

A call came.

We want your Phantom I.

Ok, where and when?

El Mirage Dry Lake and then off to Jack Rabbit Dry Lake.

Why?

*Filming an around-the-world tour for
Amazon Prime.com/Video, “The Grand Tour.”*

Frenzy *and* Folly

By C. Erik Baltzar

Rumors swirling around about the force behind this concept suggested he was the original producer of the British production “Top Gear.” Also rumored was that he got punched in the nose by an auto enthusiast and the event was then taken over by a South African automotive group.

Thirty cars were requested, all very different in everyway. Need I say more? Belva and I took off for the mighty adventure and that is exactly what it turned out to be, “The Great Race.” What fun. The 30 cars turned out to be 50. Vehicles ranged from Rat Rods to Rolls-Royce, including Ferraris, Lamborghinis and the like. Oh yes, we were accompanied by at least two helicopters, a fuel truck and a chow tent. We lived like kings in the Sahara Desert. First, a tad bit more dust, speed and thrills, and there were times (most of the time) you could not see out of the windshield much less to the radiator.

I was to lead along with a 1950 Mercury (modified with a modern drive train) and a new Lamborghini, a wide variety of cars and conditions. Our 1929 Phantom I was slow through the shifts (crash box with square tooth gears and no synchromesh) but the Rolls held its own at all speeds and conditions.

Here are the four leading cars; the one on the right is our Phantom I. It ran superbly, in proud style. All Phantom I owners would have been proud.

After the final run on Day One, we were informed that no one was to clean anything. The reason being was that the second day of filming was to reflect the end of the Grand Tour. All vehicles must be dirty. Our Phantom I had so much dirt, dust and grime all over it no one could tell what color it was, nor could they read the badge bar. The trunk and top had a total color change. It took a strong vacuum to clean it and I will be darned if both the top and trunk came out better and crisper and more beautiful than ever. We have used Envirotech’s DriWash N’Guard for many years and the entire body came clean in about 20 to 30 minutes. Good stuff. I did fudge on the chassis and used a hose to rinse all the tight fittings, cables, parts and pieces.

The first day we filled the gas tank five times and used half a crankcase of oil. The car is fine. The driver did not do so well. He, (that’s me) from all the double clutching (affecting my left leg, knee and hip, right arm and shoulder) came out in need of Melaleuca’s Pain-a-trate. The end result: a left hip replacement scheduled for the following week. Then, I too, will be on the mend and the ‘ole Phantom will again look great for holiday events, two weddings, and of course, Starbuck’s mornings.

Join us on [Amazonprime.com, Video](https://www.amazon.com/prime-video)—Original for “The Grand Tour” episode 1: The Holy Trinity. It is a weekly show done in segments as they travel around the world. And, our group started it off.