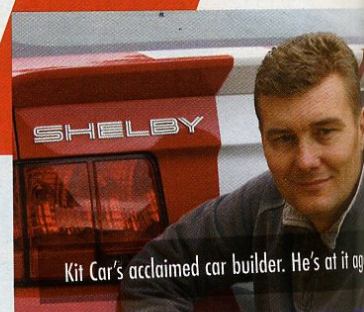


Lucky Number Seven

He's at it again ... Nigel our Tech Ed' has decided, after much persuasion from our readership and a few prods from us here in the Kit Car office, to create yet another of his masterpieces. Being recognised as one of the most talented kit car builders out there, we are clearly in store for a very special build. In fact, he has made a commitment to exceed his previous creations; yes, to eclipse his stunning NOS injected 427 Cobra replica and awesome 180 mph Ultima GTR! Hard to imagine but, knowing the man, I'm sure the end result will be distinctive in that Nigel Dean way. To whet your appetites prior to the commencement of build number seven, Nigel has agreed to give us a sneak preview into what he describes as his 'most challenging and exciting project to date.'

Nigel's last build, a concours Cobra 427 recreation was a masterpiece.



At the time of typing these words it has been twenty nine months and two weeks since I completed my last kit car project. The exact task, which I can clearly recall, was adorning the fake snake's boot lid with a flawless chromium plated badge - the icing on the cake you might say. Precision cut

from premium quality brass, intricately formed to match the boot lid profile, mirror polished and finally precision chrome plated to a thickness of 20 microns ... how sad am I to even recall such a job, let alone remember the thickness of the chromium plating?

It is this attention to detail, however, that perfectly epitomises my approach to building

kit cars and is the very reason I was previously nicknamed 'Detail Dean'. It's in the blood I guess: utilising the best components possible, investing no less than one thousand hours bolting the thing together, deviating from the norm' at every possible juncture, and hoping the end result is worthy of the interest preceding my builds.

On one hand the attention is flattering, but knowing the readership expect nothing but the best is one heck of an expectation to live up to.

This leads me on nicely to explain why I only build a kit car once every three years or so. It's not through lack of encouragement. I'm frequently approached by kit manufacturers to build their offerings, and accessory suppliers who would like their wares to be included in the build. Then, of course, there are a fair number of readers who express an interest in my next project.

Interestingly, the real reason I need breathing space between my garage antics is to recover and take stock. Ploughing a thousand hours plus into a project is exhausting in itself, but combining it with a constant strive for perfection whilst continually trying to break the mould results in, how can I put it?... a somewhat all-consuming experience. Ask my wife and children and they will know exactly what I mean! In short, I have a great time creating my masterpieces but unfortunately others can suffer a little, especially those close to me. Hence during this build I'm not only raising the bar to deliver my best projectile to date, but also aim to sustain a life balance throughout the duration.

To prove the point, I have asked my daughter, Evie, to scribe a small paragraph at the end of each feature giving her perspective of life with a fussy kit car builder. With differentials on the dining room table, components in the dishwasher, accessory catalogues littering the house, endless conversations about trim options over dinner, will harmony remain in our household? You can trust Evie to deliver the truth about such matters and all in teenager speak ... I must be mad. In an effort to allay my wife's fears that I will be totally obsessed by this build at the expense of our family life, and to foster some further father/son bonding I have also asked my son, Barnaby (10), to give me a hand with the project. 'You see,' I tried selling to my wife enthusiastically, 'it'll be fine. We can all be involved.' Mmm ... probably not my brightest idea to date.

On a serious note, I always strive to cover my builds extensively in an informative and entertaining manner, whilst trying to share the satisfaction such a project can deliver. One of my aims is to encourage those kit car virgins amongst you to take the plunge and get building. It's an incredibly rewarding experience and if you have youngsters they may even be impressed ... or maybe not!

Just look at the engine installation.



The pennies

I have several main criteria when choosing a kit car as a basis for a project. I'm not in the game of being given all the components from one manufacturer, bolting them together, driving the end result for a few weeks and giving it back. To start with, I like doing things differently and this means tracing components from multiple sources. Secondly, any project I undertake must be one I wish to own and drive. This is why I personally fund the complete build from start to finish and, at the end, the car is mine to enjoy. If I knew I had to give it back once completed the motivation to create the ultimate would be somewhat diluted, as I'm sure you can appreciate

The kit

Once I decided to start this project I found myself with a significant dilemma. Having built a Ferrari replica, two Westfield SEis, a Westfield SEiGHT, an Ultima GTR and, last but not least, a Cobra recreation, what would be the next logical candidate? In my mind I had always wanted to build a top-flight GT40 replica: a Ford 302 on quad throttle bodies, Gulf livery, knock-on Halibrands, the works. This, however, had far too many similarities to my last project, the Tojeiro, and I fancied a change. Also I thought the stress involved in adjusting the shut lines between umpteen body panels would definitely result in the self-destruction of my household! I had built a Ferrari replica and had done the Seven thing, and classic reproductions just don't float my boat. A little downbeat, I decided on a logical plan of

£1,000 of Aeroquip may have been a tad extravagant, but Nigel demonstrated in his scribbles how you can actually build the ultimate to a budget.



attack: a bottle of Chardonnay, an open log fire and a couple of hours to flick through our latest Kit Car guide. It's something I'd recommend to anyone thinking of building a kit, so armed with a large marker pen I started ploughing through the pages, ticking potential candidates. No ... no ... no ... maybe ... definitely not ... no ... a possibility ... Problem was, by the time I had waded through the two hundred plus pages - Den (Big Ed.) knows how to create a big publication - I was totally pissed. However, between wielding the indelible pen, throwing logs on the fire, and topping up my glass with Thresher's finest, one offering stood out from the rest. It made perfect sense. I had driven the manufacturer's demo car several years earlier and to this day believe it to be one of the most balanced, powerful and easiest kit cars I have ever driven. It was actually going to be my kit car of the year before I parted company from a previous magazine. In addition, there was huge scope to take the concept to another level. Technically I don't class it as a 'Seven' recreation and it definitely isn't a replica or

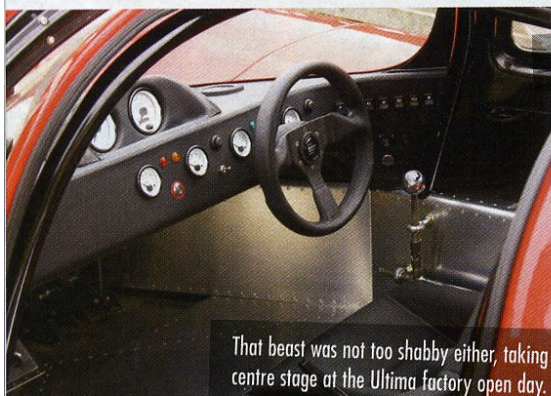
classic. What is it? A DAX Rush. A V8 DAX Rush to be precise.

The vision

My decision to build a V8 Rush was actually made about three months prior to writing this piece, so at this moment in time I have some concrete plans for the leviathan. I use this word for a reason: the drivetrain and (especially) the powerplant are going to be very, very special indeed. In previous projects I have rebuilt my own engines from the big ends up, but with this one I have a different approach. After much research and discussion, I have teamed up with one of the (if not the) most experienced companies and engine builders in the field. I'm not going to expand further at this point, but already I can't sleep for excitement over the installation! Combining my vision for the ultimate V8 Rush with the decades of experience from my partners in crime, the end result will definitely break the mould. I simply can't wait.



Before the Tojeiro came the Ultima GTR.



That beast was not too shabby either, taking centre stage at the Ultima factory open day.



Nigel's got a thing about V8s.

In the meantime I have been sourcing components and my office is packed to the gunnels with driveshafts, bearings, oil coolers and a sparkling differential, to name but a few pieces of seriously tasty hardware. I call them my executive toys, but they get in the way a bit I must admit.

All this adds up to a very exciting build, well, for me anyway and (if the orders for the complete set of my last build are anything to go by) I hope you will agree with me once again. The first instalment is planned for the May 2008 issue and I'll update you on a monthly basis as regards progress. Thrown-in for good measure will be loads of tips, techniques and contact details for all those who have supplied components for the Rush, plus a few others besides. How long will she take to build? I seriously don't know and I don't want to commit to a timescale. Everyone knows you can't rush an artist, so why should a kit car

builder be any different? It may sound a little cheesy to also include input from my daughter, but I feel an observer's perspective will be interesting - especially a teenager's!

So, the May 2008 issue it is for the first instalment of my DAX Rush V8. Will it live up to expectation? Who knows, but one thing is for sure. I'll give it my best shot.



The final choice ... a DAX Rush V8. This is a high-end example of the marque.