

Ferret Industries

232 TENTH STREET
HANOVER, ONTARIO, CANADA N4N 1N9
TELEPHONE (519) 364-3068

THE CAR

CASTROL-FERRET MK IV

Alec Purdy has incorporated several key concepts in his design for the Castrol-Ferret. He lists them as:

- (i) Safety
- (ii) A very stiff chassis
- (iii) Maximum functionality of all components
- (iv) Ease of maintainance

To many knowledgable observers, Purdy scores top points for his first three goals primarily through his unique treatment of the driver - compartment - roll - bar area of the car. In the Castrol-Ferret the roll-bar is a stressed chassis member - an actual functional part of the car's frame. As well as providing protection for the driver in the event of a roll-over (the normal function of a roll-bar), in Purdy's car it provides chassis stiffness AND protection from side impact. Thus, instead of having a front end and a back end, separated by a very weak driver's compartment with a roll bar bolted to it, Purdy's car has the entire car triangulated for strength and the roll-bar is welded to the rest of the chassis and engineered to contribute to the overall strength of the design. The driver has, in effect, a very strong roll-cage around him for protection in the event of any kind of a shunt.

Purdy's other goal, ease of maintainance, has been achieved by designing the car to leave maximum working room around components normally requiring attention. As well, the car has a bolt-on rear bulk-head which helps enable a mechanic to perform a complete engine change in two hours!

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FRED WILKEN

BUILDER - MECHANIC

A soap-box derby winner at age eight, Fred Wilken traces his interest in racing cars back to his early childhood. Consequently, although an honour student in his first two years of high school, Wilken quit after Grade 10 to apprentice as a mechanic in his father's garage. By age twelve he was already working on race cars, helping Bill Brunt with his very quick TR2 and Cooper-Norton cars.

An abortive fling at driving his own cars ended for Wilken when he developed the unhappy knack of motoring quickly into solid objects, and making a car go fast because of first-rate preparations became his goal instead. Projects such as squeezing a BMW engine into a Lola 1500 and converting a McLaren Mk1 into a formula 5000 car followed. Engine modification and tuning also became notable strengths. Subsequently, he prepared Frank Salem's race cars for eleven years, helped design and build the first Ferret, a Canada Class racer, helped prepare Stu Lamont's Lola-BMW and Eric Segrist's Formula Ford and finally has provided quarters and equipment for the recently formed Ferret Industries. Here he has helped in the construction and development of the Purdy-designed Castrol-Ferret Mk 1V.

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ALEC PURDY

DESIGNER-BUILDER

Born in New Westminster, B.C., Purdy split his childhood amongst the Dominican Republic, Vancouver and Lethbridge, moving, as his father, a professional engineer working in the sugar industry, moved about. In 1963 he entered the Engineering Course at the University of British Columbia and graduated as an Engineer in 1967. His first employment was with Westinghouse, where he stayed until 1970 working primarily with gas turbines and as far afield as Iraq. Like his builder-partner at Ferret Industries, Fred Wilken, Purdy traces his interest in racing cars to his very early childhood ("I was five years old when I decided to build my own car"), and his work at Westinghouse was really only a period to gain experience and save enough money to make his interest a reality.

In 1970, Purdy left Westinghouse and moved to Toronto, bought a Lotus Formula Ford and began a stormy and fairly short-lived partnership with a top Eastern driver, Brian Stewart. While they worked together, however, Stewart did win the Canadian Formula Ford Championship and a berth in the 1972 World Formula Ford Championship in England. The car they rented, however, was far from a top-liner and they finished a disappointing 12th. Back in Canada, Purdy raced a Formula Vee quite successfully until he wrecked it at Mosport at the end of the 1972 season.

May of 1973 saw the end of the Purdy-Stewart partnership and Purdy moved to Hanover to join Fred Wilken and his Ferret projects. For the remainder of the season Purdy raced his Lotus and helped prepare and refine the 1972 Ferret. By the fall he and Wilken had decided to begin construction of a brand new car, a car that would be designed to incorporate several concepts that had been germinating in Purdy's engineer-racing-driver mind. Construction began in October of 1973.

The designing and building of an entirely new race car is a phenomenally complicated project, and thousands of hours of work and development elapsed before the new Ferret saw its first race in September of 1974. From the start it ran quickly and showed great potential, but the usual teething problems of a new car precluded any victories before the end of the season. Purdy is confident that this past winter's checking, testing and refining have brought the car to the point of being the machine to beat in 1975.

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JOHN SCRATCH

DRIVER

Hamilton-born, Stratford raised and educated, John Scratch has been Ferret Industries driver since the middle of the 1972 racing season. And besides being the year that John and the Ferret got together, 1972 was also significant as the year that John won the Ontario Formula Libre Championship AND a Bulova Championship race in the Ferret. To date, this has been the ONLY time a Canadian designed and built car has ever won a race in this highly competitive series.

Already a veteran of eight racing seasons, 28 year-old Scratch began competing in 1968, the year he graduated from Stratford Teachers College and began employment as a Grade 7 and 8 Geography teacher in Goderich. An MGA, Cooper-DKW, Lotus-BMC and a Palliser WDF-1 have been his other racing mounts in those years, and, besides the 1972 Formula Libre Championship, have also carried him to a Formula-C Championship (1971) and a 3rd in the Formula Libre Class in 1973.

Unlike the two other key members of the team, Scratch cannot date his interest in racing to his very early childhood. As he puts it, he always had the normal teen-age interest in noisy, hopped-up cars, and went through the usual graduations to the midnight drag-races, but when a friend took him to the sports-car races at Greenacres (a now defunct racing circuit near Goderich) he was so intrigued by the high performance racing cars that he decided on the spot that he too would be a racer. If his present intention of winning the Bulova Championship this year is carried through as successfully, 1975 should be a great year for the Castrol-Ferret!