

Michael Stockdale

By Dave Doroghy

Wasn't this year's All British Field Meet poster fantastic? The artwork's overall mood, its feel, the colors were all so perfect. Even the cartoon characters in it really came to life and looked like they had stepped from Van Dusen Gardens right into the painting. How is it that the artist that paints the poster for this great event every year is able to consistently capture the whimsical



quirky nature of the Meet, while accurately depicting the classic cars at the same time? Well, I thought I'd ask him?

I recently sat down with the Vancouver artist Michael Stockdale over a cup of coffee in his studio in his Kitsilano home to find out more about him and his art. Michael loves painting and he loves old classic British cars. And it shows. Like most of us he just finds old British cars interesting and visually pleasing. He even used to own a 1958 MGA, and he told me that painting old cars is a lot easier than painting new ones. He used an analogy that I liked describing painting an old car like painting a craggly old persons face. He said they are both full of character and more definition. He said even the shapes of old cars have a fundamental balance that makes



them more interesting to paint.

When I asked him to describe his unique style, he chuckled and told me that he is stuck a bit in the 1970's. Michel has been an artist his entire life. First, as a commercial artist and designer working in Montreal and Europe, applying his talents to the advertising business. Thirteen years ago he began to focus full time on his fine art paintings. After one of his car paintings won a silver medal in an art competition sponsored by the Journalists of Canada in 2003 he calls from auto enthusiasts re-missioned assignments.

But the subjects of Michael's art world of classic automobiles. At showed me some amazing paint-beautiful French countryside, of restaurants, of colorful barns and joying wine and cheese. All of the tured a happy bygone era, with light heartedness. His paintings carefree spirit, bright sunny colors told me that he finds joy in the ures



For the last five years he has painted every one of the All British Filed Meet posters. And every year at the event you will see his small booth set up in the trading zone at Van Dusen Gardens, complete with dozens of examples of his work. Luckily enough for us Morgan owners his booth is

Automobile began to get questing com-

go beyond the his studio he ings of the interesting old of people en-paintings cap-humor and overflow with a and fun. He simple pleas-

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always about 200 yards north of where our Morgans are parked.

Since he began displaying his artwork at the show he has been commissioned to paint over a dozen old British cars. Interestingly enough several of these have been of Morgans. He commented that of all the car makes he has painted, more of them have been Morgans than any other make of car. I remember seeing one of his paintings proudly displayed at Win's house when he hosted our club Christmas party last December. Obviously us Morgan owners have discerning tastes and appreciate the artistic beauty, the colors and the great lines of our cars.

I first met Michael at the car show at that booth a year ago when I commissioned him to paint both of my cars. And what a delight the entire experience was. He came over to my place and took separate photographs of my 1997 Jaguar XJ6 and of my 1966 Morgan Plus 4. The resulting painting, pictured in this article speaks for itself. I found it interesting that I never had to park the cars as they are depicted in the painting. He photographed the cars situated in other spots and then arranged them on the canvass to be visually and artistically pleasing. He explained to me how convenient and easy it is to move and alter elements in a painting, something that would be impossible to do in a photograph.

It took him about 20 minutes of photography to capture dozens of different angles and lighting and composition elements that he would later use as reference for my painting. It was intriguing watching the first step of the creative process unfold. Step Two which I wasn't privy to took place in his cluttered studio, where he worked on the painting, and slowly took his time to recreate and interpret what he caught with his camera. He typically requires about 25 hours to complete a painting like the one he did for me. Morgans have lots of details that all have to be correct. It's time consuming and requires focus and concentration. I learned that while other artists often work on two or three paintings at once, he cannot. He works on it exclusively without being distracted by other projects.



Step Three occurred about three weeks after the initial photo session when he called me to pick up the painting. I was really looking forward to it and couldn't wait to get it and have it unveiled. My expectations were exceeded in every sense of the word. Michael is a true professional. The painting he did for me was nothing short of a Masterpiece! Furthermore it was done on time and done on budget for the original price he quoted. His average sized commissioned automobile paintings generally sell for between \$500 and \$800. The whole experience from beginning to end was an absolute joy.

As you can see I am a big fan of Michael Stockdale. I love his style, and believe he is a very very talented artist right here within our midst. He is easy to work with and reliable too. Why not have him paint your car? (that sounds funny). I don't mean spray paint it, of course I mean do a painting of your car. He can be reached at 604-738-6067 or michaelpaints@hotmail.com.