 2025

Website : www.triumphclubsa.com



TRIUMPH NATIONAL COMMITTEE: 2025

PRESIDENT	Alan Grant	grantfam@wizz.co.za	+27 82 325 2938
CHAIRMAN	Gary Booyens	gcb@netactive.co.za	+27 82 445 5111
SECRETARY	René de Villiers	rdevilliers40@gmail.com	+27 83 317 4339
TREASURER	Norman Bull	normanb0147@gmail.com	+27 83 469 6833
REGISTRAR	John Austin-Williams	john@austinwilliams.co.za	+27 83 459 7802
EDITOR: (VACANT)			
SAMCA REP	Terry Murphy	terrymurphy962@gmail.com	+27 83 292 5888
INSURANCE	John Dobbins	dobbins@iafrica.com	+27 82 508 0910
REGIONAL CHAIRMEN			
Bloemfontein	Henry van Heerden	hvh@sbakels.co.za	+27 83 651 7252
Cape Town	Tim Kent	timokent57@gmail.com	+27 76 715 2383
Garden Route	Dennis Cook	cookdennis001@gmail.com	+27 60 700 0192
Johannesburg	Gary Booyens	gcb@netactive.co.za	+27 82 445 5111
Kwa-Zulu Natal	Fonnie Nortjie	accounts@enduromotors.co.za	+27 82 442 5682
Port Elizabeth	Hugh Rademan	hughrademan@gmail.com	+27 82 930 1314
Pretoria	Bill Flynn	billflynn47@gmail.com	+27 82 921 3854

Chairmans Chat

Greetings everyone, without a SABRINA editor things have been rather quiet; fortunately the social WhatsApp groups are keeping members up to date on various club issues.

Dennis Cook has kindly taken on the task of publishing one or two SABRINA'S to inform members of what is being planned and done for the 2026 National Gathering at Hartenbos. (He is adamant that this is to promote the National gathering and not volunteering as the permanent editor of SABRINA)

Dennis and his team have managed to finalise the dates and get very favourable accommodation rates at Hartenbos. Dennis will be giving all the details in this newsletter.

With regards to the National Gathering 2026, it will be the Triumph Sports Car Club of South Africa's 50th anniversary and the 52 nd anniversary of the founding of the South African TR Register. Our aim is to have at least 50 Triumphs at the event so book your accommodation now!

I urge all centre Chairman to encourage as many members as possible to attend to make the 50 th anniversary special. Some centres are planning to assist members financially so they can attend, which is a very positive action. Presently we have 29 cars attending but, although it's still early days, the Organisers have trouble securing costs without final numbers.

The National committee has raised R 34 000 (R 20 000 sponsorship from Afrihost and Afripumps and R14 000 from National funds) to assist in bringing down the members costs at the National Gathering.

That's all from me for now, any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me on 0824455111

Yours in Triumphs

Gary

Editorial

We do hope that this National Gathering celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the club will be a memorable and successful one for you.

Having been a member of the club for more than 45 years I have enjoyed both reading and contributing to Sabrina. In that time, I have watched, and even admired, the various editors putting the journal together with not much input from the members. It is no surprise that no one is coming forward as editor because what the club actually wants is not an editor but someone to create content for their reading rather than edit contributions. The Oxford dictionary defines an editor thus:

An editor reviews, refines, and prepares written, visual, or multimedia content for publication, ensuring it's clear, accurate, and engaging for the intended audience.

If the members of this Club would take responsibility for creating and, or, submitting content the job of the editor of Sabrina would not be too onerous.

I also watched, for about a decade, the painful process of trying to move away from a printed Sabrina rather than it being distributed electronically. It took Helen to simply decline the very onerous task of distributing the journal by mail so that, at the 2018 BGM, it was finally decided to publish it on the Club Website and allow regional Chairman to distribute it to their members. Had this not happened, the demise of the Post Office would have forced the change anyway.

At the risk of being labelled a Heretic, I ask why we continue to have (or try to have) our Sabrina? If Sabrina is required in order to communicate with members, publish regional reports, news about Centres and articles about Triumphs, then it has become redundant. Times change and so do we, albeit slowly, but every one of us now makes use the very efficient and cheap multimedia service of WhatsApp- even if only to communicate with the grandkids.

If members posted interesting content and reports on the Chat Group on a regular basis as the whim takes them, the Club members could have plenty of relevant reading content. The National Body already has a dedicated WhatsApp group for the purpose; the Chat Group has regular new content and is engaging with members. Past Editors had to become skilled at trying to size and include pictures into a Word document. Now all it takes is a Google account to store high resolution pictures and videos on Google drive for all members to access what could not be included in Sabrina but is easily posted on WhatsApp.

I propose that this is something to debate at the BGM – do we really still need Sabrina? Having said all of that I commit to a post Nationals Sabrina issue if required.

Cheers
Dennis

Hartenbos- our venue for the Gathering

Hartenbos was established in 1730 when a ship and her crew were stranded along the shore. A local farmer alerted the authorities of the ship's misfortune and as compensation, the Dutch East India Company granted him a farm, which he called Hart en Bosch (deer and bush). Later, in 1933, the South African Railways and Harbours turned this tract of land into a resort town. This family holiday spot is now known for its iconic jetty, golden beaches and memorable camping spots.

Nearby attractions

Hartenbos is a fast growing and developing town owing to the constant influx of people from up North. Hart en Bosch Village is an all-new, family-friendly venue located in the popular Hartenbos area. Situated less than 2kms from the Hartenbos turn-off from the N2 highway, Hart & Bosch Village aims to be the picture-perfect rest stop for road trippers but also a vibrant establishment for local residents and holidaymakers alike to enjoy. Visit Boplaas Family Vineyards' tasting room. It is fully stocked with wares from the farm in Calitzdorp, a mere 60-minute drive away.

The Point

The Point in Mossel Bay forms part of the Cradle of Human Culture and is also a UNESCO World Heritage site. Unlike other sites that can be remote, dry and downright inhospitable, the archaeological findings here are set against a stunning backdrop of seaside caves so cosy that generations of families sought shelter in them.



The place where cultures meet: The Bartolomeu Dias museum complex was officially opened on 3 February 1989, however the Mossel Bay museum industry can be traced back to the 1960s when the Mossel Bay museum was first opened. The museum later became known as the Post Tree Museum complex before being renamed again in 1989.

The Dias Museum Complex is situated near the beach, shops, restaurants, banks and the tourist information centre. Inside the Maritime Museum is a live size replica of the 1488 Bartolomeu Dias Caravel. It was built for the 1988 500-year commemoration of Dias's voyage around the southern tip of Africa. There is also a shop where postcards, stamps, books, souvenirs and small gifts can be bought. Whales can be observed from the museum grounds during June to November.

The Granary. The Granary was built by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1788 after a record wheat harvest. This is the main Reception/information area and exhibitions of the surrounding areas.

The Post Tree. Pedro D'Ataide's ship, part of Pedro Alvares Cabral's third fleet, became separated from the other ships along the east African coast in 1500. D'Ataide landed at the "watering place of São Brás" (present-day Mossel Bay). He left a letter in a Portuguese sailor's shoe tied to a tree here.

It was declared a provincial heritage site. In 1963, the local tourism organisation placed a large post box, shaped like a sailor's boot, next to the tree where visitors can post letters and postcards. A special frank is used on all outgoing mail to commemorate the fact that South Africa's first post office was a tree.

2016 National Gathering

The 2016 National Gathering was organised in Hartenbos by the Cape Town Centre. Here is a picture of the delegates :



Some Statistics from the 2016 Gathering

Attended -39 Triumph Cars

Concours De 'Etat. Highest score : Alan Grant (TR3)

Concours De 'Elegance Joint highest score : Geof Kriel (TR3) and Heinz Koncki (TR6)

SA-built Protea Triumph race car article by Classic Drive



Wilhelm Lutjeharms drives the Protea Triumph

We drive a one-off racing version of the 1958/9 Protea Triumph – one of the most historically significant race cars ever built in South Africa – in Gauteng. It started with a video, which was sent to me by the son of the owner of this unique car. I click on the link and download the video. The 4-minute clip shows the Protea Triumph being driven at what used to be the Grand Central racetrack in Johannesburg (1949–1961). Behind the wheel is John Myers (who built and raced this machine and designed the South African Protea sportscar), and behind the camera is John Mason Gordon (who wanted this car to be built). There are times when Myers needs to apply opposite lock on the ‘wheel to keep the open-topped race car on the track, and during pit stops, the Protea’s tyre pressures and intake system are checked. It makes for fascinating viewing; it’s a flashback to when race cars could still be built by a few engineers during an era that many classify as the very height of the most romantic period of automotive design.

The owner of this Protea Triumph, Alan Grant, has owned this one-off Protea Triumph race car for a few decades and can recall every little fact about it. More importantly, he prefers to work on the car himself and has maintained it fastidiously. “I bought it in 1995, but I knew about the car since I was in my twenties. Peter du Toit of Zwartkops owned it, and I pestered him for years,” says Grant. “I had a movie of it, I had documents of it, and I had done tonnes of research on the car long before he finally allowed me to buy it.”

There is no doubt regarding Alan’s absolute infatuation with this car. He even drove it from Johannesburg to Cape Town and back shortly after he purchased it. “The reason for doing it was that we had a Triumph Club national gathering in Simon’s Town in 1996 and I wanted to meet John Myers,” Grant adds.



“We had a rainstorm in Beaufort West, and the car and I were completely drenched – but then the sun came out and all was good. This car has such a history, it is simple and just 1 of the most gorgeous cars.”

Specifications:

Model: 1958/9 Protea Triumph

Engine: 2.2-litre 4-cylinder, petrol
Power: 75 kW at 4 600 rpm
Torque: 172 N.m at 3 350 rpm
Transmission: 4-speed manual
Weight: +- 800 kg
0-97 kph: 9.8 sec (claimed)
Top Speed: >200 kph (claimed)

If you recognise a few Jaguar D-Type cues in the Protea Triumph's appearance, that's entirely by design. John Mason Gordon gave John Myers a D-Type Dinky Toy and instructed: "The car you create should look similar to this." The aluminium body was handcrafted by aircraft sheeting guru Geoff Collins. During the car's first race outing at the 1959 Roy Hesketh 6-hour endurance race, the Protea Triumph won – how is that for a start! The Protea Triumph was also driven to Pietermaritzburg for the race and driven back to Johannesburg after the race. I imagine that must have been a joyous "drive home".

Paging through Grant's thick folder on the history of this car, as well as Ian Schwartz's book "Protea: The Story of an African Car", the changes this little race car has undergone are evident. Following a big crash at the practice for the Kyalami 9-Hour, it, for example, received a different, widened front air intake.

The Protea Triumph continued its success story with Pierre du Plessis behind the 'wheel; Du Plessis drove the car to a third-in-class finish at Kyalami on 4 August 1962. Incidentally, the number 9 sticker that the car bears today refers to its original number for the Angolan Grand Prix of 1959. Originally, the doors flipped open as they had piano hinges, but today, they open conventionally.

What the Protea Triumph is like to drive: Before I climb in, we drop the large engine cover, attach the hooks and put the rear, single-piece decklid back – all of those parts are genuine, period-correct race-car components. The seating position is better than I expected, and it is not only relatively comfortable, but the small seat offers lower-back support, the gearlever is easy to reach, and so are the foot pedals and steering wheel. The low seating position (the seat is only marginally higher than the floor) further adds to the sense of occasion. From here, you can also see the grey spaceframe. I'm told it was painted grey "to make it easier to see when cracks appear." I turn the key, press the starter button, and the 2.2-litre 4-pot Triumph engine sparks into life with a throaty bark from the single exhaust pipe. These engines are known for their low- and mid-range torque. The redline is at 5 000 rpm, but I don't intend to make the venerable motor spin past 4 500 rpm today. Interestingly, this engine is basically a modified Massey-Ferguson tractor engine with a longer stroke.

As I pull away, the mechanical and direct shift action of the gear lever is immediately noticeable. The 4-speed H-pattern is easy to operate, while the pedals are close to each other, encouraging blipping of the throttle as you shift down. The view and experience from the cockpit are sensational, and I unashamedly enjoy every moment of it. The near-negligible wind deflector (as opposed to windscreen, of course) does help to direct some of the rushing air away from your face, but the view from the cockpit is something to behold. The bonnet stretches ahead of you while the rounded air intake on top reminds you that fresh air is fed into the engine bay for cooling and combustion. A relatively deep barking noise from the exhaust accompanies every touch of the throttle pedal. While there is some play in the steering wheel, it supplies honest feedback.

The tyres might be narrow, but seeing as the Protea Triumph weighs in at just around 800 kg, there is little heft to usher around corners. What a joy it must have been to race this lightweight for hours on end. Another benefit of tipping the scales at such a low weight is the level of acceleration. The modest power delivery of the engine is enough for this '50s race car to out-accelerate most traffic. Even at 2 500 rpm, the engine is eager to perform, and I eventually rev it to over 4 000 rpm. There is even an overdrive switch that can be used in the higher gears – it lowers the revs by around 500 rpm. You pick up speed quicker than you expect, and although there were only a couple of corners during our test drive, I can only imagine it would be an absolute joy to pilot the Protea Triumph up a mountain pass.

Summary

In an era long before aerodynamic downforce, sticky tyres and turbocharged engines, cars like these represent racing in its purest form. Single-seater race cars might sit at the top of that pyramid, but the ability to road-register such a car, use it and share it with fellow enthusiasts is still one of its owner's major highlights. South Africa has such a rich history in terms of automotive engineering, and this car illustrates, in a rather elegant and emotional fashion, what is possible when enthusiasts have a dream.

Author Wilhelm Lutjeharms :A passionate car enthusiast from an early age, Wilhelm has been a motoring writer since 2006, having worked for more than 10 years at CAR magazine before turning to a full-time freelance career. He is also a contributing writer for UK, USA and European-based motoring titles.



Some interesting trivia on the Golden Gate Nature Reserve.

When visiting the Reserve make an effort to stop at the van Reenen family cemetery in the Reserve. There is something rather unusual about the inscription on 2 of the graves. The persons died from a lightning strike on the same day on Mont-Aux-Sources.

This story is about Valerie Wilcocks 22, and Johan De la Harpe, a young couple in love. Valerie was a beautiful young woman, spirited and independent minded and her boyfriend Johan was a handsome, adventurous, young man in his prime. The young lovers would ride out from the farms of their respective families to meet at a rendezvous in the mountains near Clarens so that they could spend precious time together. They met in secret against the express wishes of their parents because of a long simmering feud between the Wilcocks and the De la Harpe families.

There is a hiking path that leads up to the chain ladders ascending Mont-Aux-Sources and one day they were out riding on his horse, Moscow, when a summer lightning storm unleashed tragedy in the form of a bolt from the sky. A battered and rusted sign along that path attests to the spot where it happened.

Their grieving families set aside their differences & buried the young lovers next to each other.

The local Sotho people living in the area say that when dark storm clouds gather, you will see Valerie and Johan riding off into the distance.



Stuart Bowen took this picture when he visited the reserve recently.

Registration Form: Attached is the registration form for the National Gathering. Thanks to the efforts of our National Chairman to obtain sponsorship, we have been able to keep the cost very affordable. When registering, you are welcome to pay over several months, if you wish, but please give reference Nationals and your name to the payment. **Kindly print, complete and return your registration form to cookdennis001@gmail.com**

Triumph Sports Car Club of SA

Hartenbos National Gathering 2026 : 27 April- 2 May 2026

Registration Form

SURNAME :FIRST NAME.....

PARTNER/SPOUSE :

POSTAL ADDRESS :

.....POST CODE

MOBILE NUMBER :

EMAIL :

CLUB CENTRE :TSCC MEMBER No.....

HARTENBOS UNIT BOOKED : SHARING WITH :

SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS:

DATE OF ARRIVAL :DATE OF DEPARTURE.....
(only if not 27/4/2026 to 2/5/2026)

DETAILS OF TRIUMPHS ATTENDING CONCOURS

D'Etat : MODEL: YEAR REG NO:.....

D'Elegance : MODEL: YEAR REG NO:.....

DISPLAY ONLY : MODEL : YEAR:..... REG NO:.....

PAYMENT: COST PER COUPLE: R1500 : PER SINGLE PERSON : R 850

Please pay into account Triumph Garden Route, FNB, Branch Code 250655

Account number : 63130145617

Signature :Date :

See you at Hartenbos- Travel safely
Cheers Dennis

