

CLASSIC DRIVER

It's always sunny with Alex Goy and his Morgan Three Wheeler

Lead

It was one of those typical British days where the weather can't make up its mind when we met with motoring journalist and presenter Alex Goy in London for a quick spin in his Morgan Three Wheeler. Needless to say, the odd spot of rain did nothing to dampen our fun.



Alex Goy has been around reviewing cars on the internet for a little over a decade. Aside from his engaging presenting style, Alex is best known for driving his Morgan Three Wheeler, lovingly known as Genevieve, whenever he can. We met with the motoring journalist in London to find out how he got bitten by the car bug, and what makes the Three Wheeler such a unique car.



Alex, thanks so much for taking us for a ride in your Three Wheeler! With a ride like this, we have to ask: when did you first take an interest in cars?

I must admit, I was a late bloomer. I just viewed them as transport because when I was a kid, my dad had a knackered Audi 80 and my mom had a Rover Metro. But I did try to make an effort when I was a quite young. One Christmas, I just asked for "cars", and my dad decided to get me a Mighty Metro Scalextric set, which included a Metro 6R4, a car I now recognise as a really cool. However, at the time, I didn't like it because I just associated it with my mom's red Metro.

Finally, when I was 14 or 15, I realised cars were my ticket to freedom. I played a tonne of Playstation and Gran Turismo 2, and that's how I learned it all at the start. Then Top Gear became big, and that really cemented my love of cars. The next thing I knew, I got into writing about cars.



What led you to becoming an automotive journalist?

After my Dad died, I didn't really know what to do with myself. I had the idea that I wanted to be a journalist, but the idea of reporting on petty crime filled me with dread. So, I was at Uni and I had a R53 Mini Cooper S — the insurance on it was crazy — and I was driving a mate back to the train station going way too fast through town. It was caught on CCTV, so a police car was dispatched. We got pulled over by a copper, and when I rolled down my window, he barked at me, "Is this your car?", "Yeah...", "Well then, why are you driving it like it's nicked?"

It was a stupid thing to do, but I was very very lucky and got off fairly lightly. The cop clearly saw he'd scared the shit out of me. Later that day, I received a copy of the Top Gear magazine as a Christmas present from my aunt, which came with a DVD highlight reel from the show. So, I sat down and watched it, and that's when I decided I wanted to do cars for a living.



That's quite the origin story! Could you tell us some highlights from working with cars?

Driving a Veyron was a pinnacle for me. I like silly things with lots of power, but I also like things that are technically impressive. It was the Grand Sport Vitesse — the world record car that Bugatti still own — and I hadn't driven anything even remotely close to it before. At the time, my benchmark was a 911 Turbo S, and the Veyron totally eclipsed it, it was such a feat of engineering.

In terms of drives, the Mille Miglia was one of the best things I've ever done, ever! It was exhausting, and world-bendingly difficult, especially because I was competing in a Jaguar C Type, but it was an unforgettable experience.



What's the worst car you've ever driven?

The Alfa 4C. If it does appreciate, it will be because people are fond of its flaws. It's only the worst because of the buildup; they made so many promises that Alfa was going to be back! Then I drove it, and the seats were uncomfortable, the gearbox was terrible, and overall it was a really incomplete package. For the money you paid, it was truly shocking. It's the dashed hope that will always leave it as my answer for the worst car ever made. It's not even Alfa's fault, they did their best with the resources they had, but that wasn't good enough. A used Lotus Elise for half the price was better.



Tell us about your Three Wheeler, why and when did you decide to buy it?

I reviewed one for XCAR. We did an interview with Charles Morgan about his Aeromax and they really liked that, so they gave us carte blanche within reason. One thing lead to another, and I was eventually given a Three Wheeler and we took it to a go kart track to make a film. It was so much fun and I fell in love with it.

A few years later, I was in a position where I felt I could maybe afford one, so I went up to the factory, specced it, and I picked it up the day before my 30th birthday. It was either going to be racing green with red leather, or purple with black leather, and it had to have a face no matter what because the shark face is hilarious.



We have to know how it got its name...

I showed the renders to my Mom, and she went, "Oh that's like Genevieve!" Genevieve is this 1950s Ealing comedy about the London to Brighton run with the RAC club in vintage cars. It's this London lawyer, Alan, going against his rival, Ambrose, in a 1904 Darracq called Genevieve. I was in love with this film as a kid, so I told Morgan jokingly that it was going to be called Genevieve.

After I'd taken delivery, I had the car in for its first service at Morgan, and while they were working on the car I was writing in their cafe. They came over and said, "Right, the car's ready!" and they had replaced the dash panel with one that had "Genevieve" laser etched in the same font as the movie title, it was a really neat touch.

The day I got it, I was driving it home, down the M40, which was a bit sketchy because the revs were limited by the engine when it was new. The journey was 3.5 hours back to London, and I decided to cut through Knightsbridge. So there I was, sat in my little purple car, and a bloke pulled up revving in his red Ferrari California. All the eyes were on my Morgan, and he did not look happy. You can park a Lambo or Ferrari on the street, and if there's a Three Wheeler there, it will always be the centre of attention. Even dogs really like it for some reason.



You've driven the Three Wheeler's successor, the new Super 3, how does it compare?

Almost all issues are ironed out with the Super 3. The problem with the Three Wheeler is it doesn't like turning in, and you can see the tyres peeling away from the wheels as

you go around corners, which isn't great. The Super 3 is much more mature, but it has lost a bit of the charm. The Three Wheeler also sounds better, because of that V-twin. I'd gladly have a Super 3, but I wouldn't get rid of mine in exchange.

The thing about both of them, especially the Three Wheeler, is the joy they bring. Because it's so silly, it seems to add something to other people's day. Like how seeing a Ferrari on the street as a kid would have been the highlight of my day. But it's not some prestige brand, or some snarling record holder, it's an upturned bathtub with a face. Within its ridiculousness lies its brilliance.



What do you think modern cars could learn from the Three Wheeler?

The problem with modern cars is everything must be perfect. You're usually looking at at least five figures for a new car, so you can't have wobbly trim or an engine that might break down, and when you get into that higher stratum of car, you're buying into the image: the badge, the performance, the looks, you're buying the perfection.

What the Three Wheeler and Morgan did really well was acknowledging that it isn't perfect. It's going to rattle and squeak, but you're going to have a ball with it. I've had to fix my Three Wheeler on the side of the road, and that's how you learn about it and develop a bond with it. That said, I wouldn't want that with a 911, though. I don't think other manufacturers should necessarily learn anything from Morgan, but Morgan should continue to embrace its flaws.

Photos by Mikey Snelgar for Classic Driver

Gallery

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