

## **Martin Thoene**

### **Drag Racing Bio**

- I was born and raised in England in the 1950's, and got into cars at an early age (early 1960's). Like most kids, I built things using plastic kits. It began with aircraft, then I gradually began building model hot-rods and dragsters. My inspirations came from such magazine as "Hot-Rod" and "Car Craft".
- In the 1970's, I started going to the Santa-Pod Raceway with friends. This raceway still stands and is England's first permanent drag-strip. My friends at the time knew some of the drag-bike racers, and one of these racers asked me to crew for him on his blown, nitro burning Triumph. I became the guy doing the mad-scientist thing in the pits mixing nitro and methanol... which included constantly breathing in these fumes while wheeling him up to stage.
- Also in the 1970's, I got into the custom van scene. I became Chairman of The National Street Van Association UK, which at that time had about 600 members. Soon after, a job change resulted in my resignation of that position. Although, through my new job, I met a guy with a small rail dragster, which kept me in the racing loop.
- I then transitioned from vans to hot-rods, and began helping my friends with their builds. I built a couple of rods, the last of which was a 1951 Austin Devon Pickup. I built it in a 1980's style, but it had gasser DNA, and was my daily driver, come rain or shine. I had always loved gassers and had fallen in love with Austin Gassers years before.
- Fast forward to 2001, having just gone through a divorce, I was living on my own and ultimately led to my giving up my Austin. After my divorce, I met a Canadian woman via the Internet, which led to my Atlantic crossing. I had also kept tropical fish most of my life and during this time, co-wrote a book on the subject, which was published and included my text, photographs and illustrations. My Mother was an artistic and creative soul, I definitely got her genes in this regard. These days, I seldom draw using conventional media, but rather utilize digital media.
- While chatting online one day, and inquiring about a particular 60's Austin Gasser, I received a reply from a guy who actually bought my Austin more than 20 years ago. He then introduced me to John Cassiol, who happened to know of its current whereabouts. John and I became instant friends through our common interests and viewpoints in regards to REAL gasser racing. Recently, and for two straight years, I have attended the Nostalgia Weekend Event held in Lancaster, NY. The photographs I took at this event garnered a lot of attention, and through this, John Foust and I became fast friends, and have continued our communications via the telephone and through e-mails. In 2015, I designed a 1960's inspired paint scheme for John's Willys named "Lazarus". Through John's contacts, I was asked to become the official photographer, videographer, designer and occasional public relations person for the Nostalgia AA/Gassers Club. My goal, in regards to the Club, is to provide great visual coverage and hopefully some live on-scene reporting as well. If you're racing with the club expect my lens to be on you and your stuff. Fans can expect a different kind of visual coverage, as I regard racecars as art, and period-correct Gassers are extremely photogenic and awe-inspiring. I also want to showcase the people involved in the Club, such as the drivers, crew and the support team.
- These period-correct Gassers are the quickest and fastest on the planet. It's always going to be HEADS UP, ALL OUT.

Martin "The One" Thoene (people always spell it incorrectly)