



No Parking

By Dave Doroghy

I have always viewed No Parking signs in front of buildings or on busy streets as warnings or regulations aimed at non-Morgan drivers. After all, what building owner wouldn't want a beautiful classic British sports car adorning the front of his or her establishment? Talk about curb appeal increasing property value. And if a Morgan is inadvertently left in a 4 PM to 6 PM No Parking zone during rush hour, who cares? It just means that as passing motorists manoeuvre around it they can get a closer look at the many stylish features of such a beautiful car.

The notion of a unique classic car being welcome to park where it pleases, and to be granted dispensation from mundane rules aimed at mundane vehicles, is a legitimate one. Special cars deserve special treatment. When I pull up to a *fancy-schmancy* hotel, its entrance is almost always enhanced by expensive, beautiful guests' cars purposely left there by the hotel valet.

So as you can clearly see, my reasoning that Morgans should be allowed to park where they please is perfectly sound. That's why I was so dismayed recently on two separate occasions when supposedly intelligent people in positions of semi-authority failed to recognize the aesthetics, beauty and, most important, the value-added proposition of an illegally parked Morgan.

The first unpleasant parking surprise came a few days after I bought my Morgan. One day after work I parked it in front of my favorite sushi restaurant in Kitsilano and went in for a bite. Yeah, I suppose that I saw the parking meter in front of the spot where I left the car, but it didn't really register. I figured that meter was for regular cars, not for Morgans. After all, what meter maid moron would ticket a classic British sports car? A dozen California rolls and an order of tuna sashimi later, I left the restaurant to find a small piece of paper tucked under my passenger-side windshield wiper. I figured it was a note from a passing admirer complimenting me on my pristine 1966 Plus Four

Morgan.

You can imagine my dismay and outrage upon discovering it was a parking violation ticket from the city of Vancouver fining me \$45 for illegally leaving my car in front of an expired meter. What gall they had! I was furious. I should be charging them \$45 for beautifying the city by leaving it there.

What a bunch of hypocrites at City Hall. On one hand they recognize and give incentives to old houses, calling them heritage homes and making a big fuss. They should offer the same respect to heritage cars. Did the simple servant, I mean civil servant, who issued the fine even realize he was ticketing a heritage car? A car built in the mid-sixties deserves more respect. I bet the greenhorn ticket-Rambo who fined me wasn't even born when my car rolled out of the factory in Malvern Link.

I reluctantly paid the fine. When I sent it in with a cheque, I attached a hand-written note asking for an appointment with the Mayor to discuss the matter. I never heard back from anyone and made a mental note to vote for his opponent in the next civic election.

As a side note, I haven't plugged a meter since then and have been fine-free. Maybe I have just been lucky or perhaps different meter readers with a modicum of intelligence have exercised better judgment upon spotting my car next to an expired dial. I also never buy a ticket from a dispenser in a private lot. The first time parking my car in one of these *pay as you go* lots, I couldn't figure out what to do. Morgans don't have interior dashboards to rest the tickets on. Obviously when Peter Morgan designed the cars, he recognized that as Morgan owners we shouldn't be bothered with inconveniences such as short-term parking stall rentals. It's such a nuisance.

Now, on to my second incident. Three or four parking lot signs in front of my office building's parking lot clearly state Visitor Parking Only. The warning is reinforced in bold stencilled letters painted between the white lines on the outdoor stalls themselves. It's a busy office where the specially reserved visitors' stalls nearest the entrance

are used by a never-ending steady stream of clients, customers and, well – visitors. But there are almost always a few empty spots.

One beautiful, hot, sunny day last summer, I decided to drive my Morgan to work. Upon arriving bright and early I was faced with a dilemma. I realized that the stalls in front of the office were *not* meant for office employee parking, but I also thought to myself that none of the other employees drive Morgans. Oh sure, I had a reserved stall that I paid for on a monthly basis in the office's underground parking lot, where I usually stored my boring daily driver

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that I regularly commute in. But a dark and dingy underground parking lot is no place to leave a beautiful classic 1966 British Racing Green Plus Four Morgan. My car is an immaculate, graceful and splendid motor vehicle never intended for dark dungeon dwelling. It's a Morgan, and as such is a celebration of life! Celebrations are supposed to be shared with others. My car has a purpose. Its unique beauty brings happiness to others. Morgans deserve to be the centre of attention. Morgans should be in the sun. Parking it down there in the shadowy underground lot felt like bringing a bouquet of flowers to work and then leaving them under my desk.

So as the sun rose and cast its optimistic warmth on the black asphalt office parking lot on that beautiful sunny summer day, I did the unthinkable. I illegally parked in a visitors' spot and just left it there all day. I did it intentionally, even though I knew I was asking for trouble. And I didn't choose just any old visitors' spot. I chose one on the corner of the visitors' parking lot, a stall with maximum visibility. Being on the pathway between two main offices on the corporate campus I work at, this was a spot with high pedestrian traffic. And, to make it even better, this prime spot was right under the office window of one of my favourite colleagues. Garth, whose office window I parked under, is British; surely if anyone could appreciate this thoughtful gesture, he would.

As I shut the engine off and stepped out to secure the tonneau cover, I realized that some of my colleagues would consider what I was doing wrong. I wondered what consequences this blatant transgression would bring. And although I had good intentions, some of my fellow workers would surely misinterpret my decision, considering it selfish, boastful and inconsiderate. I reassured myself that I was doing the right thing through the justification that everyone has a right to self-expression. Parking the car in the visitors' spot was my way of putting an exclamation mark on a beautiful sunny day. So I left it there for eight hours. And guess what? Nothing happened.

So for the whole summer I brought the car to work once a week and left it in the same spot under Garth's window. I'd rib him when I saw him, telling him to keep an eye on it for me. Some people at work were aware that I owned the car, but I work at a big office with six hundred people, the majority of whom don't know me. For most of the employees in the office, the car was anonymous. Like a lovely, fragrant flower in a patch of weeds, it sat there anonymously. My car was a symbol, a symbol of simplicity and beauty in a complicated, busy world of business. It was an invitation for the people I worked with to stop and smell the roses, to slow down and appreciate the wonderful things around them. Taking up one small visitors' stall was a small price to pay for the joy the car brought to others.

Summers come to an end, and one day so did my visitors' parking spot. Our office manager, who is also responsible for allocating parking stalls, is a really nice lady named Edith. Over the years we have collaborated on a number of projects, and I have found that she has a great sense of humour. So when she came by my office cubicle one mid-August day to deliver the news that my Morgan

had to be moved, I poured out an impassioned plea full of the most colourful language and best analogies I could concoct. I explained that she must be confused; a Morgan is not a car, it is a work of art. I told her that asking me to move the car was like asking someone to move a beautiful fountain. I asked her how she could deny our colleagues the joy of gazing at a Morgan on a beautiful sunny day. I pleaded with her to reconsider. She smiled and said, "OK, you can leave it there for a few more weeks, but once the summer is over and the lot gets busier I don't want to see it there any more."

Fast-forward two months ahead now. I love the fall even better than the summer. I woke up one crisp October day and looked out my window to see the leaves had changed colours and were falling. It was a splendid autumn Morgan. I mean autumn morning. It was a day that cried out – "top down, top down, top down." I succumbed to the temptation and drove the Morgan in to work. And like an addict unable to give up his fix, I drove straight to the visitors' lot and parked my car in its usual restricted spot. I knew what I was doing was wrong, but I just couldn't help myself. I thought of the verse in the Lord's Prayer about forgiving our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

I got on with my day and at then at 2:00 p.m. the unthinkable happened. An email appeared in my inbox from Edith with the heading "Your Car is Being Towed." I was crestfallen! Anxiety ridden, I needed to breathe into a paper bag to prevent myself from having a panic attack. Say it isn't so!

I rushed out to the visitors' lot, covered in sweat with my heart pounding, fearing the worst. The indignity of my Morgan being attached to a wrecking truck's cruel, cold metal tow bar made me want to cry. Thank goodness, when I got there I realized it was all a joke. She hadn't called the tow-truck company at all. It was her way of reminding me of our summer chat.

But it wasn't all fun and games. A photocopied typed note tucked under the windshield wiper by one of our security guards who patrol the lot read: "Your car is parked illegally. Consider this to be a warning, which has been duly recorded. Should any such violation re-occur, your car will be immediately towed away at your expense."

I crumpled the note up and put it into my pocket. Instead of focusing on the negative, I thought to myself that this is just another story, in another chapter of my Morgan's colourful history. A story I could share with other Morgan owners like me who recognize true beauty. No matter where that beauty is parked.