

1930 Model A Ford Murray Body
Engine No A2166536

Registration number 30FORDA
Restored 2000 to 2005



Owned by Peter & Lorraine Sartori

After driving back from the 16th Model A National meet in my 1928 AR Phaeton in Wodonga, I decided that an open car was too cold & not very water proof. I sold it in October 2004 to Rodney Spitz of Australind. Rodney had been building a Phaeton from bits, but could not find a decent body at the time so that is what tempted him to buy mine.

So I started looking for a closed car but there were very few Fordor's' in the West. Anyway, I passed the word around that I was in the market for a closed car. Next, I had a call from Steve Read telling me that Ron McDonald from the Victorian club knew of one for sale. Ron sent over some email photos of this basket case and in Ron's words, it would be a great restoration project, being about 90% complete with the exception of the right hand rear door, bumpers & cowl lights. Well, I bit the bullet & said ok it's mine, brave or stupid I'm not sure which. Ron very generously went & bought the vehicle for me, picked it up and arranged transport to WA. Some weeks later, it arrived & I picked it up from the transporter's yard with Steve Read. Gee! What a shock! My first impression was what the hell I have done?! We trailed it home & popped it into the garage.

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A couple of weeks went by & I got serious about looking at the purchase. The more I looked, the more I thought that I could do something with the pile of rubbish, as Lorraine called it. So I cleared out what I could of our home garage, including Lorraine's car & proceeded to pull the Fordor apart, very quickly, down to a bare chassis. This had the usual bends and few cracks which Steve helped me repair. In the mean time, Ron Andrews had introduced me to Greg Tuck, a panel beater. I took the complete body, all fully

dismantled, to Greg who set about patching & making parts to replace the rusted areas. Greg finished all of the body in five weeks, doing a fantastic job. While Greg was doing the body work, I got really motivated and very quickly had the front & rear suspensions all rebuilt. I also did some minor repairs to the diff, had it all re-assembled & then had the running gear back on its wheels. At about this stage, John Moorehead set up residence in our garage, well almost! I will be forever grateful for John's help over the best part of five years. The running gear progressed very well. I was fortunate to have been offered a fully reconditioned engine at a good price and all we had to do was to assemble it. The inside of the gearbox I purchased was a good second hand one from Steve. Very soon, the running gear went for its maiden run up the street.

Then the real work started assembling the body with all new wood. The roof wood I had made in the US. The rest I made myself all out of Tasmanian oak. All went not too bad until I started to fit rear doors & make rear door posts. As you will recall, the right hand rear door was originally missing & the left hand door was not fitted to the car. To find a replacement right hand rear door, I had to purchase a set of four doors from a Model A'er in the US. Anyway, when I checked if the opening for the rear doors was correct, you guessed it, the measurement was about an inch too short. I could see where the roof had



been cut off at some stage as it has obviously been stitched back on crooked. So back on the phone to Greg to come to me with his welder & hack saw. The problem was quite easy to fix - we cut through the edges of the two rear quarter window frames and up into the roof, and what we found was that the roof sprung up by itself as it had been pulled down previously when whoever had cut the roof off. After that little hiccup it was not long before we had the body all assembled with the doors opening, shutting and fitting well.

Then the real hard labour started, getting the body panels super straight and into final primer, all ready for painting and about two years later I took the car off to Gary McMiller for painting. The job took about 3 months but what a great job Gary did for me. The colours I painted the car are, for the top is Elkpoint Green and the bottom Kewanee green, the wheels and pin stripe are as close as we could get to apple green. This colour scheme is an original Ford colour scheme used on 1930 Fordor's. When I was looking for colours I found a car on the Model A Ford web site in the US, I was able to communicate with the owner, who very generously emailed to me some close up photos of the door reveals & how the two colours looked close up. Please see the photo below, taken in Gary's workshop on the 24th of August 2004, the day John and I picked up car.



After getting the car home, I drew a line in the sand and set a dead line for myself to finish the car so I could go to Kirup at Easter time in 2005. We very quickly started fitting mudguards, running boards, radiator shell, lights and bonnet, moving onto wiring and getting everything working. It all went like clockwork. Next, I made up templates for all the glass and took these to Maddington glass. This also went well and happened very quickly.

The next serious part was to drag out the LeBaron Bonney upholstery kit from the back bedroom. This again was a new experience for me as I had never done upholstery before, but the instructions to install the kit were very easy to follow and I also had a very willing helper in Steve Read. Steve came over, got me started on the first section (the roof lining) and then left me to complete it. Steve did this throughout the upholstery and soft roof insert installation, always checking on my work from the previous day. Again, like John Moorehead, I will be forever grateful for Steve's help with restoration.



The restoration was finished on Saturday the 19th of March. Being Easter the following week, I quickly got it licensed on the Monday before Easter. It took a couple of nights after work that week to find a fuel problem but again, John was with me on the job and on the first good drive we took around Murdoch. Then, with just 10 miles on the speedometer, we set off to Kirup on Good Friday. We did about 600 miles over the Easter weekend with no real



issues beyond a small water leak which dripped onto my feet and the clutch pedal hitting the floor. Oh, and I almost forgot, the rear main oil leak!

Since the restoration I have seen Ron McDonald several times. He has not been able to throw any light on the previous life of the Fordor, with the exception that I recall him telling me back in 2000 that he thought it had originally come from Queensland.

Since the restoration Lorraine and I have enjoyed our Sedan, going to the Adelaide club 19th National meet in 2006 and driving back to Perth. In 2008, John Moorehead and I went to the NSW club 20th National meet in Bathurst, again taking the Fordor. Lorraine and I went to the Victorian club 21st National meet in 2010, held in Launceston Tasmania. Prior to this meet, we travelled around the entire state of Tasmania with John & Kaye Cook and David & Pat Bussard. The Fordor has proven to be a great car for touring, just what I had originally set out to get. To date, the Fordor has done just on 18,000 miles since the restoration and will be doing some more soon as we are off to Ipswich in March.

Peter Sartori

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