

THE VINTAGE TRIUMPH

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THE ALEXANDER ENTERPRISE



Remembering a Legend
R.W. Kas Kastner
8/30/1928 - 4/11/2021

Page 9



R.W. "Kas" Kastner

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Kastner in front of the TR250K. Photo Kastner archives

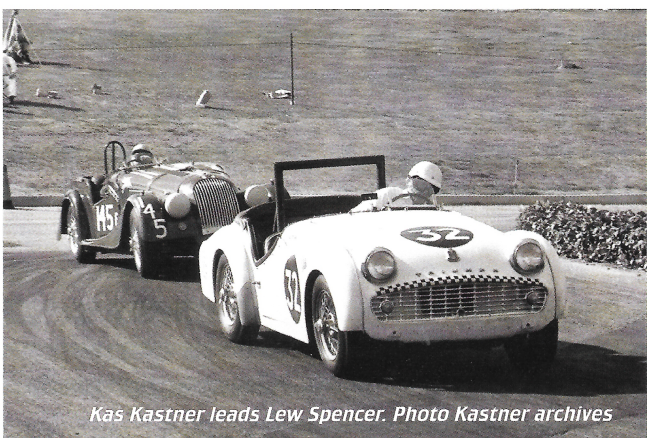
The Triumph community lost a very significant figure in April. Kas Kastner was an author of many manuals, instructing how to tune and prepare Triumph cars for racing. He developed many performance parts and had a knack for pushing more HP out of a Triumph engine than anyone. The factory didn't believe he could squeeze over 150hp out of a TR4 engine, claiming it must be the "California Air" until Kas sent them one of his engines that sang to a tune of 152hp on Triumph's own factory dynamometer.

In 1953, his first race was in a home-built MG Special on the streets of Aspen, Colorado where he placed second and won his class. His first race in a Triumph was in 1954 at Steamboat Springs, Colorado. After moving his family to Gardena, California in 1956, he went to work for Cal Sales, the Triumph distributor for the western US as a mechanic and eventually service and parts supervisor, managing 70 employees.

He continued to race, winning the SCCA National title and E-Production Championship with the California Sports

Car Club. He became the SCCA National Licensing Chairman and was a chief instructor for CSCC at Riverside Raceway. He also won SCCA's annual award for Best Technical Article in 1963.

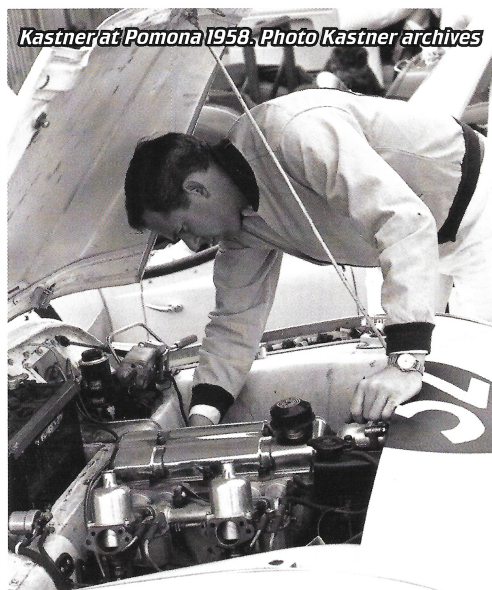
In 1963, Kastner prepared three stock TR4s for the 12hrs of Sebring, bringing home first, second, and fourth places in the 2.5 GT Class. Asking Triumph for compensation for preparing the cars, the president of Triumph refused. Kastner called Carroll Shelby, who offered him a large increase and a position in his



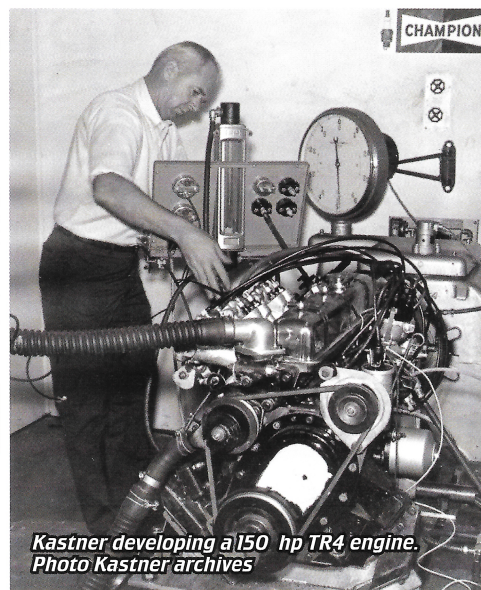
Kas Kastner leads Lew Spencer. Photo Kastner archives



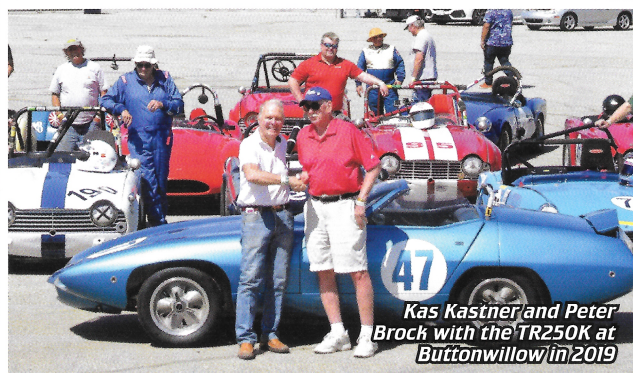
Kastner and a TR4 in 1964. Photo Kastner archives



Kastner at Pomona 1958. Photo Kastner archives



Kastner developing a 150 hp TR4 engine. Photo Kastner archives



Kas Kastner and Peter Brock with the TR250K at Buttonwillow in 2019

company. Triumph countered by matching Shelby's offer and asked Kas to establish and run the new US Triumph Competition Dept. Kas decided to stay with Triumph, Bob Tullius being his principal driver. Together, they won the SCCA E-Production title. After, they were pushed up to D-Production where they won that class twice. After that, he prepared three TR4s to run the 5 day Shell 4000 Rally, winning the GT Team prize.

In 1966, Kas prepared four TR4s to return to Sebring once again. They took first, second, and third in the 2.5 GT Class. This was about the time of the new TR4A with independent rear suspension (IRS), which the SCCA did not homologate, but instead would allow in the D-Modified Class, so Kas made a special "Super Stock" TR4A that boasted alloy wheels and fiberglass panels, lowering the weight to 1700lb with a

160hp engine. It won the 1966 D-Modified National Championship.

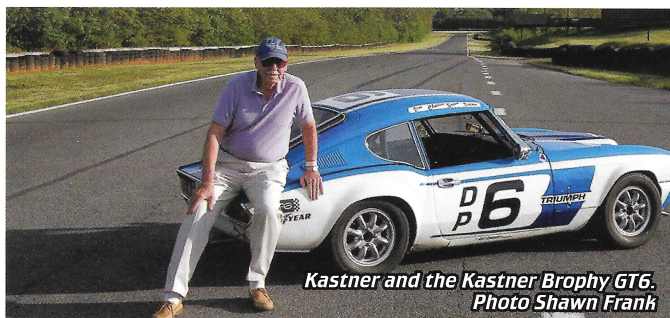
That is just a small history of Kas's accomplishments with Triumphs. He was involved with many projects, including the Macau Spitfire and more famously,

the TR250K with renowned designer Peter Brock. He had continued in the racing world with Triumph until he left in 1970. Shortly after, he formed Kastner Brophy Racing, still racing Triumphs (two TR6s, a Spitfire, and a GT6) with partner John Brophy who was a media personality and advertising executive. They both raced their own cars and later fielded the 245hp Vitesse Candybox in the Trans-Am series. Later, Kastner Brophy Racing's Jimmy Dittmore raced a Lola in the SCCA with



Kas, Peggy, and the Friends of Triumph at Summit Point during the Kastner Cup 2015. Photo Shawn Frank

Kas Kastner, Hall of Fame Inductee, 2017.
Photo Shawn Frank



Kastner Brophy cars and Kas at Pitt Race during the Kastner Cup 2018.
Photo Shawn Frank



program, and the wavering GTP program that Nissan wanted to scrap. It was run by the Electromotive Team. Kas and the team made significant changes to the chassis, gearbox, and a new all-aluminum engine block developed by Electromotive. Nissan bought Electromotive outright, forming Nissan Performance Technology

the highest position being first in the Seafair 200 in 1971.

In 1973, Kas became vice president and general manager of Roy Woods Racing in the Cam-Am and Formula 5000 series, and three Indy 500 races. About the same time, he took home a National Championship title in sailboat racing, winning the 13 ft Cyclone and 30 ft keel boat class as well as several fleet and district championships.

He started Arkay Incorporated, making full turbo kits for a wide variety of cars. NASA used Arkay parts in their aircraft turbocharged rotary engine studies. Shelby and Kastner were involved in the Shelby ME 2.2 Turbo which did not reach production. He sold Arkay Inc in 1985.

He went on to change the Nissan name forever as well. He was in charge of their off-road truck program, amateur racing program, showroom stock racing

Incorporated (NPTI) with Kastner as the vice president. Team Nissan GTP, with over 225 employees under Kas, won the driver's championship four years in a row, the manufacturer's championship three years in a row, and in 1988, won eight consecutive GTP events. Shortly after, Nissan disbanded the GTP program and focused on IMSA efforts and Kas officially retired from racing.

Years later, Kastner was encouraged by his wife and Queen of Triumph, Peggy Kastner to get involved in vintage racing where he was grand marshal at several vintage races, including

all past Kastner Cup races, which honor his racing exploits by holding the all-Triumph race each year at a different track across the US and Canada. In 2016, Kastner received the Harry Webster award for his contributions to Triumph and was inducted into the British Sports Car Hall of Fame in 2017.

His life was paved with successes and accomplishments that changed racing, Triumph, and Nissan as we know them. He had a hand in developing a reputation for Triumph as a sports and racing car, differing from other British car companies that had a reputation of making "picnic" cars. His preparation and performance manuals will be used in the future and will be

seen as a sacred writ for vintage racers for many years to come. His successes and innovations helped production car design progress to advanced levels. He truly changed every project in which he was involved into a successful accomplishment.

Kas Kastner fought a battle with cancer and died on April 11th, 2021 at the age of 92. One of the last things he said was that he missed driving. He was with his daughter Toni and died peacefully at his home. Toni said that there would not be a service, as he hated those things, but a celebration of life is planned at the upcoming Kastner Cup in Portland, July 23 - 25, 2021.

Rest in peace, my friend. Your legacy lives on.

R.W. Kas Kastner

August 30, 1928 to April 11, 2021 🕊

