

# STEERING RACK AND RUIN

**D**ammit the cruiser won't turn left! With instant panic setting in and thinking I'm about to career into the vehicle coming the other way, I frantically gave the wheel another go and with relief I was able to turn. "What happened there", flashed through my mind. "Maybe it was me and not the vehicle", I thought - just one of those things.



◀ *The rack was knackered.*

Then it happened again a few times. I asked around and the quick diagnosis varied from needing a new power steering pump, you've got dodgy fluid to there could be something lodged behind your bash plates.

It was suggested I go to Power Steering Specialists in Malaga. Sam, the proprietor, jumped into the pilot seat and with a bit of wriggling of the steering wheel and without moving a centimetre, he says "I think it's your steering rack". A quick drive confirmed the diagnosis. Now you all know I'm an expert in the black art of auto mechanics (not), I didn't have a clue about much of what he was saying. Sam patiently explained that the steering was hydraulicing due

## THE THINGS YOU SEE!

WITH (TRUTHFUL)  
**PHIL BIANCHI**



to a badly worn piston seal. He then explained what needed to be done and the cost.

There was something familiar about Sam's firm; I then recalled I had been here about five years ago. I dropped off a worn steering pump for reconditioning and at that time was told by Sam that he had reconditioned the same item about eight years earlier, he date stamps his work. I also recalled that I then asked Sam about warranty seeing the part had failed. I couldn't and still can't understand why he almost collapsed laughing hysterically - saying "eight years old!"

The Old Girl was booked in and Sam and his boys did their thing. When I picked her up later that day he said both tie rods were worn and had lots of play, the rack mount bushes were cracked and the rack and pinion had badly worn teeth. "It's knackered and can't be reconditioned," he added. He showed me the worn rack; it was easy to see where wear had taken place. The job took five hours; I drove off with the knowledge that Sam knew his stuff and with the satisfaction of a job well done. Sam had quoted a very competitive price and he stuck to it. The price covered everything including a wheel alignment which he arranged. Whilst paying the account I noticed on the wall various signed photos from satisfied customers. One that stuck in my mind was from Rosco McGlashan, who currently holds the Australian land speed record at 803 kph. Rosco a customer, you can't get better testament than that.



## Nawelly the Seminatisologist

"Is that you Nawelly" I eagerly Face Book messaged. Back came the reply, "Yes, nobody has called me that since high school". Nawelly was a close Collie High School buddy with whom I had lost contact over 40 years ago.

We then spoke on the phone for what seemed like hours and it transpired that he had lived over east but now lives in Darlington. Amazingly he recalled all manner of things we got up to, I'm sure he mixed me up with someone else, I couldn't believe this angel would get up to what he reckons we did.

Eventually we got around to what work do you do?

"I'm a Seminatisologist".

Visions of IVF and other such reproductive services flashed through my mind; before he said, "I collect seeds and sell them to mining companies so they can revegetate country after they have finished mining". He explained he concentrates his collecting in the jarrah forest between Jarrahdale and Collie.

We agreed that the next time he went seed hunting I would join him. On the due date I climbed into his Hilux and we set off.

On the drive down he explained that he was certified (at last he knew what I always suspected) and had every ticket, permit and licence imaginable so he could carry out his unusual business which is called Darling Range Native Seeds. He explained how the mines used a whole range of seeds and ordered what they required by the kilogram or in some cases the gram, with the main seed types being eucalypts, banksias, acacias, hakeas and xanthorrhoeas. He then proceeded to rattle off the relevant Latin botanical names.

"Cripes", I thought "I'll never remember those names", and decided to stick to the more conventional descriptions; gum tree, prickly bush, spikey thing, snotty-gobble and my favourite roadsideie. Nawelly had been doing this work on and off for about 10 years and knew the jarrah forest like his back yard. Today we were in search of a hakea type; he knew from past experience the likely spots and had us going along all manner of gravel roads, tracks and wheel pads. We would stop and out would come his secateurs and gloves. Not only was I enjoying learning about his seed



collecting, the 4wd driving was awesome. He had us going up and down steep rutted hills, through tight windy tracks, over rocky crests and across creeks. Having been to these places regularly he had his own name for rocks, gullies etc. "That's Dave's Rock, he damaged a vehicle there. This is Paradise Gully named by an English backpacker I had with me. That's my rock, I banged up my old boss's new Hilux on that one" and so on. It was a beautiful day, clear blue skies, it was a week day so everything was quiet and best of all we had the forest to ourselves. I learned a lot and I also got a good dose of 4wd driving, thanks Nawelly.