

The Guldstrand Tiger

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The Guldstrand Tiger

Introduction and Acknowledgement

"The Guldstrand Tiger" has been a race car since new. Raced from 1964 through 1983, this Tiger had an exceptionally long racing "career". During those two decades, seven drivers raced the Tiger. Shortly after the Tiger was retired from racing, it was "put out to pasture". For the ensuing twenty-two years, the Tiger sat on a trailer, under a tree, in a back yard, in Sunnyvale, California.

In 2006, the current owner purchased the Tiger. The new owner compiled the history of the "Guldstrand Tiger" by speaking with the previous owners and by reviewing literature from the period. In addition, Dick Guldstrand has been generous with his time. On two occasions, Dick met with the owner in person to recount the history of the car. Dick provided copies of the Guldstrand Engineering invoices for work performed on the Tiger in the period. In addition, Dick had saved the engine dyno results for this Tiger. Dick has been invaluable in researching the history of the Tiger.

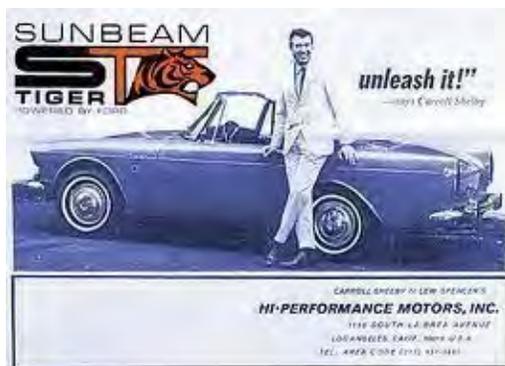
Chapter 1

Low Spencer

The story of the "Guldstrand Tiger" begins in England, at the Rootes Group Sunbeam factory (Rootes Group owned several automotive brands, similar to General Motors in the US.). This Tiger was built on September 16, 1964. The factory painted the Tiger "carnival red".



Rootes Group shipped the Tiger, via ocean going freighter, to the harbor at San Pedro, CA. From San Pedro, the Tiger was delivered to *Low Spencer Imports*, on Sepulveda, in Los Angeles. Low Spencer owned two Sunbeam retailers in southern California. The other dealership was *Hi-Performance Motors*, which Spencer owned in partnership with Carroll Shelby.



Low Spencer was more than just a car dealer. Spencer was a local "hot shoe". By 1964, he had raced Sunbeam Alpines and was a race driver for *Shelby American*. Early in 1964, Low Spencer raced a Sunbeam Tiger that had been prepared by *Shelby American* at Tucson. This was the first time that a Tiger was raced. With Shelby preparing the Tiger, Spencer driving, and their history of success with the Cobra,

expectations for Spencer and the Tiger were high. These expectations were not met. At Tucson, the Shelby Tiger went off track. The next few races generated mixed results, which were not contributing positively to the image of the Tiger. At Laguna Seca, Spencer lost control of the Shelby Tiger and crashed. The front of the Tiger was badly damaged.

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Rootes Group lost patience with Shelby American, and by September 1964, transferred the Shelby Tiger and the associated sponsorship to *Sports Car Forum* in Ohio. This left Spencer, a noted racer and owner of two Sunbeam dealerships, without a ride in a race Tiger. It gets, as Alice said, "Curiouser and curiouser!". Also in September 1964, a red Tiger rolled off the assembly line and was allocated to *Lew Spencer Imports*. Lew Spencer converted that Tiger into a race car, and raced it himself.

In early 1965, Spencer was busy at Shelby American preparing for the two big American endurance races: the 24 Hours of Daytona and the

Sebring 12 hour race. Specifically, Spencer was preparing two new Daytona Coupes CSX2601 and CSX2602 (which Spencer would drive) for those events. On Valentine's Day of 1965, with the Daytona event beginning in a week, Lew had Dennis Harrison, a well-known local Porsche driver, race the Tiger in an SCCA event at Willow Springs. Harrison competed against motorsports luminaries such as Dick Guldstrand.

Chapter Two

Dick Guldstrand

Later in 1965, Arthur D. (Art) Firmes purchased the Tiger from Lew Spencer at *Lew Spencer Imports*. During a conversation at Guldstrand Motorsports, Dick Guldstrand recalled that, "Art purchased the Tiger from Lew Spencer, who was associated with Shelby at the time. Art and I picked up the Tiger at the Lew Spencer's dealership on Sepulveda". Firmes entrusted the Sunbeam to Dick Guldstrand to complete its development as a race car. Dick noted that, "When Art purchased the Tiger from Lew, it was only partially developed as a race car."

Prior to purchasing the Tiger, Firmes had raced in southern California. While racing, Firmes and Guldstrand met. Guldstrand remembers fondly that, "We were old racing buddies" even before Art acquired the Tiger. Their association continued, with the Tiger, and turned into friendship. In Guldstrand's words, "Art was a good friend. We went everywhere together." For a decade, Firmes and Guldstrand developed and raced the Tiger. Dick Guldstrand would develop, prepare, and test drive the Tiger, and Firmes would race it. Guldstrand recalls trips, with Firmes, to Seattle International Raceway, Laguna Seca, Willow Springs, Riverside, and San Diego for SCCA road races. During a telephone conversation, Dick said, "The furthest east that we took the Tiger was Utah. We towed the Tiger to West Jordan, Utah for a race at an airport track." At that time, SCCA races were held at the Salt Lake City Airport, also known as Midvale, in West Jordan, Utah. The track was 2.3 miles long, and incorporated both runways and perimeter roads.



The car was scrutineered by a California Sports Car Club tech inspector. (Later, the California Sports Car Club would merge with the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) and became the Southern California region of the SCCA. Most people, then and now, simply refer to it as the Cal Club.) The Tiger passed technical inspections and received roll bar number 19 891. The region number for the Cal Club is 19. The sequential roll bar number, in that region, is 891.

Guldstrand used his expertise in race car suspensions, and in Corvettes and Camaros, to develop the Tiger. For example, early Corvettes are constructed with frames that inhibit the removal of the transmission unless the engine is also removed. Tigers share that same serviceability flaw. In Corvettes, Guldstrand eliminated that inconvenience by fabricating a removable section of the frame where it supports the transmission. Guldstrand brought this innovation to the

Tiger by fabricating a removable section of the X frame of the Tiger. He also fabricated custom mounts and end links for the front sway bar.

Guldstrand had two racing engines built for the Tiger. Traco Engineering built one engine, and Wally Cartwright constructed the other. Wally Cartwright, of Temple City, California, was well known for his high revving, reliable engines. In fact, Wally Cartwright built engines for the *Hollywood Sport Cars* Tiger.

Guldstrand Engineering was located on West Jefferson Avenue in Culver City, California in the heart of the legendary "Thunder Alley". Thunder Alley was the center of hot rodding in the 1950's and 1960's. Guldstrand Engineering and Traco Engineering were next door to each other on Jefferson. This was not an accident. Traco was established and successful on Jefferson. With a grin, Guldstrand recalls that,

"Jim Travers and Frank Coon, of Traco, invited me to locate next door with the enticement of a mutually beneficial arrangement. When race teams needed an engine rebuilt at Traco, I would remove the engine and bring it next door to Traco. After Traco rebuilt the engine, I would install it."

At that time, Traco was the engine builder of choice for many top race teams. So, the quality of engines and the convenience of the location made Traco engines the obvious choice for the Tiger.



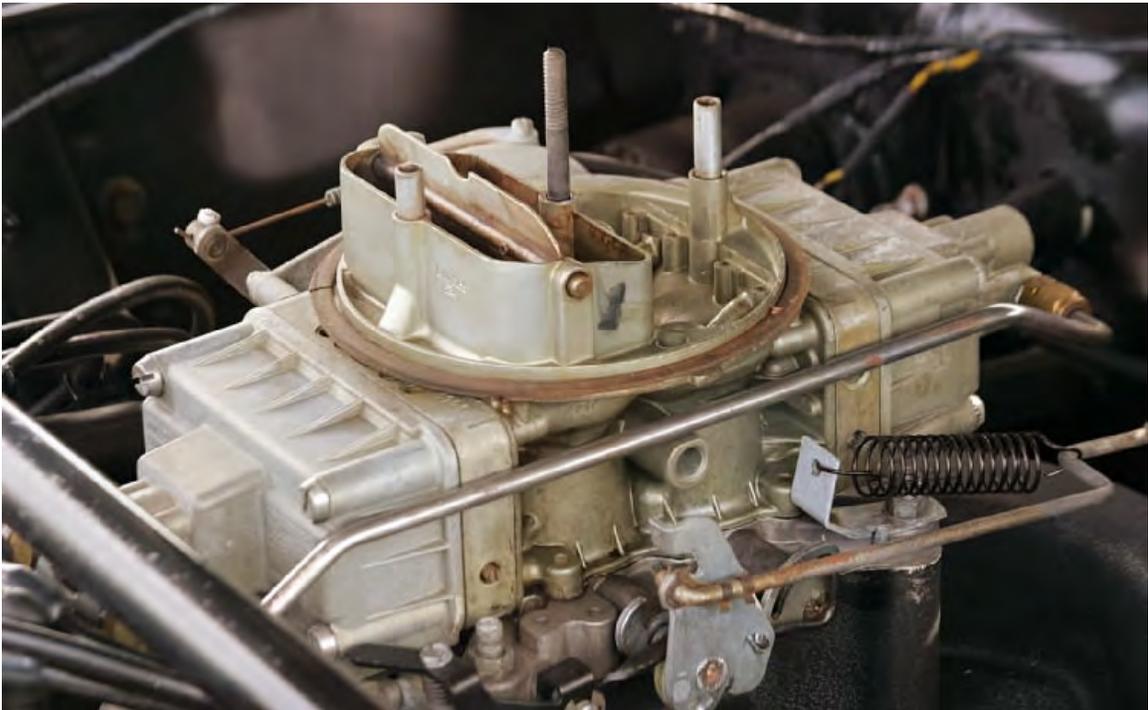
The heart of "Thunder Alley". From right to left: an outdoor salvage yard, Nairn Machine, Traco Engineering, Guldstrand Engineering, and Helen's Café.

In 1965 and 1966, Guldstrand and Firmes campaigned the Tiger in southern California events sanctioned by the SCCA. On many occasions, Dick Guldstrand would race his Corvette at the same event with the Tiger.



Dick Guldstrand racing his Corvette in 1964.

In that era, the Tiger competed in the B Production (BP) class. The B/P rules allowed the Tiger to use the optional equipment available and homologated for Tigers. These options included the "LAT Options". The LAT options were an important aspect of the competitiveness of the Tiger. These options included a Holley four barrel 715 CFM carburetor, an aluminum intake manifold, bigger valves, positraction, a fiberglass hood with integral scope, and rear disc brakes- among others.



Example of a Holley 715 CFM carburetor with Le Mans bowls. The Holley 715 CFM carb was part of the LAT 1 option package offered on Tigers. Tigers used this carburetor in SCCA racing from 1964 through 1966. This example is installed on a 1966 Shelby.

Chapter 3

Reclassification to SCCA C Production

For 1967, the SCCA reclassified the Sunbeam Tiger to C Production. As a consequence of the move to C/P, the Tiger was not allowed to use some of the options that it had in 1965 and 1966. The SCCA prohibited the use of the following options for 1967:

- LAT 1 Induction system
- LAT 3 Induction system
- LAT 38 Aluminum Intake Manifold
- LAT 39 715 CFM Holley Carburetor
- LAT 41 Side Vents in the front fenders
- LAT 79 Fiberglass Hood with integral scoop

For the 1967 season, Guldstrand made the Tiger compliant with the new SCCA rules. A stock steel hood replaced the LAT 79 part. A two barrel Holley replaced the LeMans bowl four barrel. Typical of the pragmatism of the era, the vents in the front fenders were blocked with a simple sheet of metal fastened with a bolt and a captured nut.



The Guldstrand Tiger at Sears Point Raceway. Note that the SCCA required the LAT 41 side vents in the fenders to be blocked off when the Tiger was reclassified to B Production.

In August 1967, Firms competed in an SCCA national event at Riverside International Raceway. (Riverside) Raceway magazine

described the weather at the track as "hot, hot, heat". Nevertheless, the field was filled with the illustrious drivers of the day, including: Don Roberts in his highly successful small block Cobra, Dave Jordan in the Vasek Polak Porsche 911, Red Faris in a Corvette (of course), and Scooter Patrick in a Porsche 904.

Later, in September 1967, Dick and Art traveled north to Crows Landing Naval Air Station, in Modesto, California. Over the weekend of September 8 through 10, the SCCA Trans Am series competed at Crows Landing, and, as support races, several SCCA sanctioned classes competed- including C Production. Art raced the Tiger on the flat airport runways that composed the track. Dick did not enter the Trans Am event, so he was available to crew for Art.

Tom McCarthy, founder of Thunderhill Raceway and retired SCCA executive, competed at the 1967 race in Modesto. Tom's reflections on the event, in the following email, give the flavor of the day:

I only raced there once. In my race, Marshall Meyer was in the lead and broke an axle, then flipped. Bill Haener won, and I took third. On the way home, we stopped to get a hamburger and Bill showed me the cheating large carburetors that he had on his car.

Hell, he was fast enough to beat me with out the cheater carbs, but he wasn't fast enough to beat Marshall!

I hit one of the runway lights and was charged \$150 to replace it. That cost more then my whole race weekend. I think the entry fee was \$25.

I think it was my first race in the Spitfire.

Tom McCarthy



The Modesto Trans Am race was held at Crows Landing NAS on September 10, 1967. The race program cover art is influenced by the local Haight/Ashbury psychedelic art of the time.



Art Firmes at Riverside in 1968. Note that the side vents in the fenders are blocked and the LAT hood has been replaced by a stock steel hood. Photo: John Wilson

Initially, Art Firmes and the Tiger were sponsored by *Mister T's* (Mister T's was retailer of exotic and high performance cars with two locations in southern California). The Tiger raced with the number 7, 36, or 66. Later, *Sticks Unlimited* sponsored Firmes and the Tiger. By 1974, Art Firmes design company, *Health Spa Designers*, was the primary sponsor of the car. *Health Spa Designers* appeared in large letters on the rear quarter panels. After winning the 1969 C/P Championship, to memorialize the accomplishment, the Tiger ran with the number 69.

On the Fourth of July 1968, the Cal Club region of the SCCA held a six-hour enduro at the fabled Riverside International Raceway. Douglas "Doug" Hooper, successful Corvette racer and friend of Dick Guldstrand, co-drove the Tiger with Art Firmes. The duo did not finish. However, they had good company. They finished two places behind local Trans Am racer Andy Porterfield, one place ahead of Ron Dykes in a Cobra, and two spots ahead of Dave Dralle, also in a Cobra.

C.P. TIGER — new 214hp Cobraized 260 eng., Traco heads etc., new C/R gearbox, 2 new L/S Diffs., extra mags and Firestones, new paint, brakes and gauges. 1hr. (Duno) on eng., also trailer. All possible mod. Have Formula ride. \$3500. Art Firmes, 1732 Silverlake Blvd., Hollywood, Calif. 90026; (213) 663-9384. N

Competition Press & Autoweek, September 7, 1968.

Later in 1968, Art Firmes considered selling the Tiger. Firmes placed a classified advertisement in the September 7, 1968 issue of *Competition Press & Autoweek*. Firmes provided a thorough snap shot of the state of his Tiger at that time. Firmes describes the Tiger as having "all possible modifications". He also notes that the Tiger has a Traco engine with "1 hour (dyno) on engine". Firmes described the Tiger as having "new paint". White paint had been sprayed over much of the original red. Firmes also noted "new brakes". In a conversation with Dick Guldstrand, he recalled that, "The brakes were always a problem." To improve the braking, the stock rear drum brakes were replaced with the optional rear disc brakes. Firmes listed "new gauges" in the advertisement. The stock Jaeger instruments had been replaced with race-worthy Stewart Warner gauges.

The advertisement, while compelling, did not sell the Tiger. In the ad for the Tiger, Firmes states that he has a "formula ride". It appears that the ride did not develop. So, Guldstrand and Firmes continued to race the Tiger as their friendship grew. Guldstrand's development of the Tiger paid off the following year in 1969.

In 1969, the Tiger was painted in a manner similar to the Shelby GT 350's of the 1960's. The Tiger was white with a blue stripe from front to back. The car number had transitioned from the original 7, to 36, and then to 66.

In 1969, Firmes and Guldstrand raced a full schedule in the Tiger. Historically, the California Sports Car Club Region of the SCCA (a.k.a.

the Cal Club) sanctioned an enduro on the weekend of July 4th . Through 1968, the enduro was held at Riverside Raceway. In 1969, the SCCA moved the event to Willow Springs International Raceway. Art Firmes entered the Tiger with co-driver Ron Taylor. Firmes and Taylor finished first in class, and an astounding, fourth overall! This was just one highlight of a great year for Firmes and the Tiger.



Ticket for the 1969 Los Angeles Times Grand Prix. Firmes raced the Guldstrand Tiger at the Times Grand Prix.

Art Firmes and the Guldstrand Tiger won the C Production championship in the Cal Club. The Guldstrand Tiger is the only Tiger ever to win a racing Championship.

The SCCA rules, as codified in the GCR's, are in constant flux. This was especially true in the last 1960's and early 1970's when the concern for driver safety was growing. One example, of such a rule change, affected the Tiger's roll bar. Initially, the Guldstrand Tiger had a single hoop roll bar that covered the driver's head- barely. Revised SCCA regulations required a full width roll bar with bracing.



The Guldstrand Tiger, sporting a new full-width roll bar, at Sears Point International Raceway. 1971.



At Sears Point, the stock wood dash remains in the Tiger. An after-market tachometer has replaced the original Jaeger unit. 1971.



In the 1970's some rules evolved while other rules remained unchanged. A front air dam attached the valance was allowed. In addition, headlights and turn signals could be removed (previously they were taped). The stock hood and blocked air vents were still mandated. Damage to headlight area that was repaired with a rattle can. Note the overspray on the red trim paint and on the gasket for the turn signal. The Corvette exhaust bezels that have served as brake cooling ducts have survived the entire life of the Tiger. Sears Point.

In 1974, Guldstrand fabricated an aluminum dash for the Tiger. The new dash included new Stewart Warner gauges, a Hobbs hour meter, and controls for a Mallory ignition.



This dash was fabricated out of aluminum by Guldstrand. 1972.

In the 1970's, the SCCA's roll bar rules continued to evolve. New rules required a full cage with a "halo" above the driver. While these rules improved driver safety, some convertibles racing at the time, such as Corvettes and Tigers, went from beautiful to hideous with a single stroke of the rule maker's pen. The photo below, shot inside Guldstrand Engineering, shows the "halo" that was added to the full-width main roll hoop. For reasons unknown, a pair of gusseted flanges were used to attach the halo to the roll hoop rather than notching the tubing of the halo.



The Guldstrand Tiger during re-painting and re-lettering at the Guldstrand Engineering shop. Note the over spray in the wheel wells and on the tires. Steve Feinberg painted the lettering and applied the gold leaf. The fabricated dash with the ignition control is visible.

Photo: Dick Guldstrand, 1974.

Together, Guldstrand and Firms developed and raced the Tiger through 1975, more than a decade after it was first raced. In June of 1975, Firms decided to sell the Tiger. He placed a classified ad in Autoweek. In the ad, Firms references preparation by Dick Guldstrand. He also describes the engines, now from Wally Cartwright rather than Traco Engineering. However, Traco was still involved. When Wally Cartwright finished an engine, Guldstrand would pick up the engine. Prior to installing the engines, Guldstrand had the engines dyno tested at Traco. Dick Guldstrand provided the dyno sheets from Traco, as well as an invoice for dyno services.

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Autoweek, July 5, 1975

Chapter 4

Vanishing Act

As in 1968, the Tiger did not sell in 1975. Then, without warning, in early 1976, Firmes vanished. Guldstrand attempted to communicate with Firmes, but Firmes could not be found. The Tiger was still at Guldstrand Engineering, with a balance due. Dick Guldstrand was left with no choice. He had to sell the Tiger via lien sale. In April 1976, Guldstrand placed the required lien sale posting in the *Los Angeles Times*, and gave notice to Art Firmes at his last known address.

During the timeframe that Art Firmes was racing the Tiger, Mike Rosato was racing a Shelby GT-350 at tracks throughout southern California. At one of these events, organized by the Cobra Club, as Rosato recalls, Guldstrand and Rosato met. Rosato recalls that, "We just hit it off." Years later, as Art Firmes' Tiger sat abandoned at Guldstrand Engineering, Guldstrand told Rosato that the Tiger would be available through a lien sale. Mike Rosato knew of the Tiger, and recalled that it had been raced by Lew Spencer and by Art Firmes. So, in 1976, Rosato purchased the Tiger, and picked it up at Guldstrand's shop in Culver City.

At the time of the sale to Rosato, the Tiger had a full cage and the Wally Cartwright engine installed. The Traco engine was not part of the purchase. Rosato was impressed with both the power and durability of Cartwright's engines. He recalls that, while racing at Willow Springs, the engine would run at 9000 RPM for brief periods, and always held together.



The Guldstrand Tiger as purchased by Mike Rosato. Guldstrand Engineering sold the Tiger via lien sale to satisfy the outstanding balance of Art Firmes. Photo: Mike Rosato, 1976.

In an effort to move weight to the rear of the Tiger, Rosato moved the oil cooler to the trunk. To reduce total weight, he replaced the doors and trunk lid with lightweight panels. The Tiger, as purchased by Rosato, had the two barrel carburetor and manifold required by SCCA C Production regulations. Rosato removed the two barrel carburetor in favor of Weber carburetors. Rosato remembers that the increase in power, resulting from switching to the Webers, was palpable.



*The Guldstrand Tiger shortly after Mike Rosato installed the Weber carburetors.
Photo: Mike Rosato. 1977.*

The engine compartment of any Tiger is cramped, with the two rear most cylinders beneath the cowl. When the LAT 39 option (715 CFM Holley carburetor with Le Mans bowls) is installed, the firewall/cowl must be notched to accommodate the Le Mans bowl on the secondary side of the carburetor. The notching of the firewall is typically accomplished by removing the heater core cover, the heater core, and cutting the cowl in front of where the heater core had been. Since this Tiger used the LAT 1 option during its B/P racing days, this procedure had been completed. So, no additional notching of the firewall was necessary to accommodate the rear stacks of the new Webbers. However, the fiberglass LAT hood had to be modified to clear the front stacks.

Rosato raced the Tiger at race tracks on the west coast including: Riverside, Ontario, Willow Springs, and Laguna Seca. Rosato also raced at SCCA Solo events and slaloms. In addition, Mr. Rosato participated in Cobra Club track events. Mike Rosato's participation in the annual Mother's Day Cobra Club event, in 1977 was featured in the California Association of Tiger Owners (CAT) newsletter, *Tiger Tales*.



*The Guldstrand Tiger, with Mike Rosato at the wheel, battling a Porsche.
Photo: Mike Rosato.1978.*

At a race at Laguna Seca, the Dana 44 rear end failed. Rosato replaced the Dana with a 9 inch Ford rear end. The 9 inch Ford rear end offers several advantages over a Dana 44. The 9 inch Ford rear end has a removable center section. This makes changing the final drive ratio for each track an easy process. The 9 inch Ford rear end is also the standard for NASCAR and Trans Am racing. So, high performance parts are readily available, as are mechanics with expertise in the 9 inch Ford. While performing the rear end conversion, Rosato cambered the axle tubes. Putting some negative camber in the rear axle tubes can improve cornering and reduce rear tire wear.



*Mike Rosato and The Guldstrand Tiger, at Laguna Seca, suffering differential failure.
Photo: Mike Rosato, 1978.*

The relationship between Guldstrand and Rosato extended beyond the Tiger. Years later, Guldstrand and Rosato would work together again on a Porsche race car project. In a conversation, at Guldstrand Motorsports, Dick Guldstrand noted that Porsches and Tigers might seem out-of-character for a Corvette expert. Dick continued "However, we have expertise in racing and high performance cars and that expertise applies to all types of cars. Most of the cars that we develop are Corvettes or Camaros. However, there is a steady stream of other types of cars coming here. Most of the time there is at least one other model of car in the shop."

Chapter 5

Reunited with the Wally Cartwright Engine (Briefly)

During the time that Rosato owned the Tiger, Chris Gruys observed Rosato racing the Tiger at Willow Springs. According to Gruys, Mike Rosato was a "serious racer" capable of competitive lap times at fast tracks, such as Willow Springs.

In 1979, Rosato offered the Tiger for sale. Chris Gruys, who lived in southern California at the time, and knew the capability of the Tiger, purchased the car. In a telephone conversation with Chris, he described the Tiger as he purchased it. According to Chris, the Tiger was equipped with a full cage, fender flares, a Lexan windscreen, an Accusump, and a fuel cell.

Gruys repaired the Tiger's body, and painted the Tiger green. Preferred Rolls Services, Inc. sponsored the Tiger, and the sponsor's decals were applied to the rear quarter panels. Gruys raced the Tiger in southern California at tracks such as Willow Springs and Riverside. In that era, the Tiger raced on slicks. Gruys chose to race the Tiger with number 570, the last three digits of the VIN.

The story of the Tiger's Wally Cartwright engines circles back during the ownership of Chris Gruys. According to Mr. Gruys, the relationship between Art Firmes and Wally Cartwright ended in the same manner as that between Firmes and Guldstrand- with a balance due. Cartwright had built a 260 c.i. race engine for Firmes, which Cartwright did not deliver to Firmes because of non payment. Years later, Gruys purchased this engine from Cartwright, and installed it in the Tiger. Gruys gave credit to Wally Cartwright on the front fenders of the Tiger.



The Guldstrand Tiger in the paddock, after Gruys completed the body and paint work. Note the carbureted Wally Cartwright engine. The sponsorship credits to Cartwright and Preferred Rolls Services are covered by gray racing tape. 1980. Photo: Chris Gruys, 1980.

Chapter 6

Return of the Webers

During the ownership of Mike Rosato, Rik Edwards attended a race in which Rosato competed. During the event, at Riverside International Raceway, Rik Edwards spoke with Mike Rosato. In late 1980, Chris Gruys offered the Tiger for sale. Rik Edwards, remembering the Tiger from Riverside, purchased the Tiger from Chris Gruys.

When Edwards purchased the Tiger, the driver's seat shell was made of fiberglass and covered in leather. The Tiger retained the Accusump, Lexan windscreen, lightweight body panels, the 9 inch Ford differential, and the LAT fender flares. The transmission continued to be the toploader with a Hurst shifter. The key item that was NOT included in the sale was the Wally Cartwright engine. Gruys kept the Cartwright engine to use in his Le Mans Tiger.

Edwards was curious about the long, straight steering arms, Ackerman angle, and bump steer. So, in 1981, Edwards contacted Art Firmes about the Tiger and its engineering. Firmes gave Edwards information concerning the suspension. Firmes indicated that, "The Tiger and its suspension were engineered and constructed by Dick Guldstrand at Guldstrand Engineering.". Also, in a conversation with Rik Edwards, Firmes recalled that he raced his Tiger against the *Hollywood Sport Cars* (Doane Spencer) Tiger.

Rik Edwards enlarged the flared fenders using the LAT flares as a substructure. Edwards painted the Tiger white with a blue stripes. By coincidence, this paint scheme is similar to the final paint scheme used by Art Firmes. The coincidence is not unfathomable because both Firmes and Edwards were emulating the Shelby GT-350 paint scheme that was popular at the time. Edwards continued to use the car number of 570, the VIN. Edwards reinforced the seat mounting by fabricating a seat brace. This seat brace extends from the back of seat to front of the convertible top enclosure. Edwards installed a small block Ford engine with Weber carburetors (the second time this Tiger was equipped with Weber carburetors).



*Adjusting the Weber Carburetors at Seattle International Raceway, Kent, Washington, 1981. Of course, the headlights are taped.
Photo: Jim Leach, 1981.*

Race cars are required by race sanctioning bodies to have catch cans to capture fluids in the event of an overflow. Edwards used a beer can as one of the catch cans on the Tiger. In April 1981, Edwards raced the Tiger at Seattle International Raceway (SIR) in Kent, Washington. Prior to competing at SIR, the Tiger was inspected by a scrutineer as part of a routine tech inspection. The Tiger passed tech; however, the scrutineer advised that the catch can should be "improved". The scrutineer entered this advice into the Tiger's log book which remains with the car (as does the beer can). The sticker reflecting that the car passed tech remains on the roll bar. During this time period, Edwards lived in Seattle and raced the Tiger at SIR. Jim Leach observed the races and took photographs of the Tiger at SIR.

After reading this history of the Guldstrand Tiger, Jim posted the following email to a Sunbeam Tiger bulletin board in 2010:

Date: Sat, 30 Oct 2010
From: TIGEROOTES@aol.com
Subject: Re: [Tigers] Guldstrand Tiger B9470570 LRXFE
To: tigers@autox.team.net

That was a wonderful story, and what a surprise to see a photo of myself! Here's a little more to the story:

After Rik Edwards bought the Guldstrand Tiger, many members from Pacific Tiger Club including myself joined forces and became his pit-crew for his debut in road racing at Seattle International Raceway, Kent, WA.

The night before his Saturday morning Driver's School, several of us went with Rik to the classroom portion of the school, held at a motel in Renton, WA. We all learned about what the different color flags were all about, what the turn workers actually do and the like. The Club was IRDC, International Race Drivers Club, and the square orange stickers on the headlights indicate the driver is a novice. That is done for safety of the other drivers and so senior-licensed driver-observers (I have been one) located around the track can identify which cars to scrutinize.

The next morning, we were at the track in our matching orange Club jackets and our crew double-checked everything while Rik was at the mandatory driver's meeting.

The first time out, no passing was allowed, other than on the main straight. The car ran perfectly and shot down the 1/2 mile long straight like a scalded dog, but Rik said the car was almost uncontrollable in the turns. That was caused by the ancient, dried-out slicks. We tried to soften them using a product called Formula V but it didn't help.

After every run on the track, the crew went to work refueling the Tiger and checking tire air pressure: my job was to repack the front wheel bearings. I did that twice but we decided it wasn't necessary after all.

Rik was granted his novice racing license and that afternoon he competed in his first (and I think only) race. The grid was based on the cars single fastest lap during qualifying, fortunately not on how many times Rik spun the Tiger in the turns! He gridded next to a very famous ex Can-Am car, the Burnette Mk-2. I still have 6 photos I shot at that event.

Jim Leach
Pacific Tiger Club Seattle

By 1984, Edwards had moved back to California. In February 1984, Edwards offered the Tiger for sale as a "roller" without the engine. Rik

Edwards retained the Weber equipped engine. Edwards is currently using that engine in another Tiger.

In 1985, Edwards sold the Tiger to an automobile broker, Gary McKillips. McKillips' automobile brokerage specializes in British cars, primarily Jaguars.

In a telephone conversation with Gary McKillips, he recalled that a few years after he purchased the Tiger from Rik Edwards, Edwards called him. Since Edwards had investigated the history of the car, as well as its chassis engineering, he knew the car was historically significant. So, Edwards sought to repurchase the Tiger. By that time, the Tiger was long gone. In a telephone conversation with Edwards, Rik said that he tried to find the Tiger, but could not locate it.

Chapter 7

Benign Neglect

McKillips, being an automobile broker, purchased the Tiger with the intent to re-sell it. In fact, according to McKillips, within a few weeks, McKillips sold the Tiger to Robert "R.C." Laton. Laton, the sixth owner of the Tiger, stored the car at his home in Sunnyvale from 1985 to 2006.



As stored from 1985 – 2006. Photo by Bill Martin, 2006.

In a conversation at his home, Mr. Laton recalled that Bill Stroppe, at Holman Moody / Bill Stroppe race shop in Long Beach, also contributed to the race preparation of the Tiger.

During the two decades that Mr. Laton owned the Guldstrand Tiger, he did absolutely nothing with it. Given the previously unrelenting path of modifying the Tiger to meet current rules, perhaps the benign neglect of Mr. Laton is just what this Tiger needed.

Chapter 8

Back to the Future



After 20 years of storage. At the original Rootes Group Depot. Photo Bill Martin, 2006.

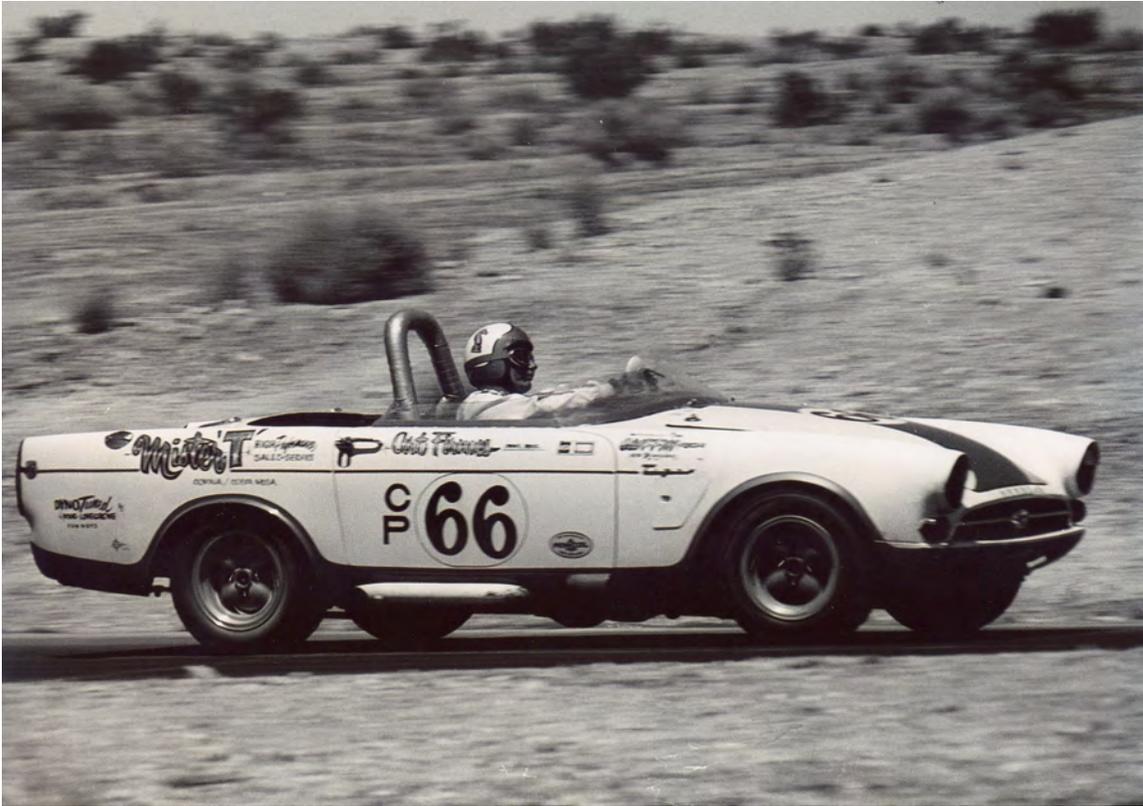
In February 2006, Mr. Laton sold the Tiger to the current owner. Amazingly, after forty-one years, the Tiger retained the period race equipment from its long racing career. When the current owner purchased the Tiger it came with the original LAT option hood. Paint chips and wear on the hood have exposed the original carnival red paint from the time frame in which it raced in B/P. Norm Miller has confirmed that the hood is an "original" from the 1964 through 1966 period. The Koni shocks are still on the Tiger, and bear a 1965 date code. American Racing *Libre* wheels that match a photo taken of the Tiger at Guldstrand Engineering are still on the car. The *Libre* wheels are 13" x 7" as homologated for the Sunbeam Tiger in 1964.



The dash, fabricated at Guldstrand Engineering in the mid 1970's, as found. Photo by Bill Martin, 2006.

The Stewart Warner racing gauges remain in the dash, as does the Mallory ignition cut out. The custom plexiglass wind screen with the up-turned lip in front of the driver is still affixed.

An early photo of the Tiger served as a guide to the restoration. That photo, below, shows the Tiger with the original Rootes "carnival red" paint around the wheel arches, the rocker panels, the valences, and the stripe down the middle. The remaining body panels have been sprayed white. The lettering is gold leaf. Art is sporting a matching red & white helmet. In addition to matching the paint scheme of the Tiger, Art's helmet bears the icon of a chess knight.



Art Firmes driving the Guldstrand Tiger approximately 1967. Photo: John Wilson.



Reason for the knight icon on the helmet is a mystery.

In the course of restoration, the "halo" style cage was removed. A single hoop roll bar, as used initially, has been re-installed. The flared fenders were cut off the unibody- replaced with stock sheet metal. The 9 inch ford rear end was removed and an original Tiger Dana 44 installed.

Chapter 9

Back to the Track

The restoration of the Guldstrand Tiger was complete “just in time” for the 2013 Monterey Motorsports Reunion. While the Tiger was trouble free throughout the event, the Tiger exhibited excessive squat on acceleration. So, some adjustments to the rear suspension were in order.

Marque specialist, Dan Walters, was brought in for a consult on the suspension. With the help of Mr. Walters, the issue was corrected.



The Guldstrand Tiger making its debut at the 2013 Monterey Motorsports Reunion. Turn 8A Laguna Seca. 2013.

With the major issue solved, Norm Mitchell made adjustments between each session- each time improving the handling. The Tiger finished mid-pack in the competitive B Production group right out of the box.



The Guldstrand Tiger heading downhill toward turn 9 at Laguna Seca. 2013.

Chapter 10

50th Anniversary

Fast forward one year, and it is the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the Sunbeam Tiger. The staff of SCRAMP and HMSA combined their talents to arrange a celebration of the half century that Tigers have been road racing. A record nine Tigers were invited to participate in the 2014 Monterey Motorsports Reunion- all running in the BP group. Astonishingly, eight of the nine Tigers finished the feature race. These eight Tigers put on a good show with Tigers to be seen throughout the grid.

In addition to the on-track racing activities, the staff at SCRAMP arranged for the famous aerial photograph, usually reserved for the featured marque, to be taken of the Tigers. The Tigers gathered at the start/finish line of Laguna Seca Raceway. The prototype, built by Shelby, was positioned prominently front-and-center. The Tiger race cars surrounded the prototype.



Tigers gathered for aerial photo on the main straight at Laguna Seca. 2014. Photo: LHS.

The invited racing Tigers were grouped together in the paddock. Tigers at vintage races are always fan favorites. With eight Tigers together at the 2014 MMR, the level of interest, curiosity, and enthusiasm reached a new high.

Thanks to the thorough preparation of Norm Mitchell, the Guldstrand Tiger once again was extraordinarily reliable throughout the MMR. It finished every session.



The Guldstrand Tiger exiting turn 11 and heading on to the main straight at Laguna Seca. Excessive squat no longer an issue. Monterey Motorsports Reunion. 2014.

The Guldstrand Tiger attracted much attention throughout the 2014 Monterey Motorsports Reunion. In particular, the committee responsible for the Henry Ford Award took an interest in the fascinating history of the Tiger. After the final chequered flag fell at the 2014 MMR, the awards ceremony began. The Guldstrand Tiger won the prestigious Henry Ford Trophy!



The Guldstrand Tiger with the Henry Ford Trophy. 2014. Photo: LHS.

Chapter 11

Biography of a *Daredevil*

Arthur Firmes was born on February 12, 1937 in Alameda, California. Early in life, Firmes showed the traits of a daredevil. He was bold, daring, and adventurous. These traits would characterize his life. This is brief chronicle of the life of a modern daredevil.



Art Firmes racing at Riverside.

Photo: John Wilson

Education

Firmes graduated from Livermore High School in 1955.

Firmes undergraduate studies were done at University of the Pacific and at UCLA. He performed his postgraduate studies at UCLA and SMU, where he studied design and architecture.

Firmes' academic studies were interrupted by time spent in the service.

Design Career

Art began his career with Jacuzzi. Jacuzzi manufactures water pumps and, their now world famous, whirlpool tubs. Art's experience in the whirlpool spa business gave him the idea for a new genre of architecture- the spa resort.

Around 1969, Art left Jacuzzi and started an architectural firm specializing in designing spa resorts and health clubs. The firm, *Health Spa Designers*, was initially located in the City of Industry in southern California. Firms designed over one hundred resorts and spas in the United States and abroad. His design accomplishments include:

La Costa Resort and Spa, San Diego, CA
Marriott Hotel, Palm Springs, CA
Bayview Yacht Club- Newport Beach, CA
Racquetball World Spa- Fountain Valley, CA
Century West Health Spa- Century City, CA
Newporter Inn- Newport Beach, CA
Atop The World Spa- Fullerton, CA
San Francisco Tennis Club- San Francisco, CA
MGM Grand Hotel- Las Vegas, NV
Sands Hotel Spa- Las Vegas, NV
Las Vegas Hilton International Hotel Spa- Las Vegas, NV
King's Castle Hotel Spa- Lake Tahoe, NV
Camelback Inn, Scottsdale, AZ
Profile Health Club- New York City, NY
La Manga Campo De Golf- La Manga, Spain
President's Health Club, Manila, Philippines
Il Picciolo Golf Club, Italy (design consultant, SRI div of Cala)
El Tapatio Resort, Guadalajara, Mexico
Rancho Del Cabo Resort and Spa, Los Cabos, ME (for Cabo West, Inc.)



La Costa Resort and Spa in southern California. Photo courtesy: La Costa Resort & Spa.

By the mid-1970's, Art's reputation had spread world-wide. In 1975, Firms received a commission to design a spa hotel in Spain. He spent a considerable amount of time in Spain during 1975 and 1976. He renamed his architecture business to match fit his new market. *Health Spa Designers* became *SPA Resorts International*.

Business Pursuits

Art Firmes led several architecture companies including:

Health Spa Designers, City of Industry, CA. Owner

Spa Resorts International, NV. Owner
sold to Cala Corporation on September 13, 2000 and became
SRI Division, Cala Corporation, Oklahoma City, OK

Janus Development Corporation, Marina Del Rey, CA. President
beginning January 13, 1999.

Cabo West, Inc., Los Cabos, Mexico. Vice President

Racing

Art had a passion for racing. One of his close friends in motorsports was Dick Guldstrand. In Dick's words: "We were great friends. We went everywhere together." Dick also notes that Arthur had a tendency to lose control of the Tiger and crash. Art raced the way he lived- with abandon. During the process of restoring the Tiger, we found that Dick had built in reinforcements into the front bumper and valence area to protect the Tiger from Art's mishaps.

On some occasions, while the race cars were being towed to the track by the employees of Guldstrand Engineering, Art and Dick would fly Art's aircraft to the track.



Art in the aftermath of a coming together at Willow Springs circa 1974. Photo: John Wilson

Personal Life

At Livermore High School, in the eastern San Francisco Bay Area, Firmes took classes in agriculture and joined Future Farmers of America with his friend Jim. On March 30, 1953, United Press reported that Firmes, 16 at the time, won a blue ribbon at the 4H Club Livestock Exposition held at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. Firmes won his class in the cattle and hogs category.

Following high school, Art and Jim, his high school friend, joined the U.S. Marines. Jim says of Firmes:

"...he was the crazy one!"



Art's High School Yearbook photo from the Class of 1955.



Jim's High School Yearbook photo from the Class of 1955.

So maybe it was not a surprise when Firmes specialized in explosives while in the Marines. While on duty, an explosion occurred that damaged his pancreas. The damage was so severe that the organ could not be saved, resulting in life-long diabetes. The diabetes required visits to VA hospitals for treatment.

On July 23, 1961, Firmes married Karen Lee Lightfoot in her home town of Alameda, California. At the time, Firmes was 24 and Lightfoot was 19.

Later in 1961, while attending University of the Pacific (then Stockton College), Art met Dolores Jean Cummings. Dolores was a bright, 18 year old, sophomore at the time. Dolores helped Art with his studies, and the intellectual relationship became romantic as well. The romance was consummated, and Dolores gave birth to a daughter, Marjorie, in August of 1962. At birth, a prominent family in the Stockton area adopted Marjorie.

Needless to say, Art's marriage to Karen Lightfoot did not stand the test of time. Art and Karen divorced.

On January 7, 1968, Art married Johnnie Marie Young in Reno, Nevada. Art was almost 31, and Johnnie Marie was 21. Art and Johnnie Marie were together during the majority of years that he spent racing. When the races were close to their southern California home, Johnnie Marie and Art would attend the races together. She remembers going to several tracks in both northern and southern California, including Laguna Seca on several occasions. Overall, she did not relish the experience. Johnnie Marie noted that:

"Art spent a lot of time in the hay bales."

Even though she did not like watching, she understood how much Art enjoyed racing. She realized that:

"Art was fearless. He enjoyed racing- it was his outlet."



Art in the driver seat of the Tiger at Sears Point in 1973. Johnnie Marie, whom he wed in 1968, is given credit (albeit mis-spelled) on the door of the Tiger as "Crew". Photo: Willis.

When asked about the being given credit as "Crew" on the side of the Tiger, Johnnie Marie responded that:

"Racing is a very expensive pursuit. I was given credit as crew chief because I was in charge of the check book!"

She recalled that her favorite memory of the racing the Tiger was when it was on the trailer.

"When it was on the trailer, the work had been completed, the car was done, and it was not costing any more money".

In addition to racing cars and explosives, Art's other high-risk activities included flying airplanes. Art and Johnnie Marie had a twin engine Cessna 310. To mitigate the risk of Art's flying, Johnnie Marie learned to fly. In case something happened to Art while in flight, she wanted to be able to get the plane out of the air. She took lessons and learned the basics: take-offs, landings, and communication with the tower. She practiced "touch and go's". For one trip, their aircraft was in for service, so they rented a single engine Cessna 172. Despite Johnnie Marie's effort to reduce the risk of flying, Art crashed the aircraft on landing. Johnnie Marie suffered injuries to her neck and back.

During 1975 and 1976, Art was in Spain working on a spa hotel project. Art's Sunbeam Tiger race car was at Guldstrand Engineering. Guldstrand had prepared and stored the car, but had not heard from, or been paid by, Art. Art also had unpaid invoices at Wally Cartwright Engines, who retained one of his engines as collateral. According to Guldstrand:

"In late 1975, Firmes vanished without a word. I never heard from him again. I had no choice except to sell the Tiger by a lien sale."

When told that Art left the Tiger at Guldstrand Engineering and never picked it up or even called about it, Johnnie Marie said:

"That sounds just like Art!"

In August of 1976, Art and Johnnmarie divorced in Los Angeles.

Art did not race again, but he did try marriage again. In 1980, Art married Linda A. Scott. Linda learned her way around deals as an escrow officer. She used that knowledge to become a successful business broker. When Art and Linda married, Linda had a son and daughter. Linda said that Art was very good with the children and that the children enjoyed Art.

Art's business was worldwide, so Art and Linda traveled frequently. Art had an aircraft, so they would fly to job sites in Las Vegas, Mexico, and Carmel, among others. In Carmel, Clint Eastwood spoke to Art about a potential project. During trips to Carmel, Art and Linda would try to stop by the races at Laguna Seca or the one of the concours events.

While at these events, Art and Linda met many people from Art's racing years.

Even later in life, while married to Linda, Art remained something of a free spirit. Linda tells the story of an expensive, collectible, Jaguar that Art owned. Art took the Jag in for service, and never bothered to pick it up. The Jaguar, like the Tiger before it, was sold via lien sale. However, Linda notes that:

"Art was smart and ambitious. He could do anything he set his mind to".

The diabetes caught up with Art, and his vision deteriorated. He could no longer pass the physical exam to fly, so he sold his aircraft. The sale was probably a good thing. Art had crashed two more times- for a total of three. But by then, he had adopted another high-risk hobby: ocean sailing. Art and Linda acquired a fifty-nine foot Pilothouse Ketch sail boat, which they kept at the harbor in Marina Del Rey.



An example of a Pilothouse Ketch.

After fourteen years, the travel required by Art's business took its toll on his relationship with Linda. Linda needed to raise her children and travel was often not practical. In 1994, Art and Linda divorced. As Art's business took him across the globe, Linda lost track of him.

Subsequently, Art and Beatrice Lee Brody, Ph.D., of Redondo Beach, met and became romantically involved.

In 2000, Art's daughter, Marjorie, then 38, located Art and met him for the first time. Art and Marjorie enjoyed time together on the sail boat in Marina Del Rey. Remarkably, and supporting the argument of genetics versus environment, Art and Marjorie shared the same interests and pursuits. Independently, Art and Marjorie pursued racing, flying, and sailing- daredevils both!

After 25 years in business, Firmes sold his company, *Spa Resorts International*, to *Cala Corporation* on September 13, 2000. Less than a year later, Art fell ill and entered the VA Hospital in Long Beach, California. On April 19, 2001, Firmes passed away. His daughter, Marjorie, his girlfriend, Beatrice, and many other friends attended his wake to celebrate Art's life as a daredevil.

Appendix 1

Tales from the Encrypt

Sunbeam Tigers were built by Rootes Group, in England, from 1964 through 1967. During this production run, Rootes continued to develop the Tiger. As a result, three generations of the Tiger were produced. The three generations are referred to as: Mark I, Mark IA, and Mark II.

The Vehicle Identification Number of the Guldstrand Tiger is:

B9470570 LRXFE

In this case, B947, at the start of the VIN, indicates that this is a first generation, Mark I, Tiger.

The last four digits of the VIN are the sequential chassis number. In this case, this is the 570th Tiger produced.

The last five characters of the VIN are decoded as follows:

L = Left hand drive
R = Roadster
X = North American specification
F = Ford
E = Engine

Researching the car with the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) confirmed that the Tiger was never registered.

The Tiger chassis carries a second identification number- known as the "JAL Number". JAL is derived from **J**ensen **AL**pine 260. The Tiger bodies were made at the Pressed Steel Company and the assembly was performed by Jensen. The JAL Number was stamped into a "JAL Tag" that was screwed to the cowl by Pressed Steel Company.

In the case of the Guldstrand Tiger, the JAL number is 560144.

Appendix 2

Know Your Alphabet: C Comes After B

From 1964 through 1966, the Tiger raced in SCCA B Production (B/P). In 1967, the SCCA re-classified in the Tiger into C/P. The effect on the Tiger was monumental. In B/P, the Tiger could use parts that were optional on Tigers, such as: the fiberglass hood (LAT 79) the Holley four barrel carburetor and intake manifold (LAT 39 & LAT 01), and vents in the fenders to cool the engine compartment (LAT 41).

In C/P, the Tiger had to use the stock steel hood, a two barrel carburetor, and the vents in the fenders had to be blocked off. In 1967, Guldstrand made these changes to the Tiger.

In 1976, when Mike Rosato purchased this Tiger, the LAT hood was included in the spares package. The original (red) LAT 79 hood, from the B/P era, is still with the Guldstrand Tiger. Rosato modified the LAT hood to accept the taller Weber carburetors. During the restoration, the LAT hood was returned to its original shape.

When Rosato purchased the Tiger, the engine was equipped with a large two barrel carburetor and ported two barrel intake manifold. When the Weber carburetors were installed, the two barrel induction system was stored. The current location of this system is unknown, but it is out there somewhere ...

Appendix 3

Chain of Ownership

Lew Spencer Imports	1964 - 1965
Arthur (Art) D. Firmes	1965 - 1976
Mike Rosato	1976 - 1979
Chris Gruys	1979 - 1980
Rik Edwards	1980 - 1985
Gary McKillips (broker)	1985
Robert R.C. Laton	1985 - 2006
Current owner	2006 ->