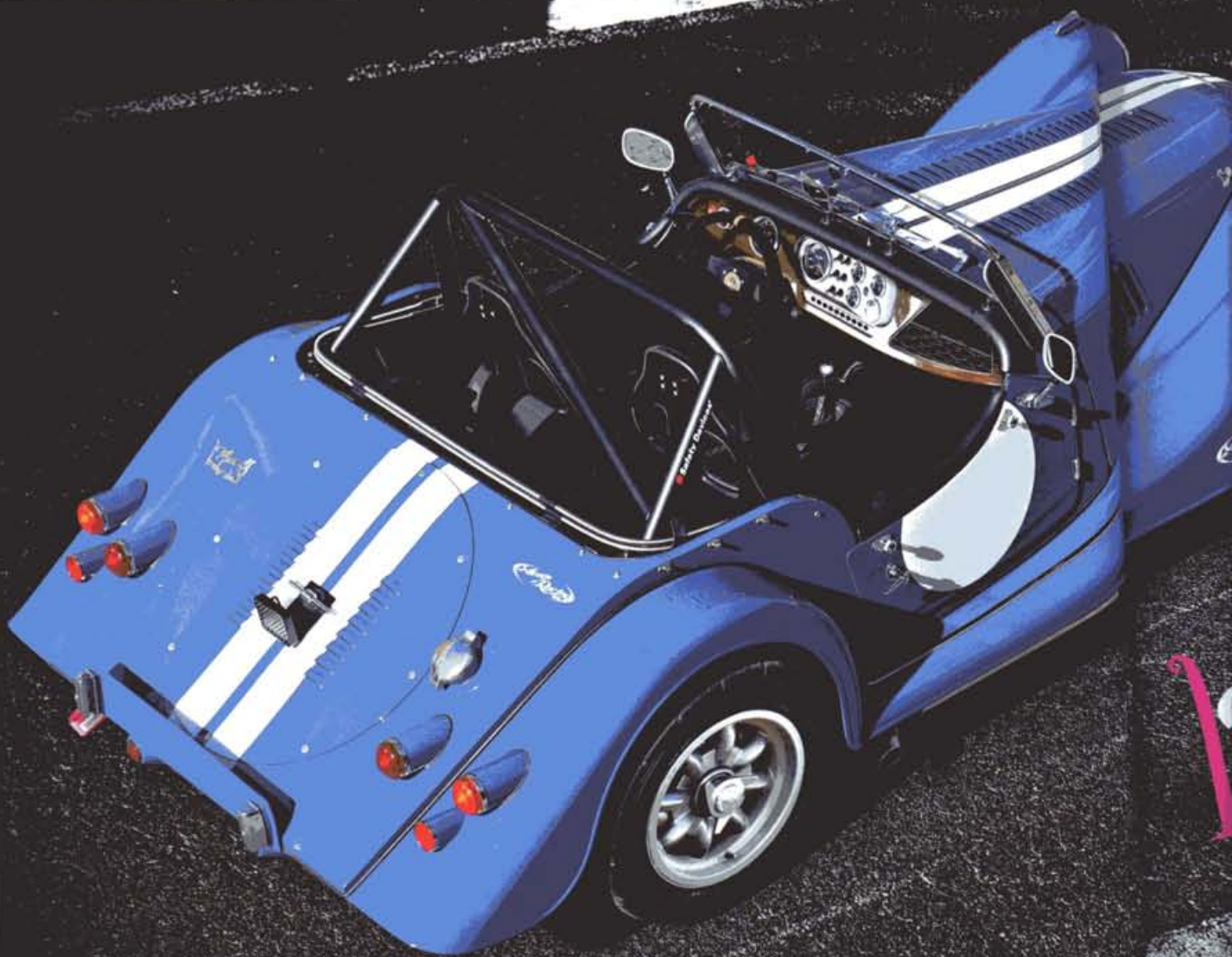


ICONIC MOGS

BABY DOLL RETURNS TO STAKE HER CLAIM FOR A MODERN DAY RACING CROWN



Right: Lev
Morgan S

Below: L
support



Right: Lew with the trophy named in his honour by the Morgan Sports Car Club Deutschland.

Below: Lew Spencer (far right) with Baby Doll II and his support team from Worldwide Automotive Imports.



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V



In the 1950s, a legend was born in America, one that would inspire a new generation eager to recreate its greatness over 50 years later. The Baby Doll series of Morgans is renowned among racing enthusiasts, and the story behind its conception is one of opportunity and a rather naughty film from 1956, as Claire Packer finds out...

In 1956, Warner Bros released a film called 'Baby Doll'. Directed by Elia Kazan, it starred Carroll Baker, Karl Malden and Eli Wallach, and focused on a feud between two rival cotton gin owners in rural Mississippi.

A black comedy, one of the characters, the 19-year-old wife of one of the cotton gin owners, is called Baby Doll, and it is because of her and her outfits in the film that the babydoll nightgown phenomenon was born.

Two of the people to see the film upon its release were Claude Brun, a mechanic at Worldwide Automotive Imports in Los Angeles, and his wife. Legend has it that when Claude went to work the next day he commented 'I wonder how our Baby Doll is today' about a special project that Worldwide Automotive Imports had been working on.

Worldwide Automotive Imports, owned by Rene Pellandini, was one of the largest Morgan distributors in the States. At that time, the late 1950s, distributors had both the 4/4 and Plus 4 to sell, and Rene had been modifying a 4/4 to enter into the local racing series. All that he was missing was a driver...

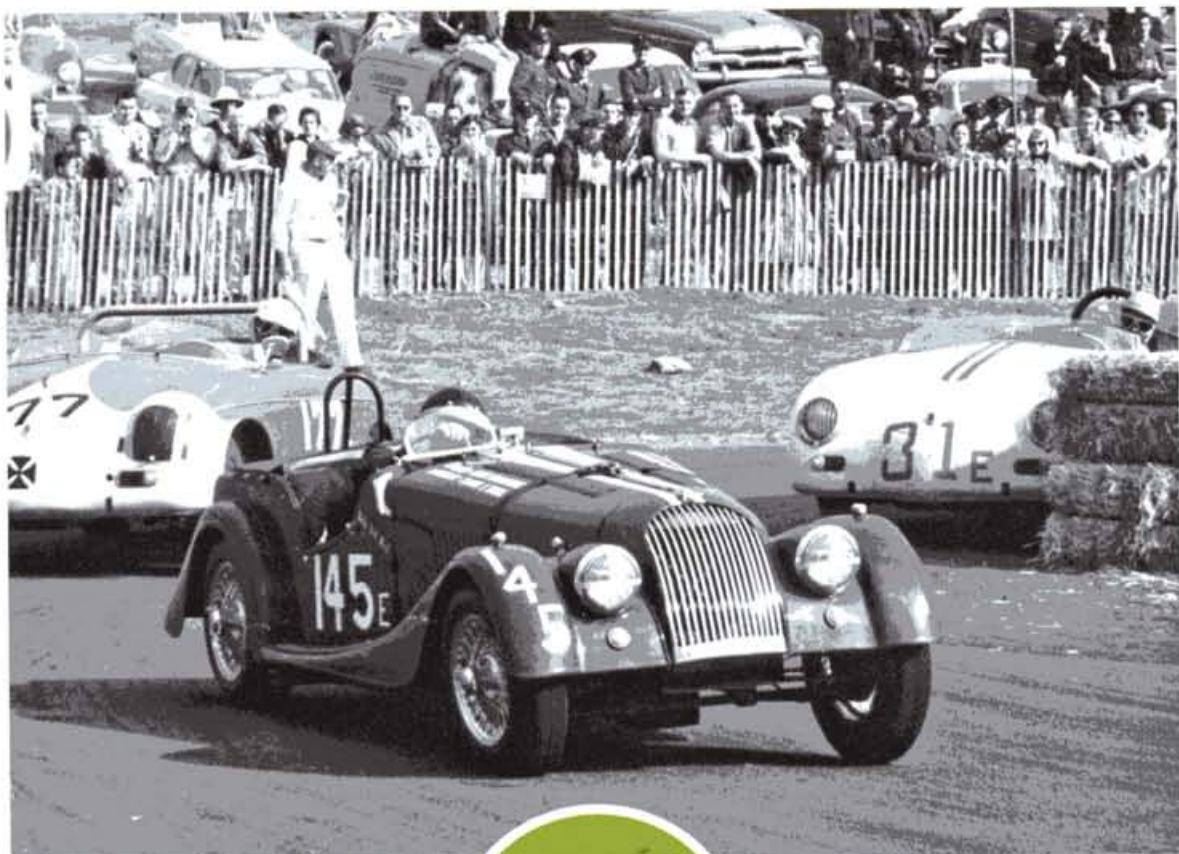
This is where Lew Spencer, arguably one of the most famous Morgan names, enters the scene. "I bought a Morgan from Rene and then started racing it by myself," Lew remembers. "Rene wanted to get into the racing scene and he approached me about driving for him. At the time I was fitting kitchens and had only driven in one race - I wasn't a professional driver at all!"

The first Morgan Lew drove on Rene's behalf, a red 4/4 Series 2, had little success. It was the newly christened Baby Doll II, a green Plus 4, which pushed all the right buttons and saw Lew picking up title after title. (The red 4/4 Series 2 would go on to be known as Baby Doll I by default.)

"Claude, our mechanic, was always working on the Morgan, doing everything he could to make it run faster and handle better," Lew remembers. "After racing Baby Doll II we still didn't know that there would be more Baby Dolls. In the end it worked out that we would have a new Baby Doll roughly every 18 months."

In April 1958, Baby Doll III, a green right-hand drive Plus 4 with aluminium wings, replaced Baby Doll II. Lew and Rene's successes against far more expensive sports cars, such as Porsches and ACs, continued. ➤

ICONIC MOGS



After trying his hand racing an AC Bristol for Rene in 1960, Lew returned with a new Baby Doll, Baby Doll IV, in June 1961. A special aluminium-bodied Plus 4, it was painted Kingfisher Blue and was, once again, a right-hand drive with disc brakes. "The AC Bristol was more modern and faster, but not as much fun as my Baby Dolls." Lew says with a laugh.



Above: Baby Doll III takes to the track at Laguna Seca in 1958.

Inset: Current owner Jeff Abramson with Baby Doll IV.

Below: Baby Doll IV enjoys a moment of down time at a club meeting.

By 1961 the tuning regulations were relaxed – previously sports car races in California were strictly controlled and little tuning or modifications were allowed – and Baby Doll IV was soon taken to Super Sports specification. Lew could now chase the Corvettes on tight circuits and give them a David and Goliath show.

At this point, Rene had sold Worldwide Automotive Imports to Lew. Pierre Brun had joined his brother preparing racers along with assistance from Kas Kastner, a member of the Triumph Competition Department in California.

In 1963, Lew took delivery of the final Baby Doll, Baby Doll V, which was a true Super Sports. He continued racing it until he joined Carroll Shelby in 1964 and began racing AC Cobras. The role of West Coast Morgan distributor was taken over by Gordon Pflug and Rule Sutton, with the dealership eventually becoming a repair shop and used car showroom when Morgan officially withdrew from the market.



The legend is reborn

Inspired by Lew's success during the 1950s and 1960s – and the fact that he beat more powerful cars from Chevrolet, Porsche and Austin-Healey – Dr Stefan Scieszka, the president of the Morgan Sports Car Club Deutschland (MSCCD) and a keen racer, had a dream to revive that tradition and bring Baby Doll back.

Stefan, who grew up in Poland after the fall of the Iron Curtain, contracted the 'Morgan fever' when he was 18-years-old. "I remember buying a motoring magazine that had a report from the Morgan factory and saying to myself that a Morgan was the car for me," Stefan reveals.

"My step-brother worked in Worcester and when I visited him in 1974 I told him that we had to go to the factory. We went on a Saturday and sadly everything was closed! I did have the chance to put my hand on the hallowed walls, though.

"I ordered my Plus 8 in 1984 and finally received it in 1990 as there was a very long waiting time back then." Stefan still owns that Plus 8 today, together with a Roadster Lightweight that he has been racing since 2006 and Baby Doll VI, the next generation of Baby Doll racers.

"I knew about Lew and his success from reading books about racing Morgans. I spoke with Charles Morgan on a visit to the factory several years ago and he said that Lew was living in Texas. This then led me to speaking to Greg Solov, who owns Baby Doll V, and he gave Lew my phone number."

The rest, as they say, is history. Stefan invited Lew to Germany and they finally met in March this year. Two months prior to their meeting, after receiving guidance from UK Morgan dealer Richard Thorne, Stefan contacted Tim Whitworth of Aero Racing and put a proposition forward about building a new Baby Doll, Baby Doll VI.

"It was very important to me to create the most powerful 4-cylinder Morgan in history as a tribute to Lew," Stefan says. "There wasn't a special engine available for it so we talked about producing a rolling chassis and buying an engine from a different manufacturer. If we did that it would only be 'half' a Morgan, though. We had discussions with the factory and they agreed to build a special, one-off engine just for Baby Doll VI."

When Lew arrived in Germany, he went through Baby Doll VI's specifications to ensure that there was enough of the original Baby Doll's DNA to have the Baby Doll name. "Compared to a 'normal' Plus 4 Baby Doll VI's dimensions are the same," Stefan reveals.

"From the start it was very important to have Baby Doll VI look like a Plus 4. However, there is a sports exhaust on the right side and the wheels. In the 1950s, there were only two wheel options: steel wheels or wire wheels. Baby Doll VI has aftermarket wheels that look like steel wheels but are actually aluminium."

Though he is yet to race Baby Doll VI, Stefan has very high hopes for it. "Compared to the Roadster Lightweight I currently race with I expect Baby Doll VI will be a lot quicker and more agile," he says. "It will have more horsepower, won't be as heavy and the weight distribution will be more even. I think it will be very successful in races next year."

He also hopes that Lew will be able to see Baby Doll VI 'in the metal' for himself. "Each year the MSCCD organises a racing tour. We've previously been to Spain, Poland and Hungary. In 2014 the plan is to go to California and hopefully rent Laguna Seca. Hopefully Lew will be able to make it – it would be wonderful if he could drive Baby Doll VI on Laguna Seca! Baby Doll VI would definitely be part of the Baby Doll family then." ➤



Top: Dr Stefan Scieszka (centre) is handed the keys of Baby Doll VI from Morgan's Steve Morris (left) and Richard Thorne (right).

Above: Baby Doll VI takes pride of place at the Morgan showroom on collection day.



Do you own or know of an iconic Morgan with a fantastic story to tell? If you do, we'd love to hear from you! Email editor@mogmag.co.uk with a short description of the Mog.

BABY DOLL EDITION PLUS 4

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- Engine:** 20 Duratec
- Gearbox:** Mazda 5 speed
- Chassis:** Standard Plus 4
- Max power:** 250bhp+
- Fuel tank capacity:** 55 litres
- Price:** £55,000

APPROVED FOR CLASS B OF THE AERO RACING CHALLENGE SERIES

Above and below: The Baby Doll Edition Plus 4 is available to order from the Morgan Motor Company now and qualifies for Class B in the Aero Racing Challenge Series.

The next evolution

In November 2012, Aero Racing, the racing arm of the Morgan group, announced the release of a limited run of new Baby Doll Edition Plus 4s. Inspired by Stefan's enthusiasm, Aero Racing redesigned the Baby Doll series and decided to put a limited series into production.

Speaking of the new addition, Tim Whitworth said: "Unlike the Plus 4 Supersport, which was a road-going car ready for the track, this car is very much a race car that can be driven on the road. I'm pleased that we have been able to satisfy both Lew Spencer and Stefan's enthusiasm, ideas and design into Aero Racing's offering."

Available, as the originals were, in Westminster Green and Kingfisher Blue, the Baby Doll Edition Plus 4s are fully trimmed and feature a full race 255 BHP 2.0 Duratec engine. Each one comes ready to race, with Tillett FIA race seats, full harnesses, a roll bar and an extinguisher.

Guaranteed to cause a stir at the race track, the Baby Doll Edition Plus 4 is a serious piece of racing technology that will be at the top of any serious racing driver's Christmas wish list. **MOG**

Thanks to Dr Jake Alderson for his help in compiling this article and to Martyn Webb for supplying the photographs of Baby Dolls II-IV.



Disclaimer: Not necessarily an engine due to new timing. Final specification for the car shown - subject to change

THE NEXT EVOLUTION



Plus 4 baby doll



ENGINE SPECIFICATION

Based upon Morgan Plus 4 specification production line engine 20 Duratec

CNC machined cylinder head with matched inlet system

Every engine dyno "run in" and tested

Tuned length exhaust manifold system

Race forged pistons

Race forged conrods with ARP bolts

Individual full race throttle bodies with linkage

Formed glassfibre airfilter backplate with foam filter

Race camshafts, valve springs and fitted with diamond faced washers.

New head bolts and fixings

Cast baffled wet sump assembly

DLC coated race big end bearings

Omex 600 Series ECU

Lightweight steel flywheel with race clutch cover and organic plate

Car approved for class "B" of Aero Racing Challenge Series
Engine testing has produced results in excess of 250bhp
More information and spec details available online

WWW.MORGAN-MOTOR.CO.UK

The Morgan Plus 4 Super Sports model was introduced late in 1961, offering arguably the best price-for-performance value available at that time. Its lightweight aluminium body provided crisp handling in a design reminiscent of the great, fully fendered sports cars of the 1930s.

Between 1961 and 1968, only 104 of the English-made, aluminium-bodied Super Sports were produced with Triumph TR4A-engines. Of the 95 two-seat cars built for sports car competition in the U.S. and abroad, 50 carried the low-bodied roadster coachwork.

The original Baby Doll V is famous in Morgan circles. It was ordered from the factory in the spring of 1962 by Lew Spencer, a well-known Southern California Sports Car Club of America member and local Morgan dealer. The car was to be his ultimate Morgan racecar; a sleek, low-body successor to Baby Doll IV, the car with which he won the 1962 SCCA C-production National Championship.

The amazing Morgan Baby Dolls are accomplished "giant killers" in historic circles, where they have regularly beaten small-block Corvettes, Porsches, Abarths and Jaguar E-types, despite their smaller-displacement engines.

Morgan is now proud to introduce the next evolution...

Baby Doll VI



MORGAN MOTOR COMPANY

