

B01 AND SO THE JOURNEY BEGAN

PROJECT: EUROPE 2011

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DATE: 26 APRIL 2011

On the 31st of May, Louise and I will be returning to Europe with several goals in mind. The first is to attend the 24 Hour race at Le Mans where our life together began in 1958. The next is to renew our marriage vows in Paris with much of our immediate family looking on. Following that we intend to re-do portions of our honeymoon in the same car. The final goal is to find a new home for the MG we have owned for 53 years. Here's the back story.



1958

In 1958, when I was in the Army and stationed with the American Forces Network as a radio announcer at AFN France, my fiancée flew over with the idea of making ours a legal union. She got a taste of what her life was going to be like when I picked her up, along with my Mother, at Orly Field and whisked them off to Le Mans where I was posted to cover the 24-hour race. One week later, following that noisy, rainy and sleepless introduction to France, we were married in Orleans...twice. Once by the Mayor (required) and again by a chaplain (strongly suggested). With a double bond, our life together was on its way.

Shortly afterward I convinced her that a man must own one red MG in his lifetime and we found our 1954 MG TF directly across from my post in Orleans. For the next year we honeymooned in this car as we traveled to other European countries and Great Britain. On our rotation to the U.S. the MG came along for the drive across the country and eventually to Los Angeles. It was my daily driver for 17 years, including three trips to the hospital to deliver babies. The firm ride shakes them right out. Thirty minutes labor max. Finally my mechanic convinced me that T Series MG's were not designed for daily high-speed freeway use and advised a retirement to weekend driving only. So it has been for the past 35 years where it languished in the carport under an MG Mitten. In 2010 our son-in-law was called to active duty in Afghanistan and our daughter moved to Paris with their son to be nearer. It seemed the right moment to activate a long-time dream. In October we took the MG apart, repainted and reassembled it and put it on a ship for Le Havre, France. We will join it there to begin the second greatest adventure of our life.

2011

After landing in Paris we will begin our searches: the first for our past and the next for the future of our beloved MG. While we have an agenda it is fairly loose allowing us to twist and turn as the opportunities arise. We do want to visit parts of Europe we missed 53 years ago and revisit parts that we enjoyed during that younger part of our life. We hope to visit the south and western regions of France and then on to England's northern Lake District. From there we'll travel to Belgium where I have relatives; on to Luxembourg (where we've never been) and into Germany where we'll visit friends and Louise's relatives. If time allows we'll drive to Switzerland to spend time with long-time friends. During these travels we'll try to connect with local MG clubs so we can take part in club events or just exchange lies about MG's. Our primary motive is to search for a new home for our MG and clubs dedicated to the marque seem a logical place to start. We're only hoping it doesn't happen too soon so we can enjoy the hunt. We've purchased return air tickets for the 14th of August. That will mean two and a half months on the road. We don't know which will break first...us or the MG.

Because we've promised so many friends that we'd stay in touch, we've decided to launch this blog. It will save us a fortune on postcards and stamps. Can't promise there will be daily entries but we'll do our best to have interesting experiences and share them with you as readily as we can. If things go as planned, on our return, we'll have a complete memoir of our adventure suitable for print or cyber media or, even better, the silver screen. So jump aboard. You're invited to tag along with us while we chase our dreams.

For want of a catchy title we're calling it **SECOND HONEYMOON; SAME CAR.**

Louise and Ray DeTournay

to be continued..