

MAXTON

"All the Maxton news that is fit to print"

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A Change at the Top

Recently Dan Ripley, President and owner of Maxton Components, Inc. and Maxton Concessionaires, Inc. has sold the companies to Bob Sutherland, a local auto enthusiast who has, until now, been in the background of Maxton's operations. Sutherland has assumed the ownership and the reins of the Maxton operation.

Dan is in the process of setting up a business to facilitate the importation of exotic cars into the

United States. He has long had expertise in dealing with the various bureaucracies and regulations of the federal government which can make it nearly impossible to bring in anything but the most generic foreign cars. His new number is 303/721-9121 and he will be glad to discuss the new services he is offering with you. Dan's departure from Maxton was completely amicable, and he and Bob remain fast friends.

An Interview with Bob Sutherland

Maxtonia: Tell our readers a little bit about your automotive background.

Sutherland: I am a hopelessly addicted gear-head who has been thinking about and enjoying automobiles since I was four years old. At the age of 48 I have never lost the keen pleasure of driving interesting cars on road and track.

Maxtonia: Why did you get into the Maxton situation?

Sutherland: First of all, it is obvious to anyone who examines and drives one of the Rollerskates coming off of the production line these days that the product is just excellent. The people at Maxton have made amazing strides in the past year perfecting the Rollerskate, improving it both mechanically and aesthetically. It is now one whale of a machine. I have just sampled a turnkey car which will soon be delivered to a customer in Fort Wayne, Indiana and it is a superlative automobile.

Maxtonia: What do you think the Rollerskate's strong points are?

Sutherland: Well, first you've got a car that is just so beautiful from every angle. Mike Mate did a great job in making all of the shapes and lines harmonious. After that you've got the reliability of bullet proof modern components. But there is something else that probably hasn't been stressed enough.

Maxtonia: What is that?

Sutherland: The performance. I don't think people realize what kind of road rockets these little cars can be with the more powerful engines installed. Even at 5,000 feet here in Denver the acceleration is simply astounding. When you combine that with the handling, the interesting sound, and the comfort, the Rollerskate is one heck of a package. Nobody ever ever tries one for the first time without being absolutely floored at the performance. It really is electrifying, and I think that part of the story needs to be emphasized.

Maxtonia: How are you going to tell this story?

Sutherland: We're going to lean on the Rollerskate's fierce performance in all of our public relations and advertising from now on. We are planning an addition to the Maxton promotional video which we will shoot at a local track here. It will demonstrate the kind of acceleration, cornering and braking that one can enjoy with the Rollerskate. It is a road car that can be punished on a race track all day long, and that is rare.

Maxtonia: What else is new since the last issue of Maxtonia?

Sutherland: We now have our own factory made polypropylene fuel tank, and we have reworked the top so that it seals out the wind and water better and is more aesthetically pleasing. We have also improved the side curtains and their latching mechanisms. The bodies now fit very nicely after subtle changes to the molds.

Maxtonia: What else is new at Maxton?

Sutherland: Probably the biggest news is that we are now offering the Rollerskate broken down into three kits so that we can cater to the individual who wants an affordable Maxton and wants to pay for it over time. Here is the way it will work: there will be a series of three packages which will include all of the parts which Maxton Components makes or modifies. The initial kit will cost \$995 and will include the front and rear suspensions. Next will come the frame kit at \$4,995 which will include the chassis-frame itself, the foot boxes, the brake lines, the fuel tank, the steering and the fuel systems. Then the body kit at \$6,995 will include the main body, the hood, the front chin piece, the rear deck lid, the seats, the dash, the cooling system, the exhaust, the windshield, the carpet, and the electrical system. And although we don't include the wheels and tires, we will insist that the proper ones be used for safety's sake. Maxton, of course, will provide a list of what will be needed from outside sources for the assembly process. There are lots of thrifty individuals these days who haunt the junkyards and are able to buy components really reasonably. One could, for instance, buy an entire wrecked Mazda RX7 thereby obtaining engine, gearbox, back axle, etc.

Maxtonia: So an individual can purchase the Maxton stuff in three shipments as he or she needs and can afford it, meanwhile picking up the generic parts locally?

Sutherland: That's right. Additionally, for those individuals who want Maxton to do their shopping for them, we will continue to offer complete kits down to the last nut and bolt.

Maxtonia: What about turnkey cars?

Sutherland: Although Maxton cannot install engines, there are now outside contract painters and assemblers who can do the whole build if necessary. The price depends on engine options, etc. Just call us for a quote.

The First Fifteen Cars

Chassis 1. The Experimental Frame

The idea for the Rollerskate came in June of 1988 with Mike Mate working over the summer on the packaging and the shape of the body. Ben van der Linden received Mike's drawings in the early fall and was finished with the frame design in November. An outside consultant was commissioned to do the front suspension geometry since he had access to a good chassis computer program. Over the winter of 1989 Mark Bickford, a welder from Colorado Springs, produced the first chassis to Ben's drawings. Jeff Novotny in June of 1989 at Mike Dopudja's shop in Englewood, Colorado installed the various components on the bare frame. Late in the summer of 1989 the car was tested in chassis form with a 210 h.p. engine at the road course at Mead, Colorado. The chassis jigs were then created by Jeff Novotny and Ben van der Linden in the fall of 1989. All the parts were transferred then to Chassis 2. The engine was installed into Chassis 2 and then Chassis 3. The first frame remains in Maxton's loft.

Chassis 2. the Prototype. Over the spring and summer of 1990 FCP of Lamar, Colorado created the buck, then the molds, then the (somewhat crude) first Rollerskate bodywork, which was installed on Chassis 2 in September of 1990. The car was painted yellow and the engine from Chassis 1 was installed. It was finished in time to participate in the first Colorado Grand in late September, making the 1,000 miles with literally no trouble. A 235 hp engine was then installed and Chassis 2 was our demonstrator over the winter of 1990-91 and appearing in a variety of publications. In July of 1991 the lumpy yellow bodywork was removed from Chassis 2 and stored in Maxton's loft. At the time the whole car was updated and fitted with new body-work which was painted bright red. The car remains a company demonstrator.

Chassis 3, the Motorweek car. This car was constructed by the staff of PBS's Motorweek program which aired nationally in the spring and then again in the summer of 1991. The 170 h.p. engine mentioned above with light flywheel was used. The car was painted British racing green. As agreed, there was a drawing for the car in the fall of 1991 as part of Motorweek's tenth anniversary celebration and it went to Monte and Chris Payton of Long Key, Florida. Some 900,000 people sent in entries.

Chassis 4, the Raterink car, was the first customer car, VIN IMXRSN02ROME00001. Fitted with a 170 h.p. engine, it was painted blue on top and silver below. Ginger and George Raterink fell in love with Chassis 2 as Maxton personnel tested on the Raterink's race course in Mead, Colorado. Recently it has been sold to an individual in Houston, Texas.

Chassis 5, the Siegrist car, was delivered in July of 1991. A 235 h.p. engine with heavy flywheel had been fitted. A special bright red paint was applied by Bob Robb of 3R Automotive, Englewood, Colorado.

Chassis 6, the silver car, was built as a second company demonstrator in July and August, 1991. A 210 h.p. with heavy flywheel was installed. The silver car was the first Rollerskate to receive a top and side curtains at Klint's Auto Upholstery of Englewood, Colorado. The silver car was demonstrated at several races and used as a support vehicle in the 1991 Colorado Grand.

Chassis 7 was built in the late summer of 1991 as a turnkey car for Jim Watson of Salt Lake City, Utah. It is British racing green.

Chassis 8, also British racing green, is a turnkey car for Robert Baglin of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Chassis 9 is a turnkey car for Lee Barnett of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.

Chassis 10 is a kit for Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher to be assembled by John Palinca. It is a dark maroon.

Chassis 11 is painted black and was made for Dr. Michael Kell of Georgia. It has yet to be completed.

Chassis 12 is a kit going to Charles Gordon of Overland Park, Kansas. The car will be silver.

Chassis 13 in metallic dark blue is a turnkey car for Steve Spangler of Salt Lake City, Utah. It is being assembled by Peter Stout of Boulder, Colorado.

Chassis 14 is painted bright red and will be a turnkey car for Rick Harvey of Fort Collins, Colorado. The car will be built by Robert Wenger of Littleton, Colorado.

Chassis 15 is a complete car for Kenneth Long of Salt Lake City, Utah. It will be black.

Long Chassis Cars, Even with Maxton's own seat, drivers over 6'0" just don't have enough leg room in the Rollerskate. Consequently the company is working on a 6" chassis extension which will be available as an option. The cost won't be much, but has not been determined yet.



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First Class

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