

Richard Smith XK140 - Jag Owner Wins A Camel's Kiss

By PAUL MILTON BUTLER

A CAMEL has thrilled a busload of tourists by kissing the owner of a classic Jaguar motor car.

As the owner of the 1956 sports car stopped to pose with the camel, standing beside his car, the Camel lowered its long neck and planted the kiss firmly on his lips.

It was amazing, especially as the two had never met before.

The couple, Richard and Carla Smith, from Happy Valley in South Australia, were the envy of everyone when they pulled up in their classic Jaguar motor car at Camels Australia, a camel farm about 90km south of Alice Springs.

The owner of the farm, Neil Waters, had only entered moments before Blacky the 15-year-old male camel walked into place for the picture and leant down and kissed Mr Smith.

The crowd loved it.

Mr Smith bought the Jaguar, an XK 140 Special Equipment Model Roadster, three years ago, when it was a rusting wreck.

He then set about restoring it, which took him a year.

Mr Smith said: "I bought the car off a fellow in New South Wales for \$18 000, but it was in poor condition.

"The seats were totally rusted out, and all



Blacky the camel gives Jaguar classic car owner Richard Smith a kiss while Neil Waters, of Camels Australia at Stuart Well, and Carla Smith look on. Picture LEX BALLANTYNE

Jag owner wins a camel's kiss

the gauges on the dash were hanging out and many of them were broken.

"But luckily getting parts, even after all these years, really is not a problem so I was able to restore it to its original factory condition." Today it is worth \$95, 000.

Mr Smith said another car the same as his sold for \$140,000 last March, at Pebble Beach in California,

The Smiths had just taken part in the classic car rally which was run from Darwin last weekend.

Mr Smith said "I was a bit worried how it would go as it had never travelled these distances before. It has gone well for most of the trip; the only thing we've had go wrong with it was that it popped a welsh plug".

"But we got that fixed and it is now just purring along."

Mr Smith said the XK 140 roadster has its original engine which is a six cylinder double overhead cam engine and is capable of 225km/h.

A small brass plate fixed to the dash on the passenger's side and signed by the engineer testifies to its speed.

Mr Smith said it is only five cars of its type in Australia. ■

The story appeared in the Centralian Advocate, Tuesday, August 7, 2001. Richard & Carla were with the XKs in the Australian XK Darwin to Alice Springs Run. The journalist only happened to be there as he was part of the media frenzy reporting on the "Peter Falconio" disappearance that occurred while travelling with his girlfriend Joanne Lees on the evening of 14 July 2001.

