

The dates for SCTA Speedweek 2016 at Bonneville USA have been confirmed - August 13th to 19th, entries are open and motels are taking bookings. Hopefully Mother Nature is kind to the Yanks this year and the course is in good condition. If you do intend to go, be aware that some of the casino accommodation requires you to pay up front and the terms are that if the event gets cancelled, they get to keep a large portion of the cash.

Amongst our overseas visitors this year at the Australian DLRA Speedweek at Lake Gairdner was American Les Davenport. He is one of the partners in the Treit and Davenport Streamliner "Target 550". He was on a scouting trip to see just how good our salt lake is, how well the DLRA runs Speedweek and what difficulties would have to be overcome to bring their 43 foot streamliner to the Australian outback. As the name implies, the target for the streamliner is 550 mph! If successful, it will be the fastest wheel driven car in the world.

The streamliner needs a long course to obtain the big speeds. With Bonneville USA having only eight miles of good salt and shrinking, it provides a starting point for test and tune, but the race team needs to look further afield to find a venue to reach their ultimate goal.

Les Davenport believes Lake Gairdner, South Australia may have the answer. We have a nine mile course with another eighty miles that can be used for run off if required.

The first time I heard of the project was in 2007. Rod Hadfield and I were walking around the pits at Bonneville, checking out the cars when we were approached by a guy who

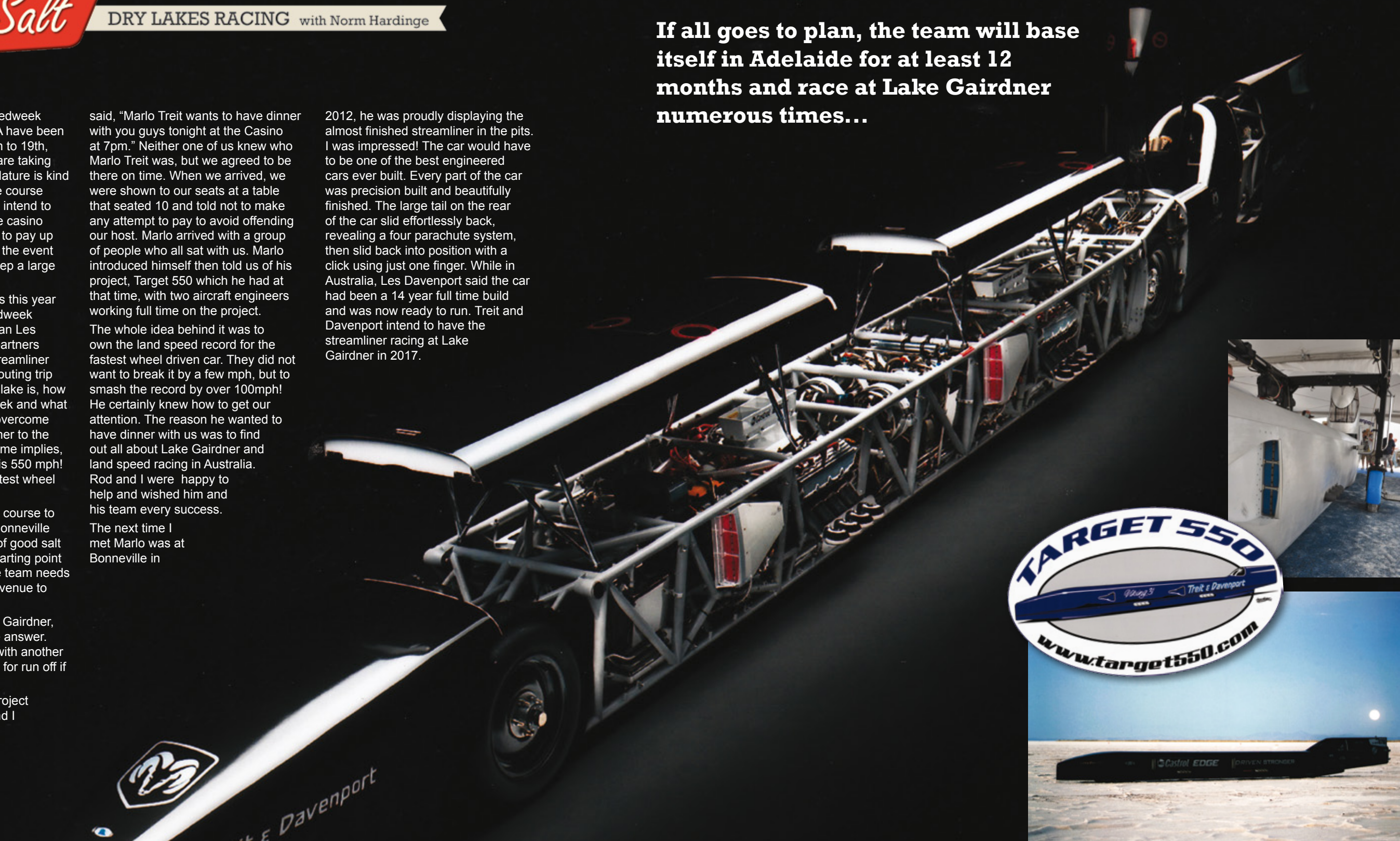
said, "Marlo Treit wants to have dinner with you guys tonight at the Casino at 7pm." Neither one of us knew who Marlo Treit was, but we agreed to be there on time. When we arrived, we were shown to our seats at a table that seated 10 and told not to make any attempt to pay to avoid offending our host. Marlo arrived with a group of people who all sat with us. Marlo introduced himself then told us of his project, Target 550 which he had at that time, with two aircraft engineers working full time on the project.

The whole idea behind it was to own the land speed record for the fastest wheel driven car. They did not want to break it by a few mph, but to smash the record by over 100mph! He certainly knew how to get our attention. The reason he wanted to have dinner with us was to find out all about Lake Gairdner and land speed racing in Australia. Rod and I were happy to help and wished him and his team every success.

The next time I met Marlo was at Bonneville in

2012, he was proudly displaying the almost finished streamliner in the pits. I was impressed! The car would have to be one of the best engineered cars ever built. Every part of the car was precision built and beautifully finished. The large tail on the rear of the car slid effortlessly back, revealing a four parachute system, then slid back into position with a click using just one finger. While in Australia, Les Davenport said the car had been a 14 year full time build and was now ready to run. Treit and Davenport intend to have the streamliner racing at Lake Gairdner in 2017.

If all goes to plan, the team will base itself in Adelaide for at least 12 months and race at Lake Gairdner numerous times...



Like most fast car projects, Target 550 started as a chalk line drawing on a shed floor. The car has a length of 43 feet which means some disassembly is needed to fit it into a 40 foot container. Height is just over 42 inches and the width is 3 feet. The chassis is made from 2 inch tube with a 1/8" wall thickness. The power plant is two Blown Dodge 510 cubic inch Hemis running on alcohol, each producing 2,500 horsepower @ 7200 revs. The streamliner is four wheel drive with 18 inch rims and

30 inch tyres. Final drive is 1 to 1.

The body has been designed after extensive wind tunnel testing using models at Western Washington University. The car needs 7 miles to accelerate and 5 miles to de-accelerate.

Michael Brixton from the DLRA has done a great job as Les Davenport's unofficial ambassador/tour guide. Les Davenport is now a member of the DLRA and was reported saying the salt at our Speedweek

in Australia 2016 was the best he had seen for years. He added he will be heading back to the USA with glowing reports.

If all goes to plan, the team will base itself in Adelaide for at least 12 months and race at Lake Gairdner numerous times over that period to get the job done. Target 550 intends to make history and if they run in Australia it definitely should not be missed! See you at the salt!

Norm Hardinge