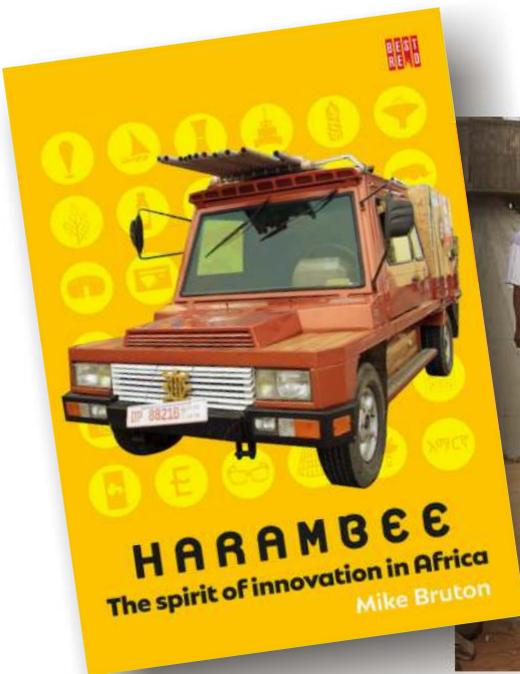


'Africa-made cars'



Turtle truck made from the parts of different vehicles in the Suame Magazine scrapyard in Accra, Ghana

Part two, based on the talk that Mike Bruton gave to the Crankhandle Club, extracted from his new book "Harambee". Copies of the book are available directly from Mike at a discounted price.

Many different kinds of cars and off-road vehicles are made in Africa. The story of the famous Turtle car in Ghana is quite remarkable. An artist from Rotterdam, Meile Smets, and a sociologist, Joost van Onna, visited Ghana to learn about the informal economy and follow the path of auto part waste in this west African country. They came across the giant Suame Magazine auto parts scrapyard, where old car parts are sorted and sold by over 200 000 technicians in 12 000 informal workshops. They realized that not all cars in Ghana end up as third-hand vehicles or waste and there is a dynamic autopart recycling industry, building 'new' cars from scrap parts.

In March 2012 they decided to find partners who could help them to develop cars made from 100% recycled parts and, with assistance from the Dutch government, they formed SMIDO (Suame Magazine Industrial Development Corporation) and SMATI (Suame Magazine Automatics Technical Institute). Within three months they had developed the first SMATI Turtle car, named after the reptile due to its robust construction.

Turtle 1 became the first Ghanaian car to be seen in the West when it toured motor shows and was proudly displayed next to the fully electric Tesla S. The Turtle 1, which has no electronics and is therefore easy to maintain and repair, is arguably the lowest tech automobile in the world and is somewhat reminiscent of the 'psychobilly Cadillac' built from different parts and described in Johnny Cash's 1976 song, 'One piece at a time'. The Turtle is a cross between steam punk and disnovation and is a classic product of the post-industrial revolution. As it does not comply with international safety and patent standards, it cannot be sold abroad but it has the potential to be useful in Africa.

Laraki, a car maker based in Casablanca, Morocco, is owned by luxury yacht designer, Abdeslam Laraki. The company designs and makes its own range of luxury, high performance cars including the Borac, Fulgura, which resembles a Lamborghini in look and spirit, and the formidable Epitome with a V8, 1 750 horsepower engine. This is the only officially recognised African-made supercar. Larakis are strictly concept cars that are custom-built for each customer and were ranked among the most expensive cars in the world in 2015, priced at over \$2 million each.

The legendary 'Libyan rocket', Saroukh el-Jamahiriya, designed in 1999 for the former dictator, Muammar Gaddafi, was the country's pride and joy. It was fast and luxurious and was pitted against German luxury car market leaders. Unfortunately, it never

went into full-time production, although it was a prime example of inventive North African design with its designers claiming that it was one of the safest cars ever made. It had many innovative safety features including the ability to drive for long distances on flat tyres and a fully electronic safety system with airbags for all four seats.

The small but powerful Wallyscar, manufactured in Tunisia since 2006, is a relative new entry into the lucrative off-road market. The company is building a strong reputation for affordable, reliable and powerful 4x4s, despite the relatively small size of its vehicles, which are similar to Suzuki and Skoda off-roaders. Before the Covid pandemic, Wallyscar was selling over 600 units a year, predominately in Africa and the Middle East, but also in Panama and Europe. The company's plans include making its colourful, sporty vehicles more environmentally friendly.

The Nyayo Car was a project by the Kenyan government to plan and make its own cars, but it never came to fruition. The project was initiated in 1986 by then-President Daniel arap Moi, who asked the University of Nairobi to develop the vehicle. Five prototypes were made, named Pioneer Nyayo Cars, and the Nyayo Motor Corporation was established to mass produce them. However, due to lack of funds, the car never went into production. The Nyayo Motor Corporation was later renamed Numerical Machining Complex Ltd and now manufactures metal parts for local industries.

Mobius Motors was a more successful venture. It was founded in Kenya in 2011 by Joel Jackson to design and manufacture SUVs specifically for the African mass market. Mobius II was conceived by re-imagining a vehicle around the realities of the African consumer rough road terrain, high vehicle loading, and low average



Wallyscar

income levels. The result was a tough SUV that sold at the price of a used sedan.

Namibia can lay claim to URI off-road vehicles which are available in two models, the URI Desert Runner, a simple, reliable jeep with civil, military and police modifications, and the URI Mining Vehicle, with two low-profile cab heights (1.4 and 1.8 m). The original URI all-terrain truck was designed and built by Ewert Smithis, an Angora goat farmer based in Windhoek, Namibia, in 1995. He named it 'Uri' after the Khoisan Nama word for 'jump'.

The vehicle was extensively tested in the Kalahari Desert for rallying as well as for agricultural, police, military and mining applications and small-scale production started in Witvlei, Namibia, in 2001. Production was subsequently taken over by Uri International Vehicle & Equipment Marketing (UVM) in Watloo, Pretoria.

In 2008 UVM became a subsidiary of the South African defence contractor, Ivema, and, since 2015, the vehicle has been produced by Uri Purposely Built Vehicle of Rustenburg, whose cofounders, Andre and Raymond Squire, purchased all the intellectual property in URI. The Land

Cruiser 79 4.5D V8 Namib single- and double-cab off-road vehicles have also been developed and sold in Namibia.

The Nigerian vehicle maker, Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company, was originally commissioned by Goodluck Jonathan (president of Nigeria from 2010 to 2015) and founded by Innocent Chukwuma. It is based in Anambra state and is one of Africa's most successful automobile ventures. The company built on its success as a manufacturer of reliable buses and trucks to branch out into building the ubiquitous Uzo minibus taxis, small trucks, sports utility vehicles and the ambitious Fox sedan, released in 2015.

The Kiira EV SMACK, a sedan hybrid-electric vehicle, was originally developed as a group design project by engineering students at Uganda's Makerere University for a project headed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and is the first African-made hybrid electronic vehicle. The five-seater sedan is powered by a rechargeable battery and has an internal combustion engine-based generator which charges the battery.

The Kiira EV was launched in 2014 and went on sale in 2018. The Ugandan government has invested \$40 million in Kiira Motors

Corporation to create an affordable hybrid car for the African market and turn Uganda into the hub of the automotive industry in East Africa. With the factory in Kampala developing various sedan, off-road and urban variations, the company had hoped to go into full production by 2018, employing 10 000 people and making 300 vehicles a year, but its plans have been partly foiled by the pandemic.

Another Ghana-based automobile company, Kantanka, founded by Apostle Safo Kantanka, assembles passenger vehicles

(mainly SUVs and pickup trucks) in Gomoa Mpota in central Ghana, but the company has reportedly pushed back the commercial release of its models pending approval from the Ghana Standards Authority.

Since 2009 Madagascar has been producing the Karenja Mazana, a rugged 4x4. In their factory in Fianarantsoa, a staff of 60 people, including six women, has produced 140 Karenjays ('stroll' in Malagasy), with all parts, except the Peugeot engine, being designed and made locally.



Libyan Rocket car

Kiira EV Smack car - Uganda



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