



Yvon Botcazou, classic car enthusiast and journalist

Jeff: I'm here with Yvon Botcazou and we're going to be discussing the work he does and also his hobbies. Hello Yvon.

Yvon: Hello.

Jeff: First of all I'd like to ask you what it is you do for a living?

Yvon: What I do for a living is writing articles about classic cars, old cars and also photographing them. It came naturally. I didn't do a photography school but, uh, I liked photography and so I progressed. When I was 27 I had a chance to, to be employed by a publisher who specialised in classic cars and classic motorcycles. So it was 25 years ago. So it lasted until 2006 and then I became a freelance journalist so I left the, the magazine. Most of my work is working at home thanks to Internet. Sometimes I go out to do reports, either on outings, exhibitions, rallies but most of the work is about specific cars. So I test the cars and I write about the story about the way they feel at the, at the wheel. I work for some magazines, mostly specialised in English cars, American cars sometimes and Mercedes- Benz cars which are a passion for me. My other interests in cars are the coach-built cars especially Italian cars from the '50s to the '70s, the, the golden era of coach-building in Italy such things as Bertone, Pininfarina, or less well known Vignale who worked for

Ferrari others also. Freelance stylist I'm very fond of whose name is Giovanni Michalotti who worked for many, many coach-building houses in Italy and for car dealers too especially Triumph in England.

Jeff: You mention Mercedes and I know you're very interested in Mercedes but why Mercedes - what's special about Mercedes?

Yvon: It was the pioneer of car making. So at the beginning there were two pioneers. So there, there was Daimler on one side and Benz on the other side so they merged only in the 1926 to, to form Mercedes-Benz but both were pioneers about at the same time so at the end of the 19th Century the extraordinary thing is that they always have an ambition for excellency in, in every field so they build as well passenger cars, race ca..... racing cars, trucks so they have a fabulous history and this history still goes on.

Jeff: And you've owned them?

Yvon: Yes, I have 4 Mercedes Benz, one old classic one which is 220SE coupé from 1963, 2 younger ones 190 which is the (?) and 2 220CD from the '90s.

Jeff: What's your favourite model?

Yvon: Without consideration of price it would be obviously the 300SL from the 50s. The famous gull-wing car - the car with the doors attached to the roof - and the roadster version too, because they were truly exceptional, as they were really a racing car disguised in civil cars, because of the, the beauty of

the lines and because of the performance they are a sort of a icon. I love my own car too because it was styled by a Frenchman who worked for Mercedes Benz at the time and so its quite a privilege to meet the person who styled your own car. There are many, many other models – too, the pre-war cars, there are the, racing cars of course from the 30s and one special car which was built for the then King of Iraq – a unique model which was quite, quite fantastic and which still lives in Iraq believe it or not.

Jeff: Yvon, thank you very much for your time and I'm sure that our listeners will find that fascinating.

Yvon: Thank you very much.

