



## COMPANY HISTORY

The Marcos marque was founded in 1959 by Jem Marsh and Frank Costin, who took the first three letters of their surnames to devise a name for the new company. Their first cars drew on Costin's aviation experience and were remarkable in their use of wood laminates for the monocoque body/chassis unit. Light weight and good streamlining gave outstanding performance from the relatively modest 1 litre and 1.5 litre Ford engines they used.

As with so many of the smaller British manufacturers spawned during this period, Marcos earned its market pedigree on the race track. Notable early customers include Jackie Stewart, who gained his first racing experience in a Marcos, Derek Bell, Jackie Oliver and Jonathan Palmer.

These first cars were no beauties but sold well on sheer capability alone. When Frank Costin left the company in 1961 his creation was placed in the hands of Dennis and Peter Adams. Their first challenge was to simplify the construction technique. During 1963, and intended merely as a stopgap project, the Adams brothers produced designs for the Marcos 1800. Though still relying upon wood for the chassis this new model was clothed in an extraordinarily beautiful fibreglass shell. Indeed, this 'stopgap' turned out to be so good looking that it was acclaimed an immediate success following its launch at the Motor Show that October and remains the inspiration for the Company's top models to this day.

During 1966 the Mini Marcos was introduced; a fibreglass-bodied car utilising trusted Mini mechanicals, including the front wheel drive engine/transmission unit. It sold extremely well, despite being described as "ugly as Hell" by one correspondent. Subsequently the Mini Marcos earned its spurs and reputation on the track, especially at Le Mans in 1966 when it was the only British car to complete the 24 hour race.

Throughout this time the Marcos GT remained a solid success but was still hindered by the labour-intensive wooden chassis. In 1969 the Adams brothers were commissioned to design a steel chassis, which appeared in the form of a square section tubular spaceframe that cut some 15 hours off the manufacturing times of every car. Power units were generally Ford (4 cylinder 1.5 litre and 1650cc, V4 and 3 litre V6) and Volvo (the original 1800cc and later the 3 litre straight six). All received excellent reviews from the press, where they compared very favourably with other specialist marques of the time, such as Lotus, Morgan, Gilburn and TVR.

In 1971, encouraged by a healthy order book, the decision was taken to move the manufacturing plant from Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire to a new factory in nearby Westbury. Production volumes were intended to become 6 to 10 cars per week, with a large proportion destined for the United States. Relocation to a new plant interrupted output considerably which, combined with problems involving the main US importer and a widespread collapse in the UK market, resulted in the closure of the original company in 1972.

Jem Marsh continued in business by establishing a spares and service facility for existing Marcos owners. In 1976 he re-acquired the Marcos moulds and name, though it was not until 1981 that Marcos GT manufacturing was relaunched. Since then the car has been updated and revised several times; in 1984 as the Mantula Coupé fitted with a 3.5 litre Rover V8, and then in 1986 by the Mantula Spyder.

In 1991, to satisfy a growing interest both at home and abroad, the Mini Marcos was relaunched. A number of subtle alterations were made, though the main revisions addressed the concerns of the '90s through the provision of lead-free engine options and catalytic converters.

1993 proved to be a turning point for Marcos. The NEC Motor Show in late 1992 had witnessed the launch of the Mantara. Though visibly related, this latest Marcos was an all-new car that made use of the changes in UK type approval legislation to permit low-volume production and sales through selected dealers. The car was universally acclaimed, and following numerous road tests and reports, has continued to meet with compliments and widespread admiration. Powered by the latest derivative of the famous Rover V8 the Mantara offers outstanding performance, sure-footed roadholding and unrivalled practicality.

However, the story does not end there. At the 1993 Motor Show Marcos unveiled the GT Le Mans. Derived from the Mantara but with a completely revised bodyshell and chassis, this is the Marcos that brings the famous name back onto the racing circuits of the world. With a top speed of over 200 mph, this is the company's contender for the new GT class in the BRDC GT Challenge and, ultimately, the Le Mans 24 Hours.

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