

Mike Newman
The Panther Years
1987 – 1991



Mike Newman 1987 (shown far right)

Mike took the job of Managing Director at Panther at a critical time in the Company's history. Originally started by Robert Jankel in 1972 and known as Panther Westwinds the Company was bought by Young Kim of the Jindo Group in Korea in 1981. It continued to operate from the factory in Brooklands (site of the 1930's banked racetrack). In the mid 80's Kim decided to expand the company and add the Panther Solo to its range. An immensely ambitious decision as it represented cutting edge design and performance at the time. In September 1987 (coincidentally the month that 'D437 WPC' was produced) Kim brought Mike on board as M.D. to take the Company through an expansion that saw it taken over by Ssangyong (one of the top 5 Korean Companies) and complete a major relocation from the original factory in Byfleet to a new Production and Sales facility on the M25 at Harlow employing nearly 200 people.

The relocation saw the expansion of the Kallista product and the eventual introduction of the Solo (described by Autocar as the most exciting British Sports car since the E-type).

However in 1991 Ssangyong made the decision to relocate the Company to Korea bringing the UK production of this classically styled British Sportscar to an end.

The family connection

2007 – Present

D437 WPC

My son Greg Newman bought me a Panther Kallista in 2007 (D437 WPC) as a surprise present for my 65th birthday. A model he found which rolled off the production line in the first month of production (September 1987).

I enjoyed driving and maintaining the Kallista for around 10 years, before my son took ownership of it a couple of years ago (a return present for his 40th!).

We hope the next family to own it will enjoy and look after it as much as we have.