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The Home of Uncle Abarth

A personal museum in Belgium celebrates the work and life of Carlo Abarth

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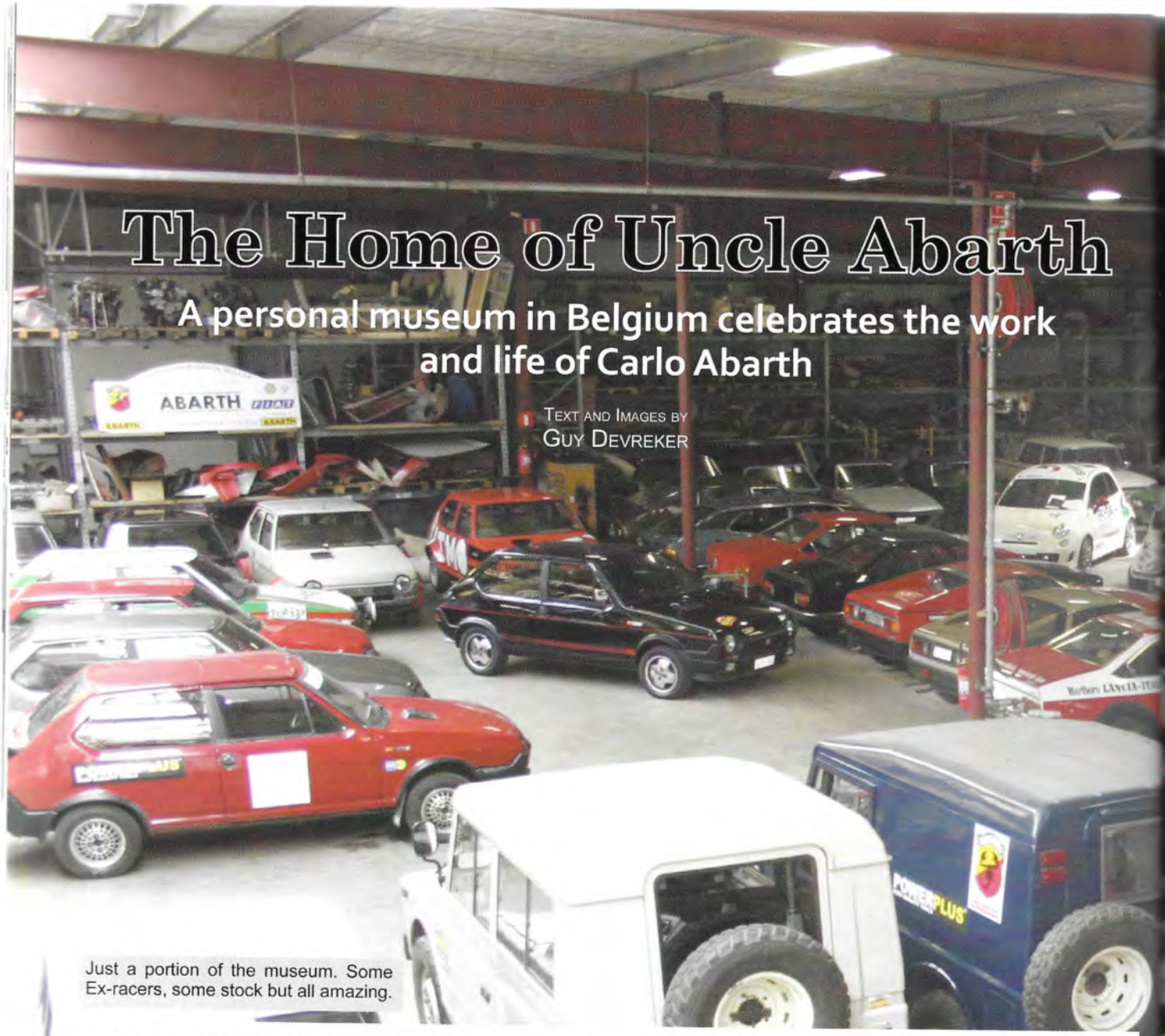


Just a portion of the museum. Some Ex-racers, some stock but all amazing.

Just over 37 years ago, Belgian Guy Moerenhout started his sporting career as a rally driver in Belgian events. He inherited this passion from his father, who was himself a famous racing driver in the '60s. Guy drove various makes of cars from the Honda Civic Mugen to the Ford Escort and Capri. By 1978, he owned a small car dealership, selling Russian Ladas.

His company specialized in preparing rally Ladas and off road Lada Nivas, and he himself competed in national and international rally competitions with Fiat Uno Turbos, Alfa GTV6s, Fiat Ritmo Abarths and, of course, his own Lada cars. Some years later, he started a rental company with rally cars and owned a fleet of four Porsches. He drove one himself and finished twice on the final fifth place of the gruelling British Rally Championships in 1995 and 1996. In 1997 his love for Fiats emerged, so he bought some 500's and 600's and arrived at the Abarth brand – he decided that this should be the direction for him. These cars were all pretty straightforward, with little mechanical items and the best buy on the market.

Then, everything went very fast.

He got to know Polish racing driver, Jaroszewicz, the European Rally Champion, who looked to sell all his stock. One original Fiat 124 Abarth Spyder group 4 (one of 25 made), a few Fiat 124s, 125s, Polski Fiats, X1/9s and lots and lots of parts. Jaroszewicz had some Fiat clients and friends in Poland, like Rally Champion Marek Sadowski, and knew where to get more cars and parts, and .....the ABARTH SQUADRA STORICA got underway!

This name was invented by Guy Moerenhout to cover the passion and the business and this meant the real start of his Abarth story. His father in law, wife and son own a tool distribution and construction company, PowerPlus, and when they moved to a new complex, Guy sold his own building near Antwerp and moved to the old PowerPlus building, a 3,500-square metre facility in Lier. It should be his own Abarth playground, but in his mind he liked to please the fanatic Abarth guys! From then on, everything went well.

At the same time, he met Michel Pont, owner of the 'Chateau de Savigny' in France, who owns a big collection of fighter planes, motorcycles and a lot of Abarth cars and he asked Guy to restore eight pieces in his Abarth Collection. Guy performed the work with much love, but at the same time, gained an immense amount of information and ideas for his own collection.

Today, Guy's building houses a museum, home, shop, meeting room, café, workshop, warehouse and showroom to display and, eventually, sell cars. Numerous Fiat Abarths have found their way to his home. Fiat 500's, 600's, Fiat 124 Spyder Abarths, 131 Mirafiori, X 1/9's, Formula Italia's and so on. His collection of cars is divided in three categories: complete original cars, fully-restored cars (but converted to rally spec with original rally plates and in original livery) and the remakes with the correct body parts of Abarth that should normally be impossible to have. He decided his friends and Abarth lovers should be able to do the same thing, so he found a company to remake bodies of the Abarth Periscope 1300, the Mono mille, Bialbero, Biposte Cuneo and the 2000 Sport Spyder. For rally cars, people can buy body extensions for the Fiat X 1/9 prototipo, the 030, 131 and 124 Abarth.

Some remarkable facts about this unique collection:

Fiat 124 Abarth group 4:
25 produced; 1 original and 5 remakes the collection

Fiat 124 Abarth:
1,113 produced; 10 in the collection

Fiat 131 Abarth:
400 produced; 5 in the collection

Simca 1000 Abarth:
10 produced; 1 in the collection

Simca Abarth Corsa:
55 produced; 2 in the collection

In total, Guy owns 40 original Abarths, including 'small' Abarth cars, like the Simca Abarth 1300, Double Bubble Corsa, Alemano and Bialbero. Some of these cars were used for measuring and photography by toy manufacturers

Guy has many parts for Fiat brands and Abarth.

Fiat Abarth rally cars are desirable-Guy has real ones and can recreate them.

Ixo and Spark Models to help them to produce correctly proportioned die cast models. By 2010, there will be a book with pictures and details of all the cars in the museum.

Currently, some 50 Fiat cars are waiting for rebuild or restoration. When the widow of Carlo Abarth visited the museum in 2008, she was extremely pleased with what she saw and wrote in his guestbook, *"A big compliment to Guy Moerenhout that he is keeping with the name and the ideas of Carlo Abarth."*

Guy's unique collection and love for the Abarth cars also introduced him to former Prime Minister of Belgium, and now European Presidential Candidate, Guy Verhofstadt, who is an Italian car fanatic, with a passion for Fiats. He became a regular visitor to the museum, and recently bought a rare Fiat Abarth in the United States, and, before registering it in Belgium, will send it through the hands of this Abarth Guru.

Some clients ask him for special commissions, like the full restoration of a Maserati motorbike, or the rebuild of an original Lancia Stratos. Guy keeps a small workshop for himself, occasionally letting friends needing help preserving special vehicles (even non-Abarth cars) work there. Regularly classic car clubs have their meetings in his museum, from time to time it is the starting place of an old-timer rally, some press presentation of cars and events, but above all, this museum from Uncle Abarth, as he is known by insiders and family, is a home for people with passion for cars.

The museum is a living museum. The cars are prepared and decorated as Guy likes them, without any commercial thought. Nevertheless, this means almost everything is for sale (or can be…) and he is also buying regularly. Because of this, Guy also has a warehouse with countless engines,

Guy will restore and enhance certain vehicles.

Guy himself-racer, restorer, historian.

Several 124s and a ferocious racer tucked in the back corner.

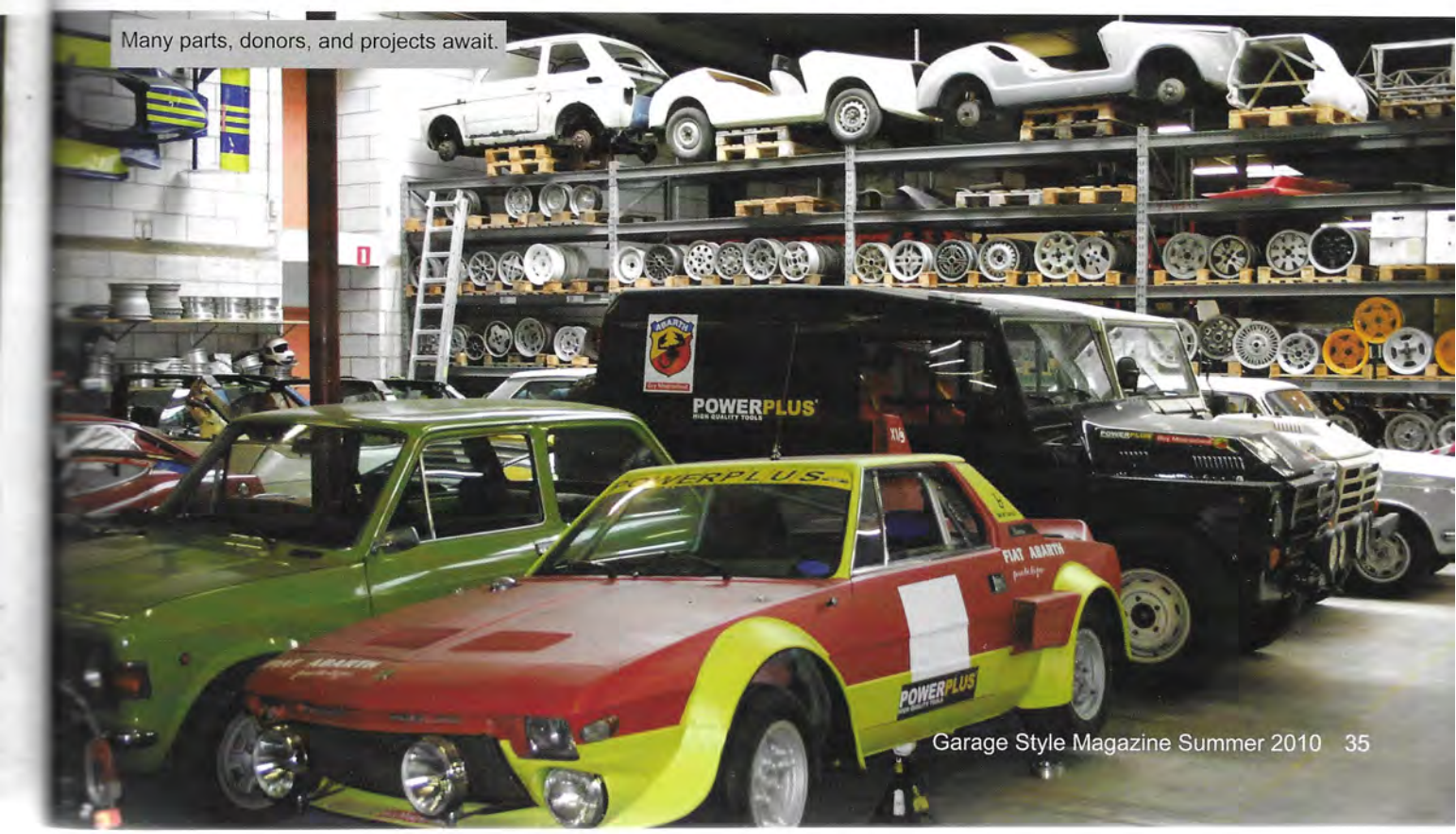
gearboxes, axles, wheels, body parts and so on. In his shop, he sells remake Polyester body extensions, steering wheels, body parts, Abarth signs and type plates – in other words, everything to prepare an original, modified or remake of an Abarth car.

A truly unique treat, Guy also created a rental service, which is popular for classic car events. Now that the new Fiat 500 Abarth is having introductions on the Belgian market, Guy is providing dealers with famous and priceless history for their displays.

He is also recognised by many prominent people in the automotive world and so he was offered, some months ago, the original Fiat 125 S that in 1969 the Fiat factory had given to racing driver and famous car journalist, the late Paul Frère himself for all the help and loyalty they received from him. It is a one-off 'family car,' in a special blue-grey color, equipped with rally suspension parts, De Carbon shock absorbers and the twin-carb 1,608cc Abarth Works engine. The car has only run 35,000-kilometres, and is dearly treasured by Guy.

Just to show the purpose of this museum and the ideas behind this collection, seen as Abarth's home in Belgium, we must notify that Guy was present in June 2009, in France, at the 'Chateau de Savigny' in Savigny- les-Beaune, during the event in memory of the 30th anniversary of the death of Carlo Abarth. There were hundreds of Abarth cars and Abarth aficionados from all over Europe, including Guy and a few of his cars, family and friends, and instead of being an exhibitor with a sales shop with Abarth parts and so, he was running 'Guy's Bar,' talking with other Abarth lovers and serving the famous Belgian beer, DUVEL.

His car spirit runs deeply, but a special place in his heart belongs to Abarth. GSM



Many parts, donors, and projects await.