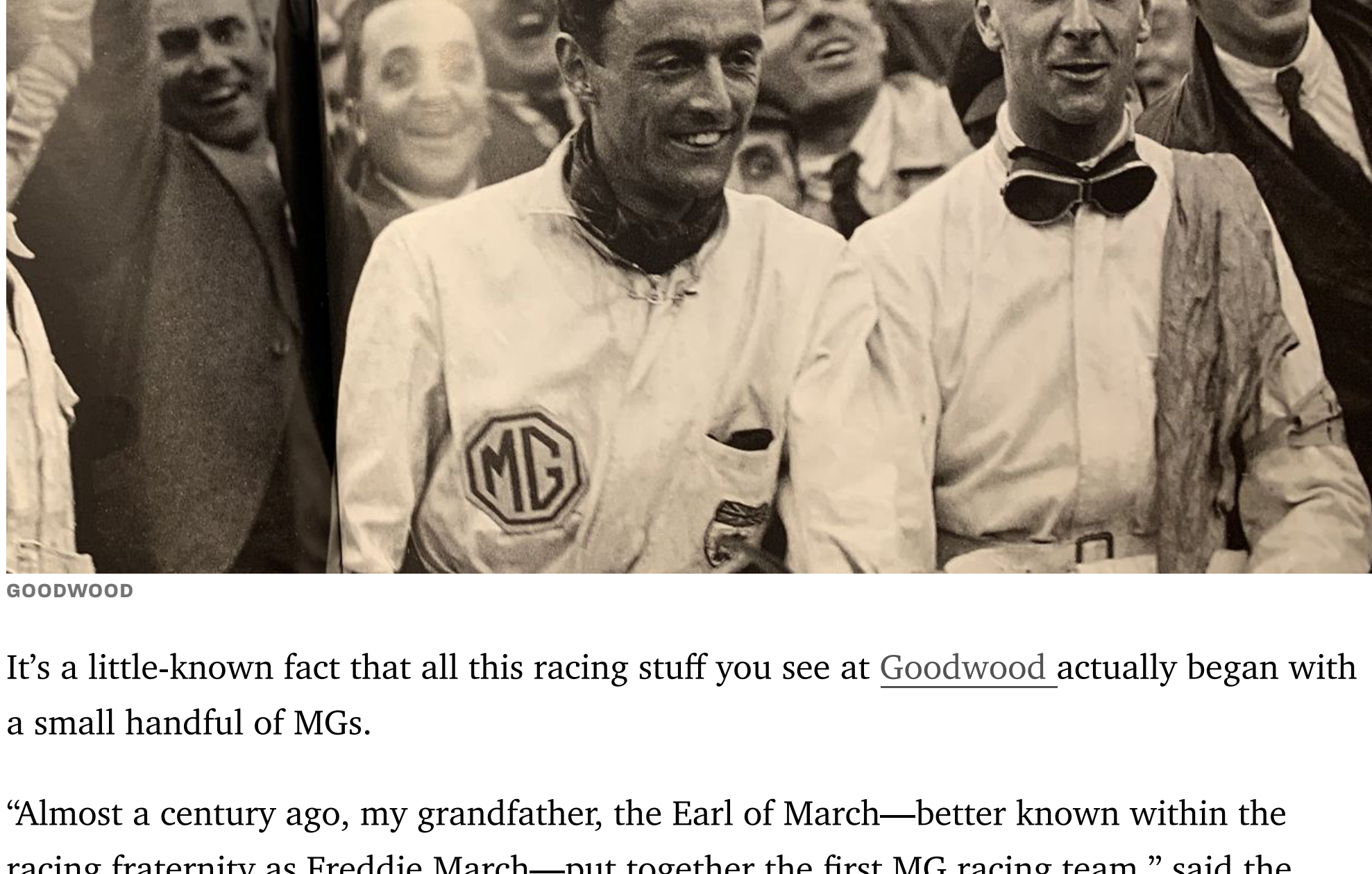


CAR LIFE

Goodwood Celebrates 100 Years of MG

Over many owners and a few halts to production, the old Morris Garages continues to make fun sports cars.

BY [MARK VAUGHN](#) PUBLISHED: JUL 16, 2024



GOODWOOD

It's a little-known fact that all this racing stuff you see at [Goodwood](#) actually began with a small handful of MGs.

"Almost a century ago, my grandfather, the Earl of March—better known within the racing fraternity as Freddie March—put together the first MG racing team," said the Duke of Richmond, formerly [Lord March](#), Freddie's grandson.

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Freddie bought the very first C-Type MGs from MG founder Cecil Kimber in 1931 and promptly won the Double Twelve race at Brooklands, a 24-hour contest split into two days. Then he won the 500 Miles at Goodwood, the Irish Grand Prix, and the Tourist Trophy. MGs were among the winners at the first races held at the [Goodwood Circuit](#) in 1948 and remained competitive up until the track closed in 1966.

So it seems entirely fitting that the Duke of Richmond would choose this year at the [Goodwood Festival of Speed](#) to celebrate MG's 100th anniversary.

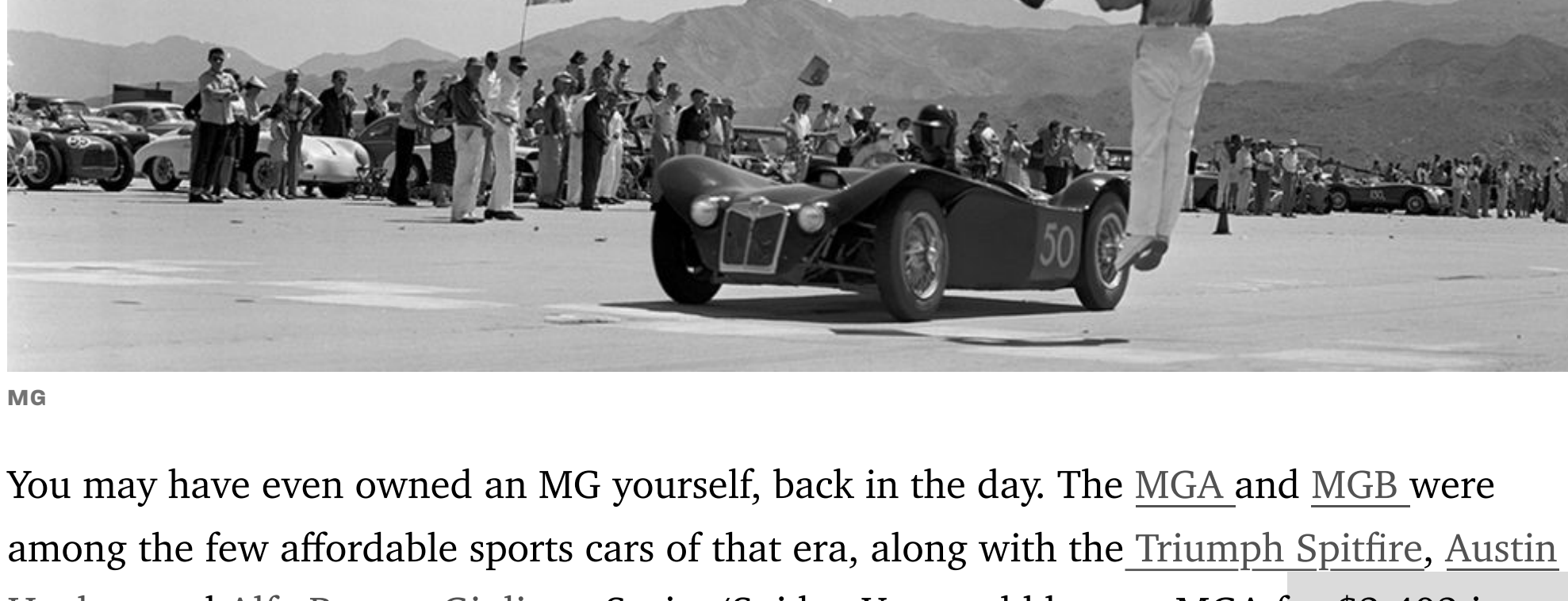


MATT ALEXANDER/PA MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

Two MGs balanced on a spear.

To that end, a massive sculpture in front of Goodwood House did its best to capture 100 years of the sports car maker, with a gasoline-powered Mk1 MGB on one end and a modern all-electric Cyberster on the other. The two cars balanced above the lawn like a two-headed dart, one end looking back toward what was, the other aimed straight for the future.

A 100th anniversary only comes once, so both MG and Goodwood wanted to do it right. In addition to the sculpture, on hand at this year's Festival of Speed were: an ex-works Magnette K3 in which [Tazio Nuvolari](#) had driven to victory in the 1939 Tourist Trophy at the Ards Circuit in Northern Ireland; a 1929 C-Type owned and [raced by Freddie March](#); the EXE181 electric concept that is itself a tribute to the 1957 EX181 that [Stirling Moss](#) and later [Phil Hill](#) drove to over 200 mph at [Bonneville](#); and modern MGs like an MG HS Plug-In Hybrid SUV and the all-electric Cyber GTS Concept.



You may have even owned an MG yourself, back in the day. The [MGA](#) and [MGB](#) were among the few affordable sports cars of that era, along with the [Triumph Spitfire](#), [Austin Healey](#), and [Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint/Spider](#). You could buy an MGA for \$2,402 in 1958 before taxes. A 1953 MG TD was \$2,115. A 1948 TC was \$2,238. Not terribly cheap for the day, but not completely unaffordable, either, especially if you waited a few years and bought it used.

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The MG TC was the first European sports car to be imported into the United States in any great numbers after WWII. Popular history says G.I.s returning from service in WWII brought them. However they got here, they changed the way American drivers thought about the automobile. While domestic coupes and sedans of the day were top-heavy and cornered on their door handles, an MG TC was lightweight and nimble, without squealing from the tormented tires.

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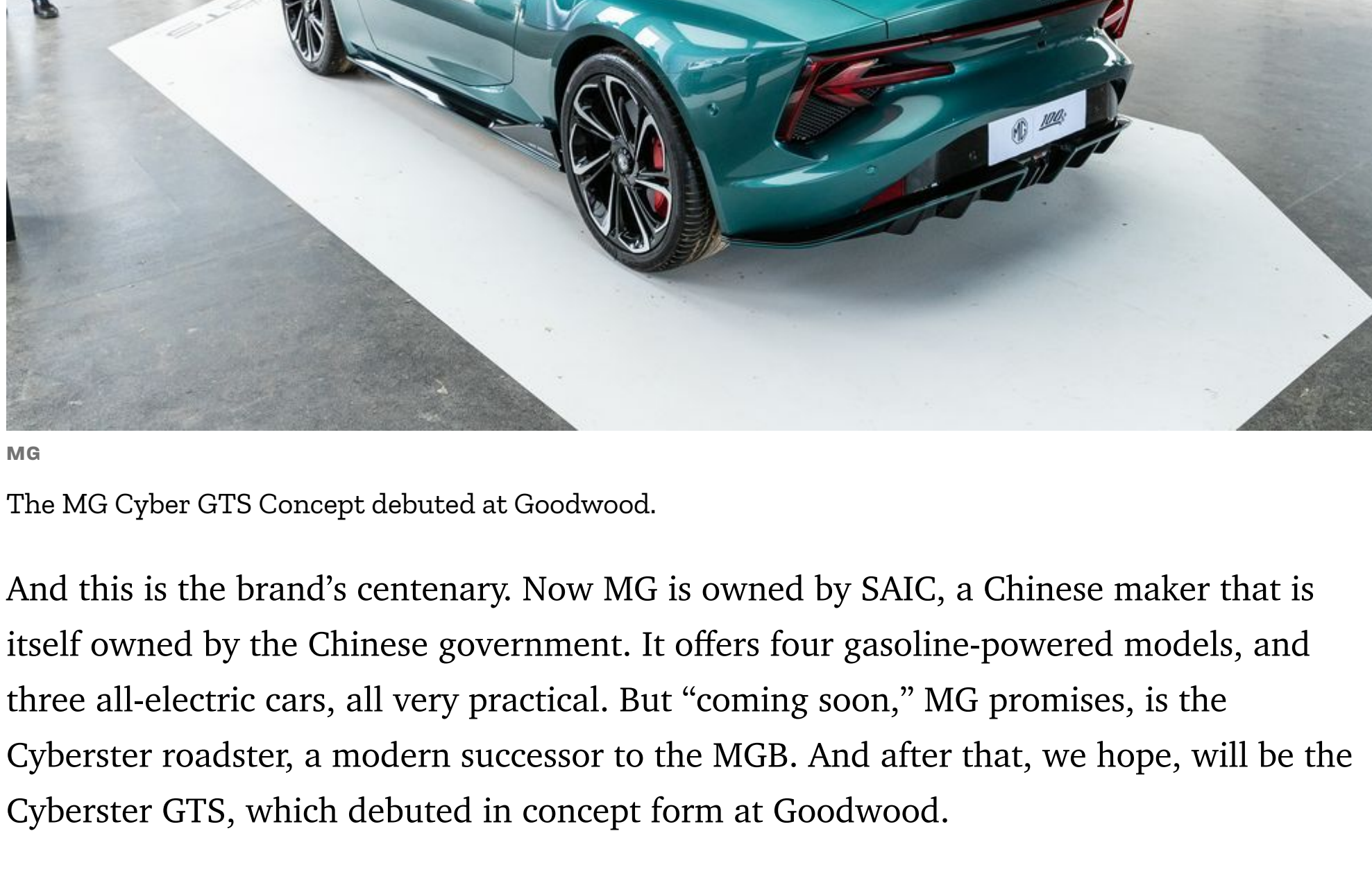
"It was mostly the way MGs handled that excited the Americans."

"It was mostly the way MGs handled that excited the Americans," noted Auto Quest, an investment car dealer in Tifton, Georgia. "Here was a car that went where you pointed it and did not roll sickeningly at every bend. The driver was the best, not the car."

The MG was the first car of many a later-famous racer, including [Carroll Shelby](#), who won his first race in an MG TC, as well as [Steve McQueen](#) and Autoweek's own [Denise McCluggage](#), to name just three.

Other greats who started out in MGs were: [Phil Hill](#), [Richie Ginther](#), [Ken Miles](#), [Jack McAfee](#), [Bob Holbert Sr.](#), [Briggs Cunningham](#), [Miles Collier](#), [David E. Davis](#), [John von Neuman](#), and [Dick Thompson](#). There's even a book by Carl Goodwin called *They Started in MGs* that chronicles the early races of 79 later-famous drivers who launched their careers in an MG.

The MG was also the first of the many post-war sports cars that would later launch the SCCA, the Cal Club, and spur the building of many a road course across America.



MG

The MG Cyber GTS Concept debuted at Goodwood.

And this is the brand's centenary. Now MG is owned by SAIC, a Chinese maker that is itself owned by the Chinese government. It offers four gasoline-powered models, and three all-electric cars, all very practical. But "coming soon," MG promises, is the Cyberster roadster, a modern successor to the MGB. And after that, we hope, will be the Cyberster GTS, which debuted in concept form at Goodwood.

MORE GOODWOOD



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While the Cyberster roadster uses dual electric motors driving the rear wheels, it's possible the Cyberster GTS Concept 2+2 electric hardtop coupe will have a single electric motor driving the rear wheels. From certain angles the GTS looks like a little Aston Martin. Consider it a rolling argument against those EV tariffs.

And consider Goodwood's tribute a perfectly fitting honor to a brand that has meant so much to so many.

MARK VAUGHN
 Mark Vaughn grew up in a Ford family and spent many hours holding a trouble light over a straight-six miraculously fed by a single-barrel carburetor while his father cursed the Blue Oval, all its products and everyone who ever worked there. This was his introduction to objective automotive criticism. He started writing for City News Service in Los Angeles, then moved to Europe and became editor of a car magazine called, creatively, Auto. He decided Auto should...

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jturmer 40 minutes ago
 MG's are the cornerstone of sports car evolution and important for all of us. IMHO the two cars should have been the MG "M" type and the MG3. The true alpha and omega.
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oneduffly12 1 hour ago
 I think it's great that the MG name still lives and a few models are still manufactured. It matters less to me who the current custodian of the name is than that the name still exists. I'm not happy China owns it but they paid for it and that's that. I find it sad that MG's 100th anniversary has been...
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MGWrench 1 hour ago
 Overall, I agree with your article. Just to be clear, MG does not stand for Morris Garages. It does not stand for anything. Cecil Kimber was the manager of the Morris Garages and liked the way the letters M and G sounded together, that's why the company was incorporated as the MG Car Company....
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IrishRond 1 hour ago
 Sorry, but MG is no longer Morris Garages... Try Mao's Garage.
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romad 1 hour ago
 Being owned by Red China makes it DOA.
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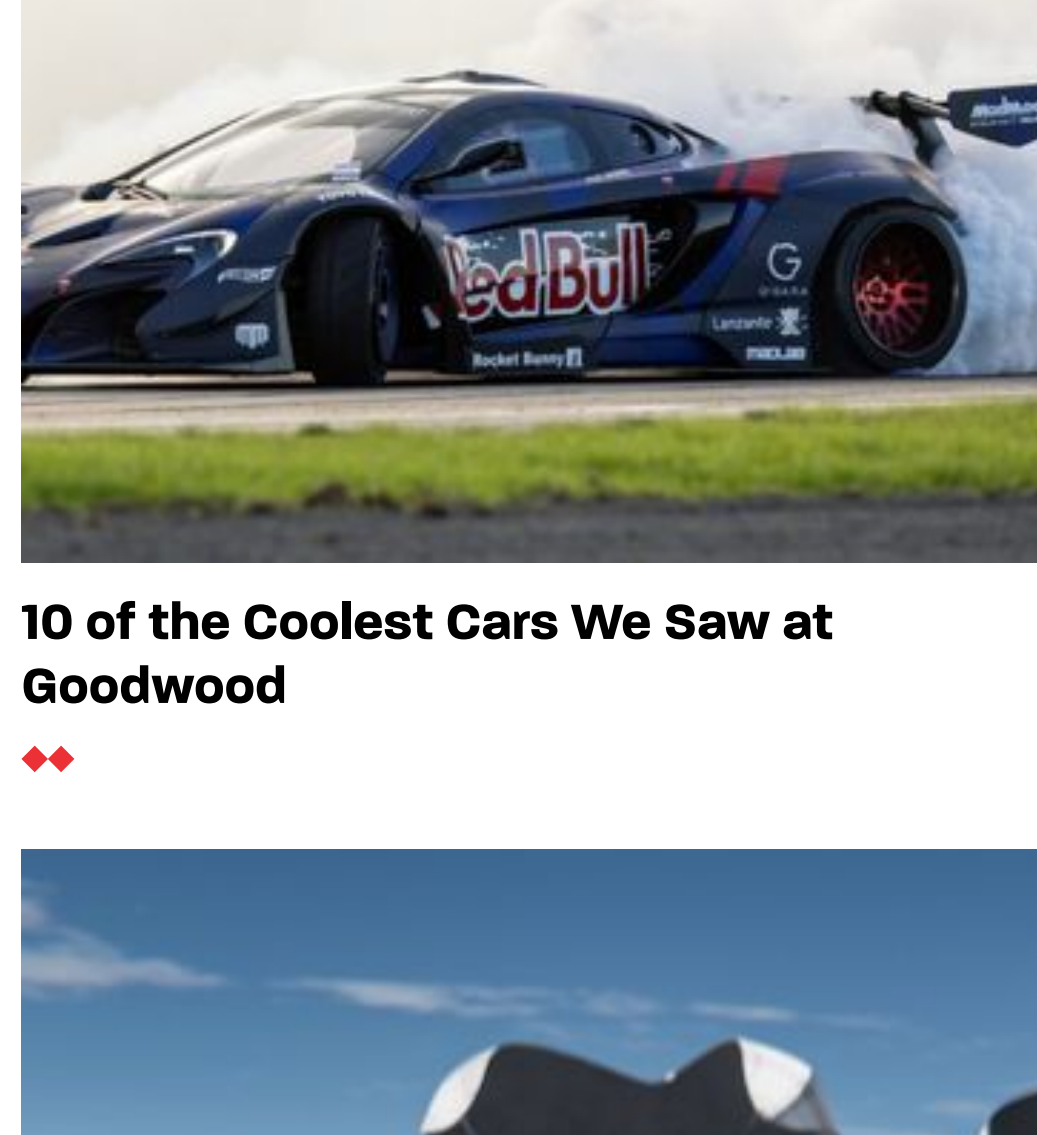
mat6105 2 hours ago
 Can we please name these articles "Hey! Guess What Was a Famous Brand and is NOW Owned By the Lying, Cheating, Spying Communist Gov't of China?" Or maybe just say something like "Chinese overlords buy ancient car company, tout air bags made from recycled spy balloons"
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Lefty1943 2 hours ago
 I want to see pics of motorcycles, not women (or men).
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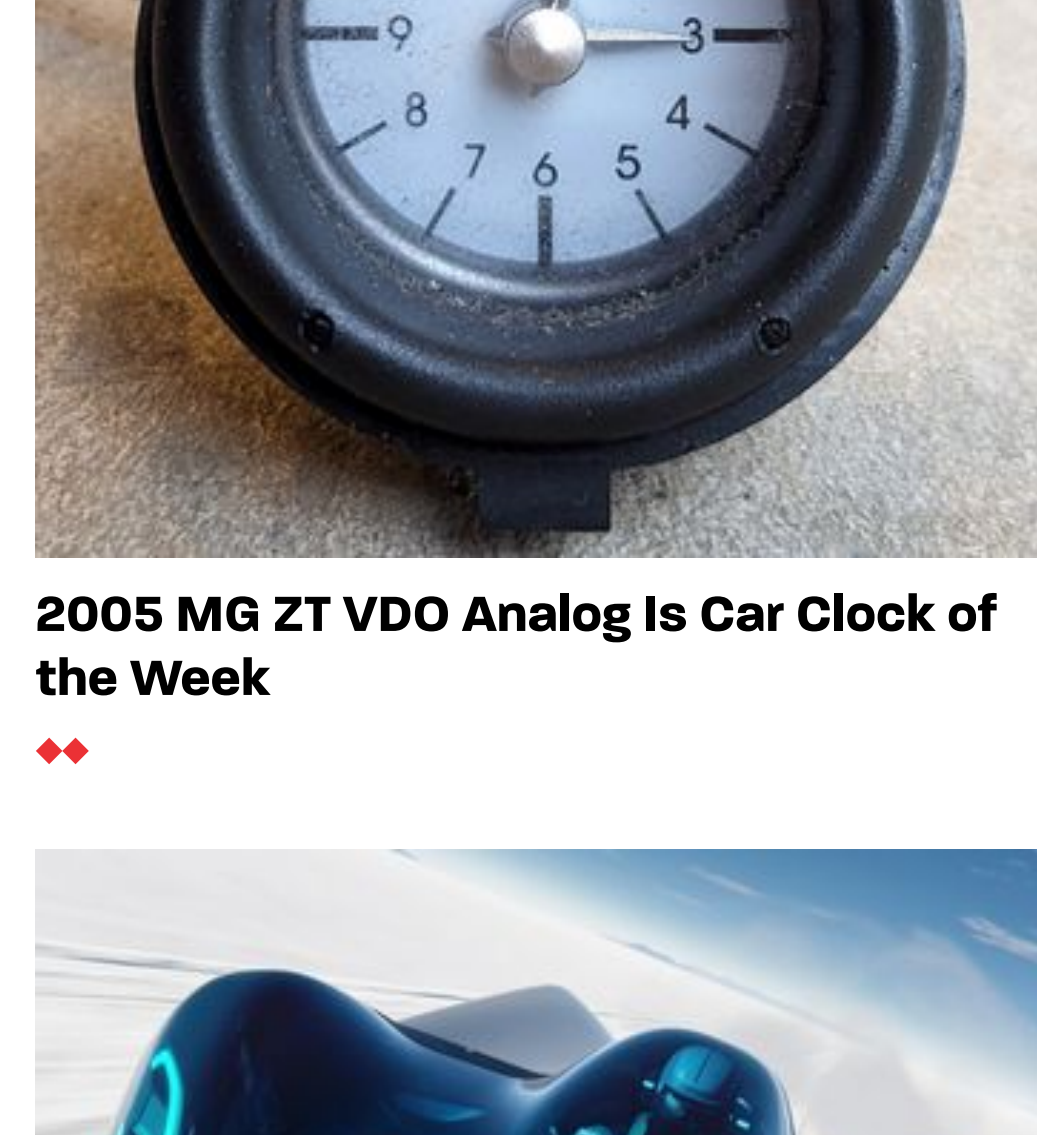
hansstein 3 hours ago
 Singer Johnny Cash had an MG TC while stationed in Landsberg/Germany
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MG

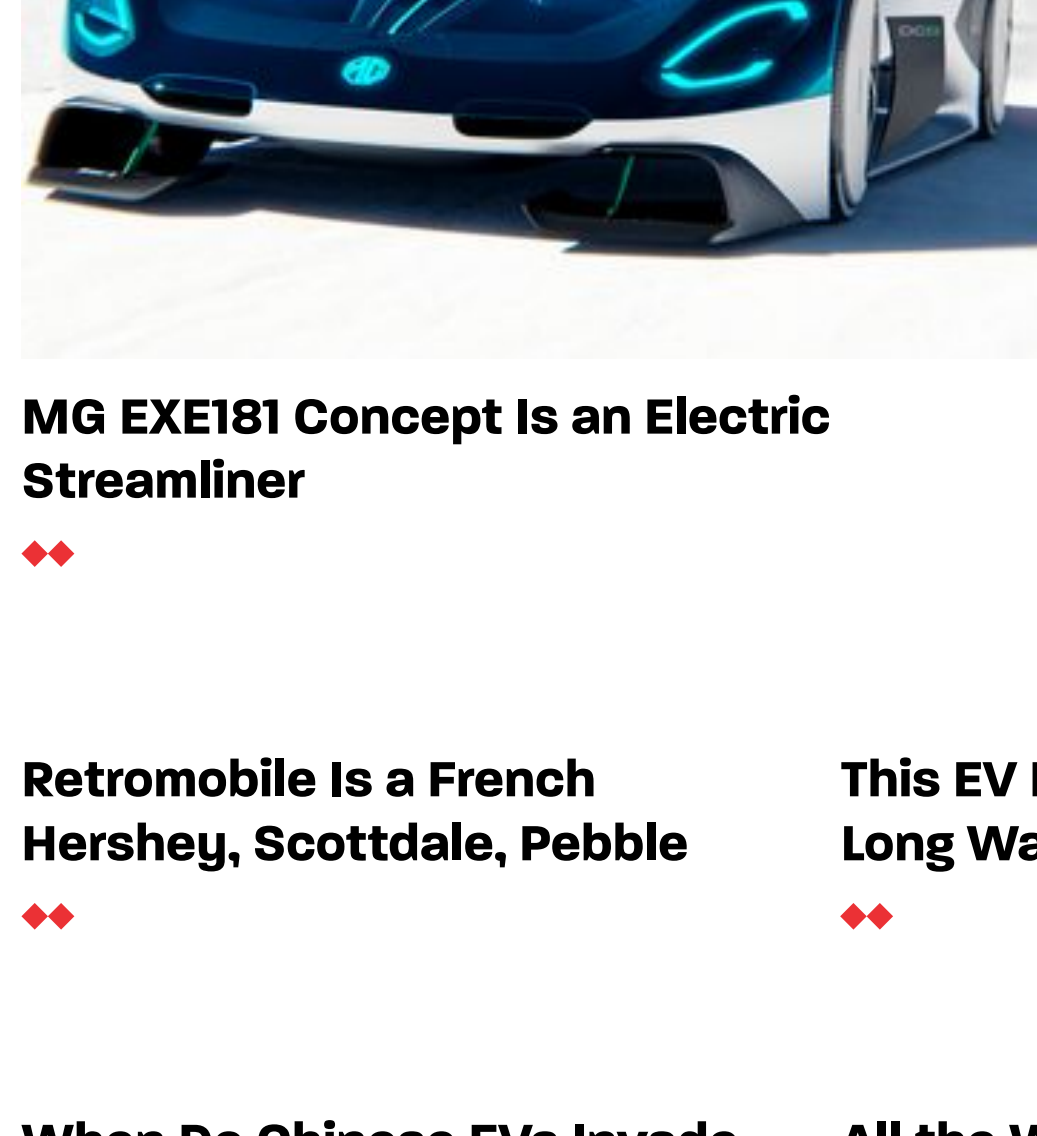


10 of the Coolest Cars We Saw at Goodwood

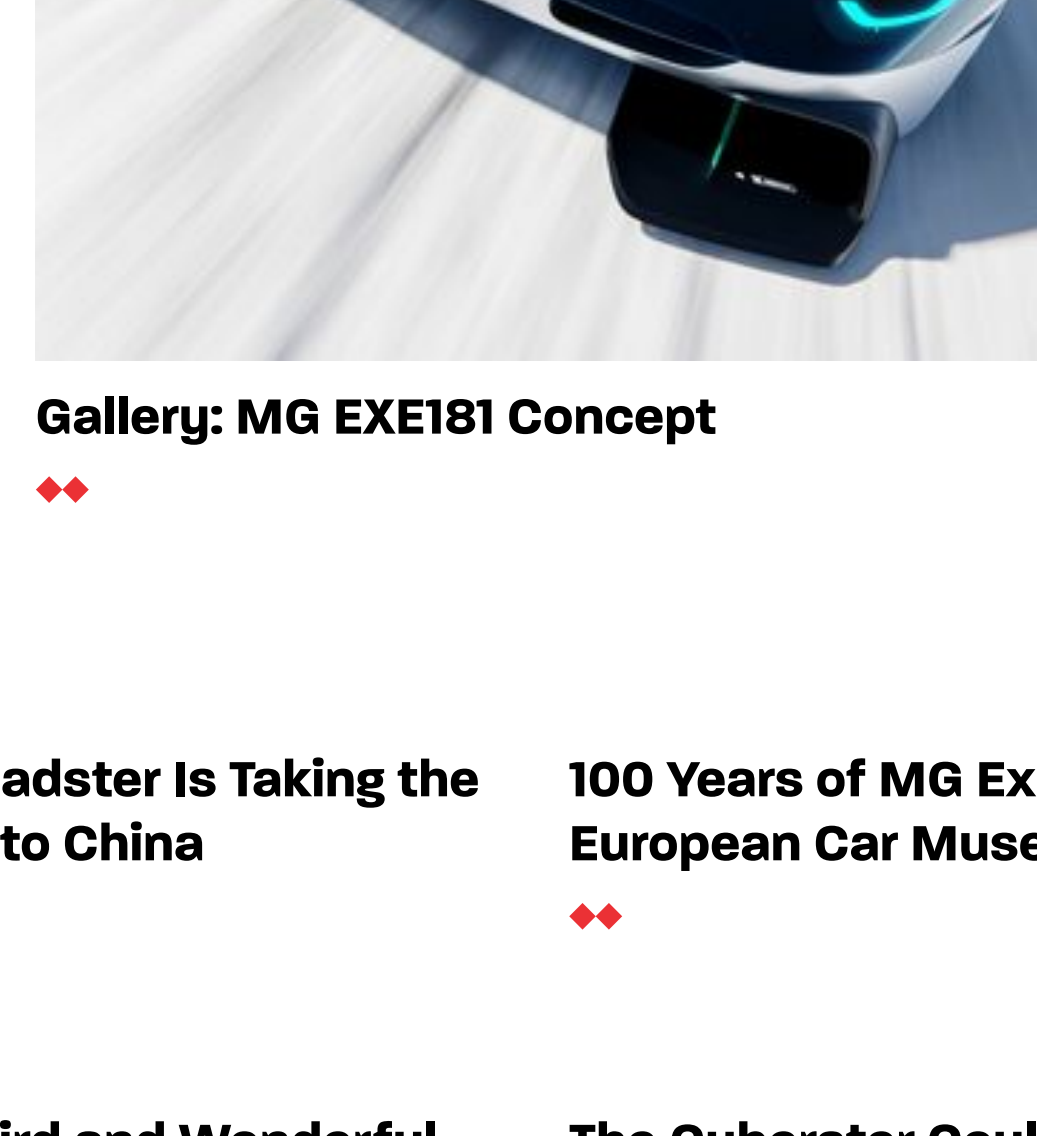


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MG EXE181 Concept is an Electric Streamliner



Gallery: MG EXE181 Concept

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