



**Rich's Ramblings**  
- BY RICH TAYLOR

## True Car Guys Love 'em All

The multi-billion dollar business we so quaintly refer to as "The Hobby" has had one serious problem for decades. And that's divisiveness. No matter what kind of special car we own, we all have pretty much the same issues with Value Added Tax, EPA regulations, ethanol fuel, NHTSA regulations, noise and safety laws, vehicle inspections, title transfers, speed traps, etc. Yet it's almost impossible to get die-hard Porsche, Ferrari and Corvette owners to even talk to each other, let alone agree about anything.

Add in the narrow focus enthusiasts from the Horseless Carriage Club, Classic Car Club, Antique Automobile Club, Milestone Car Society, etc. etc. and you've got a seriously fragmented group who should be standing shoulder to shoulder. Then there are the enthusiasts from the National Hot Rod Association and Good Guys Rod and Custom Association, not to mention professional racers, amateur racers, vintage racers, oval track racers, road racers, off-road racers, etc. etc.

Interestingly enough, the major vehicle makers all belong to the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, while the



*courtesy of Rich Taylor*

## Maserati 3500 GTI.

thousands of new car dealers who daily compete with each other are smart enough to come together under the umbrella of the National Automobile Dealers Association. The SAE brings together auto and aircraft engineers and designers from across the industry. The Specialty Equipment Marketing Association also represents a broad section of the industry, but no organization actually brings together all the various millions of enthusiasts and businesspeople who share a common interest in things on four wheels that move and make noise.

The National Rifle Association has been brilliant at organizing all gun owners, whether they collect old Winchester '73s, regularly fire an AR-15 or manufacture M1911 pistols. The same goes for aviation enthusiasts who all belong to the Experimental Aircraft Association. Nobody at the EAA's annual Oshkosh Fly-In really cares whether you arrive in a Stearman Model 75, a Rutan Varieze, a Gulfstream 550 or a Lockheed F-22. If you have an airplane, you're automatically one of the guys.

We've tried to bring this all-inclusive attitude to our Vintage Rallies. We like to say, "We're like the yacht club: it doesn't matter how long your boat is, just that you have one." Last week, this backfired on me. I got publicly lectured by the owner of a Jaguar XKE because he had to share the road with a new McLaren MP4-12C Spider.

Personally, I don't get it. What difference does it make to me as I'm battling along whether

the car 5 miles behind me is a 50-year-old Maserati 3500 GTI or a new McLaren? When we arrive at the next checkpoint, the Maserati is going to be as beautiful as ever, but that doesn't mean that the McLaren is any less beautiful.

Personally, I'd rather be driving my old Maserati, because I think new exotics from companies like McLaren, Ferrari, Porsche and Maserati are so good they're not much fun unless you're going 150 mph! That's not a realistic expectation on the winding mountain roads of New England or West Virginia and only rarely even in West Texas. But while I prefer to drive a vintage car fast rather than an exotic car slow, that doesn't mean everyone else should have to.

My argument for automotive inclusiveness, which has been proven over and over, is that if you expose the owners of new exotic cars to vintage cars, next year they show up with a vintage car. It seems to always work that way. But if exotic car owners aren't allowed to bring their late-model cars to an event, how are they going to be exposed to vintage cars?

Perhaps the AACA has the right idea, considering anything to be antique if it's more than 25 years old. Among other things, that means every year, another group of cars officially become "antique," so that there's a constant influx of new cars and presumably, new owners. If we applied the AACA criteria, then in 2014 we'll be rallying cars built in 1989 or earlier. But there have been so many neat sports cars built since then!

To me, this is just another manifestation of where I started this discussion. No matter what special cars we own, new or old, American or foreign, street legal or track-ready, we all have the same interest in preserving and using our beloved cars. Fighting among ourselves is stupid when there are already so many people outside the hobby who are ready to attack all of us!



*courtesy of Rich Taylor*

## McLaren MP4-12C Spider.