

Octane

Fuelling the passion



COLLECTORS' EDITION

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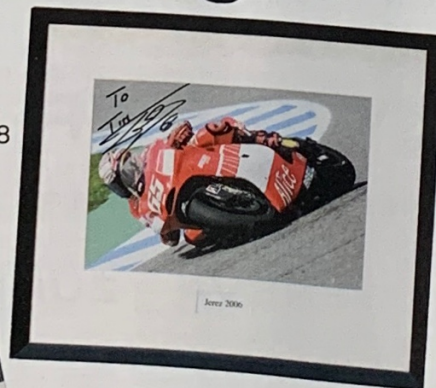
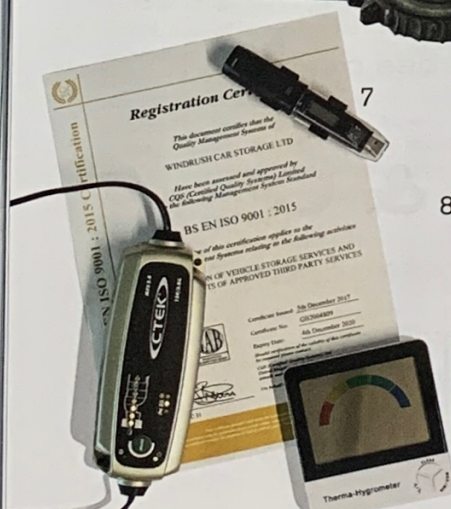
JANUARY 2019



TIM EARNSHAW

Petrolhead who built his own car, worked in the F1 paddock and now owns Windrush Car Storage

Interview and photography James Elliott



1. My most important business tools are my mobile phone and my notebook. I dread to think what I would do if I ever lost either of them.

2. For five years in the early 2000s I organised the logistics for Marlboro in paddock hospitality 'motorhomes' for Ferrari in F1 and Ducati in Moto GP. Most signs like this were destroyed, but I was given one as a memento of those days.

3. This photo was taken in Nottingham in 1945. My grandfather bought all these Army radio cars as a job lot during petrol rationing straight after the war, and parked them up. The radios took up the entire passenger seat area. When rationing ended he took them out, sold them, fitted seats and sold the vehicles. Look how neatly they are parked. That's where I get my obsessive attention to detail from.

4. In my mid-teens, I decided to build my own car, a 'Morgan' using a real bonnet and wings and MGB mechanicals. I spent nearly every afternoon in the workshop at school, doing everything from building the spaceframe onwards. I learned a huge amount about fabricating, wiring, painting and more, and I still have the car today. It was building the secure storage for that car that accidentally created my business.

5. I was brought up on a Cotswolds farm, learning to drive and mend an old S3 Land Rover when I was 10 or 11. When the gearbox went a couple of years later, I was lucky enough to have a workshop at school. With guidance I stripped the 'box, replaced the gear and put it back together. The sense of achievement was like a drug.

6. The S3 has gone but I still have a Land Rover: a 1949 S1, the first one registered to the British Army. I bought it five years ago before prices went crazy, and I'll never part with it. One day I was walking past a toy shop and saw this model, so I dashed in and bought it because it looked a bit like my Land Rover. Later I realised that it actually is a model of my Land Rover.

7. While I was working in motorsport I stored a few cars for other people on the farm. I went full-time in 2009 and now have storage for 200 in the Cotswolds and 150 in London. The split is 60:40 modern to classic. We're fastidious about details and gained ISO9001 status a few years back. The car and clients we look after are a pleasure to work with; the answer 'no' isn't in our vocabulary.

8. Marlboro had its own media hospitality at the Grands Prix. One of the photographers took this and gave it to me, and Loris Capirossi signed it. It reminds me of the fun times we had, but also what hard work it was being part of that world. It taught me everything about customer service, carried on in my own business.