

Eighteen Reasons to Love a Morgan

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I don't know what it is about old British cars that draws me towards them. Maybe it isn't the old British cars so much as what the cars represent: a simpler time. A time with fewer options, fewer decisions and less complexity. Modern cars, like modern lives, are too fast, too complicated and too confusing. They're mass-produced without personality and are loaded with so many options and gadgets that they make your head spin. Old British cars are quirky, moody and sometimes unreliable. Old British cars are like old British people - just plain interesting. Interesting and uncomplicated. Perhaps I can demonstrate my point best by pointing out eighteen reasons why I like my 1966 Morgan Plus Four more than my daily driver.

1) Satellites are for Astronauts

My daily driver has two radios: one that gets all 20 local stations, and another radio, which I think is hooked up to something happening in outer space. The outer space or satellite radio gets another 200 stations. I haven't figured out how to use either radio, or the tape player or CD. All I know is that no matter what is playing at the time, I always want to change it anyway.

My Morgan has no radio. This, I found, has forced me to pay attention to something called - driving. It also encourages conversations with my passenger. Fewer choices can be good.

2) I'll Seat Myself Please

My daily driver has adjustable electric seats that, through a complex programmable on-board computer, memorize unique settings for three different people. When I put the key in the ignition, the steering wheel adjusts itself, something called the lumbar pushes my back forward, and the seat swings up and down and forward and back and all over the place. The car makes a big fuss every time I get in.

My Morgan's seats do not adjust to me. I adjust to the seats.

3) Identity Crisis

My daily driver looks good. But it looks like every other car.

My Morgan looks fantastic. Peter Morgan understood the importance of lines in a car. It's elegant, sleek and sexy. The Morgan's design is all about fashion and not function. And it is

oh so British! Every time I start the engine, I can swear that I hear Big Ben clanging its bells in the background. When I drive down the street I always get a second look.

4) A Colourful Personality

My daily driver is black.

My Morgan is British Racing Green. Need I say more? Imagine a colour being named after a motor sport!

5) Swarmed by Switches

My daily driver has too many buttons, dials and switches on the dash - forty-one altogether! That's too many controls. What does it think it is, a 747? Some of the controls, like the windshield wipers (10 settings) and air conditioning (30 settings) are variable, with several settings. Just for fun, I factored the variable control settings into the equation and found out that when I get into my car I have over 260 settings and options controlled by the 41 switches.

My Morgan has 9 buttons, dials and switches. Two of them don't work, and then there is one that I am not even sure what it



does. Other than the turn signal, which has two options, right and left, all of the rest of the dials and switches are single-option, like the windshield wipers, which are either on or off.

6) Parking Schmarking

My daily driver is easy to park.

I always enjoyed arm wrestling as a kid and now I get to do it again. My Morgan's manual steering is both a character builder and body builder. Sometimes I will purposely pass by and dismiss a tight parallel parking spot because I can't muster the

strength to negotiate the tight fit. I think parallel parking is over-rated anyway.

7) A Paper-Thin Veneer

My daily driver has real wood grain accenting the interior dash and on limited areas of the interior doors. When I watched my mechanic once remove the dash to install a CD player, I was disappointed to see that the wood was nothing more than a paper-thin veneer.

My Morgan's dash is mounted on a half-inch-thick piece of solid wood. I'm not even sure what type of wood it is, but I am sure some Morgan enthusiast will read this article and let me know.

8) Deep Knee Bends are Good for You

My daily driver is easy to get in and out of.

If you want to stay in shape, deep knee bends are great. OK, my Morgan is a pain to get in and out of. I won't romanticize this one, but I have to admit it is pretty cool to be able to stick your hand out of the door and touch the road.

9) A Muffler is a Winter Scarf

My daily driver is quiet to drive.

My Morgan is as noisy as all getout. Driving it is a celebration, and most celebrations are noisy. People hear me when the car is coming and they hear me when the car is going. And what a distinctively beautiful sound that four-cylinder Triumph engine makes.

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10) An Inconvenient Truthful Smell

My daily driver creates low gas emissions and burns fuel very cleanly.

My Morgan's exhaust really smells like fuel. If I am going to pay \$1.25 a litre for gas, I want to enjoy every aspect of it. Including its smell.

11) Rise and Shine

My daily driver takes about 20 minutes to wash. It's a bit of chore.

Washing my Morgan is a pleasure. It's like dusting. Or like shining your shoes. The car is small and naturally attracts a shine.

12) Zen and the Art of Driving

When I am "driving" my daily driver, I am distracted by the radio, the cup of coffee I'm drinking, and the 41 dials and knobs on the dash. At the same time I am being distracted from driving by these diversions, I am also probably trying to make a phone call on my mobile. Sometimes driving is secondary in my newer car.

My Morgan requires you to live totally in the driving moment. A fellow Morgan owner told me to always keep both hands on the wheel and to PAY ATTENTION. No coffee, no music, no phones. Enough can't be said about the Zen of being in the moment and being at one with your car.

13) Shocking Absorbers

My daily driver gives a smooth ride.

My Morgan gives a bouncy, entertaining, noisy and rough ride. Any shocks the car has have stopped absorbing years ago. Let's just say, if I drive over a cigarette butt in the parking lot I can tell if it is plain or filter.

14) Speed Appreciation

In my daily driver, as I accelerate from 70 m.p.h. to 80 m.p.h. and to 90 m.p.h., it is a surreal, non-participatory experience. It is kind of like hitting fast-forward on a DVD and watching images on the screen speed by more and more quickly. It is actually quite

dangerous, because you feel invulnerable inside of two tons of steel.

I got my Morgan up to 70 or 80 miles an hour (I can't really tell because the speedometer needle is so unsteady) the other day for the first time. It shook the heeby-jeebies out of me. The shake, rattle and roll had me hanging on for dear life. It was so noisy it sounded as if a jet had landed on my head. I had a bug fly into my left eye and I had to slow down. Now that's appreciating the true meaning of speed.

15) My Cup-holder Runneth Over

My daily driver has four cup-holders.

I don't drink coffee while driving my Morgan. But if I did, the person sitting beside me would be my cup-holder.

16) I'm choked

Where's the choke on my daily driver? It doesn't have one.

When and why did they do away with chokes? Chokes are great; they make you feel like you are prepping and fine-tuning the engine before you head out. I have to leave my choke out for at least a minute before I move my Morgan. That extra minute allows me time to reflect on where I am going, ease into the driving experience, and listen to the sweet sound of that Triumph engine awaken from its slumber and jump into action.

17) Fasten Your Seat Belt

My daily driver makes a huge fuss if I forget to fasten my seat belt. To say that it "reminds" me to fasten up is putting it mildly. It nags me. Not only does it nag me, it keeps on nagging me. Ding ding ding ! Buckle up ! Ding Ding Ding ! Buckle up ! Like a nagging cow. Every time I hear that bell ring all I can think of is GOAWAY

My Morgan has no seat belts.

18) Morgans Just Look so Great Parked in Front of the Sylvia Hotel

When I park my daily driver in front of the Sylvia Hotel it just looks like another car illegally parked in a tow-away zone.

Check out the picture at the top of this article - worth a thousand words.