

IN MY GARAGE: IAN GODNEY'S IMPREZA WRC

WORDS :: JONATHAN MACDONALD // IMAGES :: JMSPHOTOGRAPHIC.COM

WORLD OF PASSION

It's not often a World Rally Car is the subject of our In My Garage feature but this month we thought we'd make an exception. This 1999 'S5' specification Impreza WRC, which has just been sold by Ian Godney to a collector in Japan, was originally used by Juha Kankkunen to win the 1999 Rally Argentina...



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This is chassis number five of the '99 spec Impreza WRCS and it made its World Rally Championship debut at the 1999 Monte Carlo Rally. Kankkunen and navigator Juha Repo finished second on the event to Tommi Makinen, giving it a successful first foray into the WRC scene.

The late '90s rally era was all about Subaru, Mitsubishi and Toyota. Subaru had won the Manufacturers' title three years on the trot, between 1995 and 1997, before Mitsubishi finally clinched the crown in 1998 ahead of Toyota.

Subaru finished third on that occasion so 1999 was to be their comeback season and with Colin McRae moving to Ford, new recruit Richard Burns headed the team's efforts alongside Juha Kankkunen, while Bruno Thiry and Possum Bourne each contested selected events.

The combination of Kankkunen and Burns proved to be a potent force and although the team eventually finished second at the end of the season, just four points behind Toyota, there were plenty of notable results along the way.

Chassis 5, which was originally registered under S8 SRT, turned out to be a key component in that success. Kankkunen's Monte Carlo result was followed by sixth in Sweden, a win in Argentina and fourth in China.

The following year, the car was acquired by the Italian Procar outfit and was used by a variety of drivers including Paolo Andreucci, who won a round of the Italian national series.

"It was around that time that the car was involved in a crash," Godney told Pacenotes. "It was reshelled and the car which retained the S8 SRT registration number later went to Maurice Gass and eventually Barry Johnson. Meanwhile, the original bare shell was sold to MSP who built it into a new World Rally Car. That's when it received its new registration number, T22 SRT."

"I know my car is definitely the original shell because the chassis number is welded into the rear chassis leg," he added. "MSP built it using original Prodrive parts for Mike Tomkinson, who used it on gravel events in the UK."

Subaru Passion

While chassis 5 was rallying its way around the globe, Ian Godney was fast becoming a Subaru enthusiast. Having rallied an Escort during the early '90s before switching to a Chevette, then a Nova, followed by a Sierra Sapphire Cosworth and a Peugeot 206 Cup Car, he eventually

decided to buy a Type R Impreza for gravel rallying in 2008.

"Imprezas really helped our Godspeed Brakes business to take off," Godney told Pacenotes. "We've been involved with Subarus through the business for a long time and I've owned a few Imprezas, from an RB5 to an imported Version 3 STI."

Owning a World Rally Car Impreza was something that Godney had never considered during those early days but when the opportunity arose to purchase chassis 5 from Steve Fuzeland a little more than three years ago, he jumped at the chance.

Just prior to his purchase, the car switched to another new plate, S100 WRC, and since early 2014, Godney has rallied the car all around the UK and Ireland. He managed to pick up a few victories along the way, including wins at the Patriot Stages and Dale Stages.

"It took me a year or so to get the car right," Godney admitted. "It was quite unreliable at first. It kept misfiring, like a severe ignition cut. No matter how fast you would drive on the road in testing, it was fine. But the problem would start as soon as you took it into a competitive stage so we ended up doing quite a few events like that. It turned out it was quite a simple fix - we just had to make the spark plug gap smaller."

"We also had a few issues with gearboxes and the

centre diff kept locking up solid," he continued. "After all of that was sorted, we ended up chasing software issues. Howard Dent of Autosportif and GEMS became involved but once it was all fixed, it was an amazing bit of kit to drive compared to a Group A Clubman car."

"A clubman car tends to understeer but with this car, you just point it where you want and go. The active diffs make a big difference and even though it doesn't have anti-lag - none of the late '98 cars had ALS - there's no lag unless you're in a stupidly low gear."

"The parts of a World Rally Car are built for purpose so it's bombproof too. For example, the clutch is stronger and lasts a lot longer. In Jersey, at the start of every stage I was able to sidestep it at 7000rpm and nothing ever broke... and >>>

there are over 30 stages on that rally. Although £3,500 sounds like a stupid amount for a clutch, you just need to reshim it back after every two events but you will never break it because it's so solid."

Keeping it Original

During Godney's ownership, he wanted to keep the car as close to original as possible,

so much so that when the time came to change his brakes, he opted to replace them like for like rather than using his own brakes. So it still has the Alcon brake disc setup complete with AP Racing calipers.

"I could have put my own brakes on for a quarter of the price," Godney admitted, "but I wanted to keep the car close to 'works' specification. The only thing that's different on it are the Kevlar wings on the front because I couldn't get steel ones anywhere, it has a replica aluminium bonnet and it has EXE-TC suspension."

"The suspension is probably one of the

best things on the car," he added. "The 3-way EXE-TC is on all four corners, which I believe is something like £14k worth, and it soaks up the bumps extremely well."

Godney has used his WRC in a lot of events since he took ownership, including trips to Ireland plus many of his local clubman rallies. He secured a handful of wins in the process but then an engine problem at last year's Mewla Rally forced an engine rebuild.

"The car has been completely refreshed by Graham Sweet of GT Motorsports since then so I thought it would be a good time to sell it," Godney admitted. "I still have the car but it has been sold to a collector in Japan...I'm just waiting on the shipping arrangements to be finalised. The new owner intends to use it as an occasional road car."

Surely driving an Impreza WRC at low speeds on the road would be quite difficult?

"It's quite hard to drive as a slow car," Godney admitted. "As soon as you touch the throttle, it wants to go fast so it's a bit of a pig to drive slowly on the road but it gets a lot of looks."

Godney is going to miss his World Rally Car power but he already has plans for its replacement...

"I'd like to get another Subaru," Godney added. "I was considering a Spec C RA-R but I think a new Type RA will be launched soon so I'll wait to see what happens there."

In the meantime, Godney still has his ex-Clio Cup race car which he has converted to rally spec. With 242bhp as well as a Sadev sequential gearbox, it's a potent bit of kit and is more than capable of satisfying Godney's need for speed!



SPECIFICATION

- Right-hand drive conversion
- Front: 365mm Alcon discs with AP Racing 6 pot calipers
- Rear: 304mm Alcon discs and AP Racing 4 pot calipers
- Carbon Lorraine RC8 brake pads
- Prodrive chassis legs with EXE-TC 3-way suspension
- Floor mounted pedal box



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