

# SMORE on the Water

Classic American chats with the organiser of a unique event arranged exclusively for Mopar C-Bodies (Imperial, Chrysler, Dodge, Plymouth) of the Fuselage era (1969-1973) which takes place each July in the Moselle region of Germany...

Words: Georg Otto & Mark Weidner Photography: Faber & Georg Otto



Mustering for the cruise.

The event began in 2016 with just 26 cars attending and now, eight years later, the show welcomes between 50 and 60 Mopar Fuselage C-Bodies – with participants travelling from as far away as Sweden, Denmark, the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic and Germany.

Georg Otto, who set the whole thing up, told us: “Our little get-together is exclusively for full-size Mopars from the ‘Fuselage’ era. That’s what the large four-door sedans, two-door coupes, convertibles and wagons of the years ‘69 to ‘73 are called, due to their airplane fuselage-like bodies. All four Chrysler Corporation brands which were still in existence at the time (Plymouth, Dodge, Chrysler and Imperial) are welcome.”

So how did he come up with the idea of organising a special get-together for such a unique and niche corner of Mopar culture? After all, owners of these Mopars have a reputation for not exactly being especially loyal to the brand (like, say, their Mopar muscle fan siblings) but rather to big cars in general. Not only that, these large Mopars are often looked down upon and seen as a ‘cheap’ way into the scene. Georg also has an answer to this: “I’ve been working on old cars since I was 17, mainly rear-engined VWs and

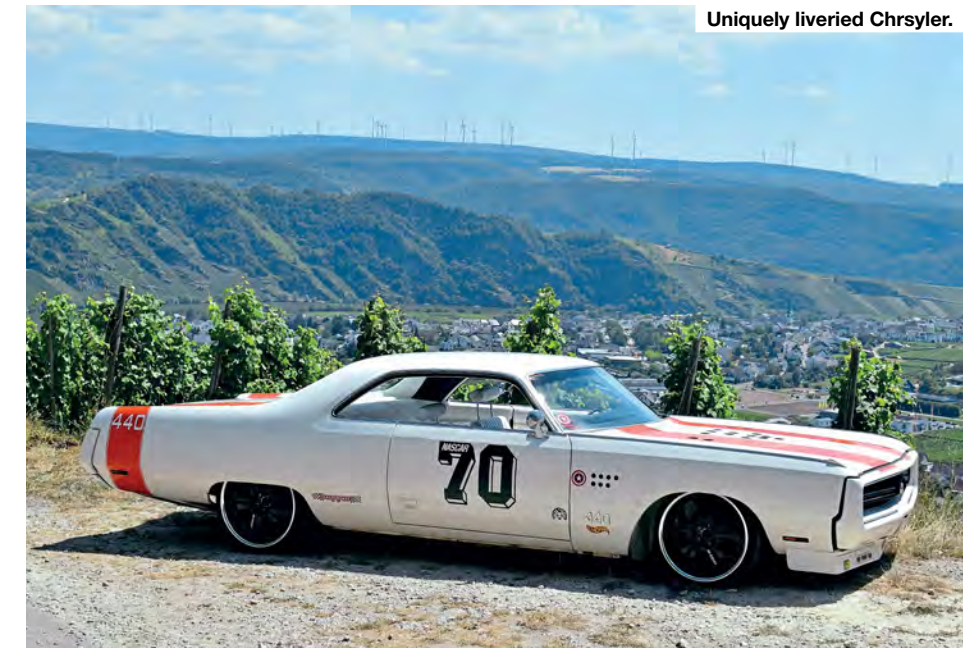
Porsches. I’ve always had a soft spot for American cars, although my focus was more on hot rods and custom cars from the Fifties.

“I came to the Fuselage models more by chance than anything. An encounter with a four-

door Seventies Sport Fury Hardtop in evening traffic left me gobsmacked. I was enchanted by the shape, the way the wheels were positioned so far inwards and the grille with the concealed headlights. I started to do some research and stumbled across the [www.fuselage.de](http://www.fuselage.de) website dedicated to these cars.

“I also looked at GM and FoMoCo cars from that era, but quickly realised that at the time, no one by the Chrysler Group was building such timeless, beautiful full-size sedans. Long story short: in 2015, I bought a ‘69 New Yorker, founded a Facebook group for owners of Fuselage C-bodies and the idea for a small event developed from there.”

The first BBTR in 2016 came together despite Georg being completely unknown on the Mopar scene at the time. Bastian Ewert, who attended this seminal gathering with his 1970 Imperial LeBaron as a visitor, but is now a member of the organising team, remembers it well: “I found it all a bit strange at first. There was supposed to be a cruise and wine tasting. It sounded a bit elitist to me and not at all appropriate. For me, a typical car meet consisted of looking at cars,



Uniquely liveried Chrysler.



Wagons roll!

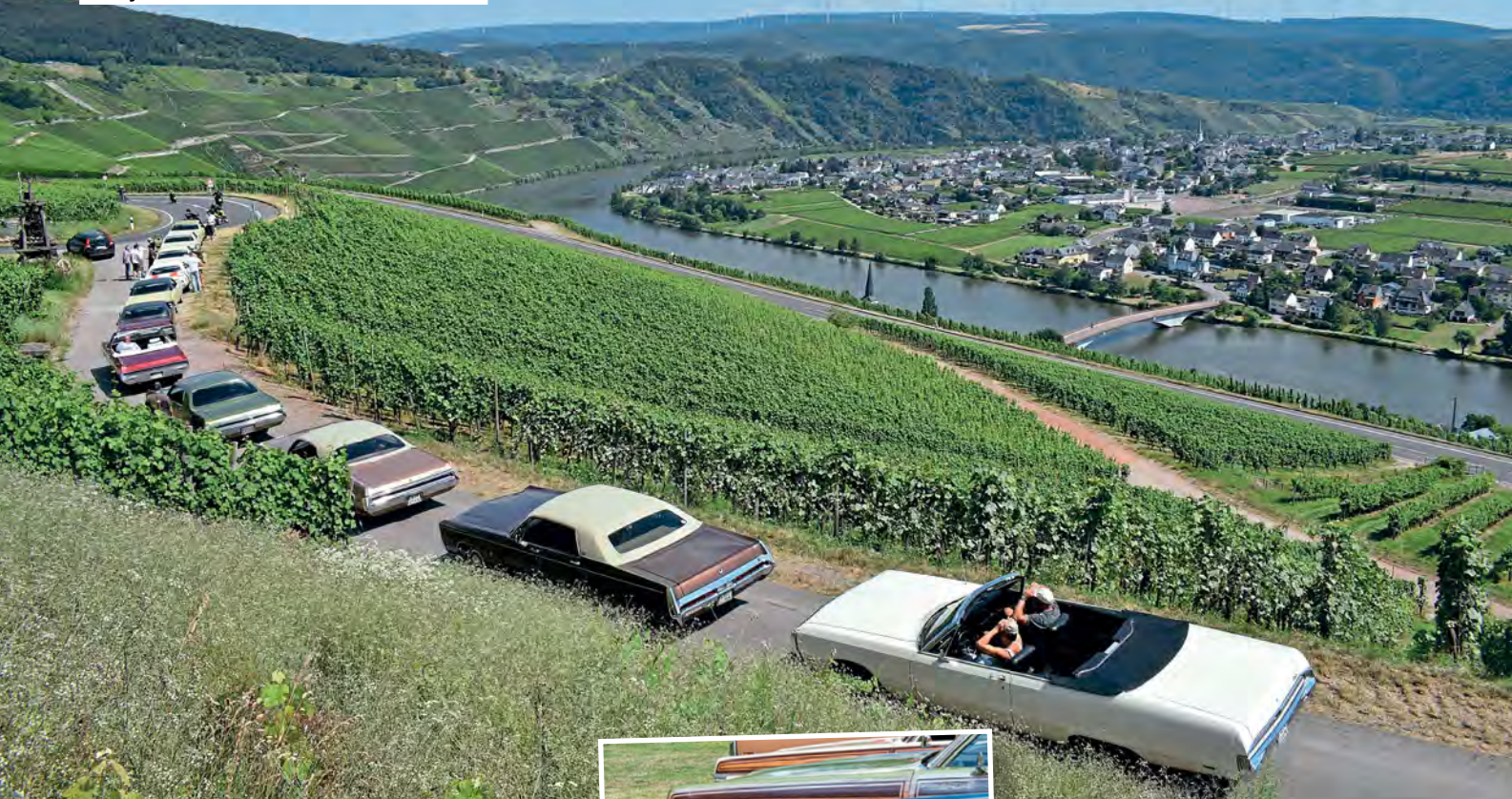
drinking beer and bench racing! But of course, I didn’t want to miss it.” That was probably how all the participants felt, so they were probably surprised at how well organised it was, at the informal atmosphere and at the fantastic scenery.

Back then, it was held at another location, but since 2018 the BBTR has been based at the campsite in Erden. A large swivel barbecue, beer tent and two 3x6 metre party tents have always been available for all participants.

“People have been gathering around fires since time immemorial, and it’s no different here. By barbecuing together, you quickly get into conversations with other enthusiasts, and you’ll always meet other folks, even if you come alone,” explains co-organizer Marco Planz. However, most folks come with company, and an added attraction is the fantastic location of the campsite, which is nestled between the river and the riverside road, behind which lies the small wine village of Erden itself. If camping is not your thing, you can book into one of the many guesthouses in the area and can »



Vineyard on the banks of the river Moselle.



Chrysler 300 flying the flag for the Czech Republic.



Vineyards and the river Moselle.



Always help on hand.



1972 Dodge Monaco wagon.



1973 Chrysler New Yorker.



Plymouth Fury GT.



1971 Chrysler Town & Country.



1969 Dodge Monaco – check out those taillights!

Making friends!



1971 Chrysler New Yorker.



Lining up for the cruise!



Setting up camp.

leave your Mopar on the campsite, as all such accommodation is within ten minutes' walking distance.

The real highlight of BBTR is the cruise through the Moselle valley, which always takes place on Saturday. When the convoy of around 50 almost 18ft long, full-size Mopars sets off, many locals are left agog at the sight. In this idyllic tourist region, people are delighted to see classic cars and rush out of their houses to marvel at the seemingly impromptu parade, waving at the cars' occupants. The route, which changes every year, wends its way through tiny villages, through towering vineyards and alongside the world-famous Moselle river.

A road book issued by the organisers helps with navigation, and to date everyone has found the location for lunch, even if they've gotten lost somewhere along the way! The selected restaurants have always provided the best food and a relaxing 90-minute break before the approximately one-hour drive back to the »





Swedish Chrysler gets directions.



Town & Country sunset.



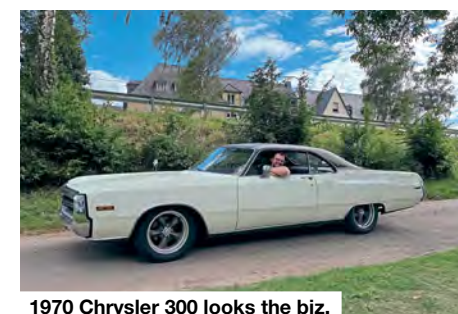
1971 Plymouth Fury.



Rarest C-body there?  
Maybe this 1970 Chrysler 300H!



Danish Dodge proves  
not all C-bodies are pretty!



1970 Chrysler 300 looks the biz.



campsite, where the participants arrive back at around 4pm.

After the land yachts have had their run-out, BBTR moves on to the more relaxed part of the event. As is customary on the Moselle, the barbecue is cooked over the best beech wood and after dinner, if you like, you can take part in the wine tasting organised on site. "In the Moselle, wine is simply as much a part of life as beer is in Bavaria. There's absolutely nothing elitist about it," explains Marko Roßkopf, the fourth member of the BBTR team. The tasting is always well received and always ends with particularly 'jolly' participants!

If you're considering attending this event and you're worried it might be too expensive to travel, because it's a long way, Georg says why not do the trip with some friends? Four in a car as big as a Chrysler B-body is no problem, it's fun and you can all share the costs and the driving. Or, why not take your family along and stay longer than just the weekend? There's plenty to see in the Moselle valley, which is one of the most beautiful parts of Germany.

BBTR is different from other meetings, and they make a point of being family-friendly – apparently an astonishingly large number of participants travel with their wives. There are several reasons for this; on the one hand, there are plenty of attractions nearby that offer 'non-car' interest and on the other hand there's the cruise on Saturday. You can sit in the car with your loved one, you don't have to talk car stuff and you can enjoy the beautiful landscape as you drive through it. As for fees, if you're camping, you'll have to pay the campsite owner on site and the organisers do charge a nominal fee (for renting the tent, firewood for the grill, etc.) of 10 euros per vehicle (regardless of the number of passengers) which is incredibly reasonable! If you spend the night in a local guest house, there's a five euro 'parking fee' for cars left on the campsite, which again very reasonable.

So, as you can see, BBTR is not only different from other American car events in terms of the vehicles taking part, but the actual show also differs in terms of what goes on. You won't find any burnout contests or sales stands or food stalls. "Instead," explains Ivan Movcan, "there is an incredible sense of solidarity and friendship... If someone breaks down, they get help. We've never had to call the road assistance! I've been there with my family since the first show and we haven't missed one since, because we can't imagine a year without BBTR!" The same goes for many other participants, who now travel from all over Europe and further afield. So, if you want to take part in this unique event, you can register with your Fuselage C-Body without obligation via [www.bbtr.de](http://www.bbtr.de) or by emailing [register@bbtr.de](mailto:register@bbtr.de). This year's show takes place over the weekend of July 5-7. ★

