

Derek Hulse's Ford Sierra XR8

By Derek Hulse
Photos Viv James



On September 11, Derek Hulse gave an excellent talk on his Ford Sierra XR8. This is a rare car, built only in SA in 1985 as a Ford SA Special to compete with other SA Specials in Group One Championship saloon car racing (see my article in the Chronicle Oct 2023). It is fitted with a 5-litre Ford Mustang V8 and only 252 cars were built.

A brief summary of the XR8 presentation of the September Seniors' meeting by Derek Hulse.

I came across the XR8 by accident when I bought an Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint from a friend who is known for collecting cars and never selling them. It took me two years to extract the Alfa from him, so I knew it would take

some time for me to buy the XR8! My main interest in the car was that it was a one-registered-owner car with 30 000km on the clock and had all the handbooks, even the supplement for the XR8, which is very rare, the spare key and was stock standard.

Long story short, I had got very close to doing the deal when, sadly, the owner died of a heart attack. Fortunately, his wife was aware that I was trying to buy the car. I managed to buy the car from the estate only to discover that the car was still registered in the original owner's name, who was also long deceased! I was fortunate enough to track down the executor of the original owner, who was eventually able to give me the necessary documentation, a case of no pain no gain. As the car had been in storage for 25 years and the license had not been kept up to date, I had to go through the whole police clearance process. Four months later I'm still waiting for the registration document!

The recommissioning was relatively straight forward. It involved the overhaul of the cooling system, fuel system,

brakes, new shocks and new tyres, which were the original Generals. The end result is very nice original low-mileage example.

In 1983/84 Ford SA decided to enter Group One racing to take on the likes of Alfa Romeo and BMW amongst others. They decided to build the required number of units for homologation (5 litres/ 200 units). The motor chosen was the Mustang 302cu in (5lt) V8 unit with a Holley 4-barrel carburettor, a relatively under-stressed motor. Around 90 components / modifications were made. Amongst these were the fitting of AP Racing 4 pot caliper to the front and Ferrari 308 calipers at the rear. This was one of the limiting components to the production run. The front and rear cross members had to be redesigned, the radiator was uprated and moved forward to accommodate the V8, which was 100mm longer than the V6. The fan was removed, and twin electric fans were fitted in front of the uprated radiator, which necessitated a redesigned grill. One must remember that this was all before CAD and so everything was hand drawn. Brian Gush still has all the original

drawings. The Granada 5-speed gearbox was used and a redesigned propshaft, Granada 84GB diff and unique CV joint and driveshafts were used.

A more detailed article on the XR8 by Roger Houghton was published in the September 2021 edition of the Crankhandle Chronicle. Car magazine also published a four-page road test in the Jan 1985 edition.

The total production of the XR8 was 252 and, unlike most vehicles, the numbering was by engine rather than by body/chassis number. This was because the Sierra body shells were taken off the normal production line as and when needed. The ID plates of all XR8s are riveted to the body under the right hand headlight. The engine numbers started with RY 00001 and ended with RY 00252, my car is number 110. The body number prefix was EY and, as mentioned, these were not consecutive.

My thanks to Brian Gush for the power point slides and lots of information that those who attended the Seniors' presentation at the club enjoyed.



*Derek Hulse
in full swing
before an
enthusiastic
gathering of
Seniors*



HISTORIC ADVENTURES

SPECIALISTS IN CLASSIC AND VINTAGE CAR ADVENTURES THROUGH EXOTIC LOCATIONS

Join us on our next historic adventure
To book visit www.historic-adventures.co.uk
+27 83 301 7090 / info@historic-adventures.co.uk



McCarthy's AUTO DETAILING
PAINT • RIM • TRIM

DETAILING NOW OPEN

Your No.1 Interior & Exterior Specialists

Mobile Repair Concept **WE COME TO YOU**

Loving your exterior **PAINT** Since 1996
 Shining that **RIM** Since 1996
 Keeping her **TRIM** Since 1996

McCarthy's AUTO TRIMMERS
PAINT • RIM • TRIM

086 100 (TRIM) 8746
 021 510 3531
 www.mccarthystrim.co.za