



MG/GT TEAM
STANDING BESIDE MG;
WES DAWN,
BOB PERLOW

MOONTRASH II
STANDING BESIDE
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KIM CHAPIN
STEVE BEHR

Those damn fools, they went and did it. Shortly after midnight on the 15th of November, 1971, six outlandish vehicles, manned by 16 even more outlandish drivers, co-drivers, navigators, mechanics—and a TWA stewardess, for God's sake—scattered out of the Red Ball Garage on East 31st Street in New York City and headed west. A few hours passed and two more entrants joined the chase—a coast-to-coast epic that will be remembered as the Cannonball Baker Sea-to-Shining-Sea Memorial Trophy Dash. Eight vehicles in all, 23 lunatics.

Less than a day-and-a-half later (six minutes less to be precise), the first car, a mud-streaked Ferrari Daytona, yowled into the parking lot of the Portofino Inn in the marina of Redondo Beach, California, 2863 miles from New York. In the next three hours, four more machines had checked in, and the exhausted, red-eyed competitors were lounging around, breathing the gentle Pacific air, stretching their cramped, grubby bodies in the warm sun and exchanging tales of their adventures. Twenty-four more hours passed before the last competitor, a pachydermatous Travco Motor Home with a shrieking police motorcycle escort, rolled sedately over the finish line.

It was over. The Cannonball Baker Sea-to-Shining-Sea Memorial Trophy Dash had entered the annals of sporting minutiae, leaving future generations to decide what it meant, if anything. To those involved, it had been an adventure, encompassing difficult endurance driving, nasty weather, brushes with the law—some of the latter bordering on the absurd—navigational challenges and a variety of mechanical troubles. The concept had been refreshing in its simplicity. Whereas every automotive competition in the world is encumbered by a thick-et of confusing rules, the Cannonball Baker had but one—"All

They did it! Dan Gurney and Brock Yates
in a 172 mph Ferrari race a wild
assortment of challengers across country.

competitors will drive any vehicle of their choosing, over any route, at any speed they judge practical, between the starting point and destination. The competitor finishing with the lowest elapsed time is the winner." There were no other rules. Once this word filtered through the underground of the sport, a substantial discussion arose as to what type car would be best suited, what route would be the fastest, etc. In keeping with the essentially anarchistic underpinnings of the event, there was no organizing body (save for a shadowy group known as "The True Friends of Hernando DeSoto"), and more important, no prize money. The only material award to be gained by the winner was possession of the S-K "Nutmaster" trophy—a free-form sculpture of wrenches, hammers and pliers fabricated and donated by the S-K Tool Company.

In its simple challenge; getting from New York to Los Angeles in the quickest possible time, lay the fascination for the competitors. Others wanted to go, but were held back by obligations to job and family, or in some cases fear of censure. Others talked big but disappeared before the start. In the end it was eight cars, 21 guys and two women who ran the Cannonball Baker.