

Me and my motor

with Bo Hanson

BO Hanson's first car arrived in Brisbane in 1991, covered in red dust from Emerald in central Queensland and ready to be worked over by its new owner, aged 18.

Hanson had had his driver's licence for a while before the 1984 Nissan Patrol — cost \$6500 — arrived but had long had his eye on a car that could do more than travel on road.

"My brother had a four-wheel drive and I wanted to get one as well and we both liked camping and that sort of thing," recalls Hanson, a former Olympic rower who now works as a corporate trainer.

"I was fairly conservative, I suppose. There wasn't too much of a car scene around me at the time.

"But we would often go four-wheel-driving on Straddy, including one day when I had to pull my mate and his dad's Range Rover out of a creek he'd got stuck in.

"My girlfriend at the time liked driving the Patrol just because it wasn't a typically female type of car and was instead quite blokey."

The Patrol was also handy for Hanson's main passion, rowing, the extra capacity allowing him to carry boats to training sessions.

When he ditched the Nissan for a 1973 Mercedes 350SE for \$7000 five years later, the future of his single scull was, perhaps, in jeopardy. Not so.

"It had a towbar but I actually had a roof rack on it for my single scull on the roof," Hanson recalls.

"I found the Merc more comfortable to drive with a lot more space and leg room, even if it was still a fairly conservative sort of car. That, I guess, has been my track record.

"I really do remember the engineering on a car from 1973. It was fuel-injected, had electric windows, central locking, all the extras really.

"Everything was electric on it and it was an amazingly smooth ride. It had a 3.5 litre V8 so it was quite powerful but it cost me a bit in petrol. I like cars that have a bit of weight to them so they sit a bit more solidly."

He had the Merc until he crashed it in 1996 — Hanson not paying enough attention one day and running up the back of another driver.

The Merc should have been a write-off but the mechanics salvaged it.

"It would have been better as a write-off because it was never the same with the electronics and the cost was huge because the whole front section of the car was smashed."

The solution? He sold it to his father who sold it to his brother.

Hanson's next move was into a 1991 Mitsubishi Lancer for \$5000, an example of

the changing nature of his life at the time as he began to switch cars more regularly.

"It was pretty fast and furious but it was just one of those cars that just died a slow death, falling apart slowly," Hanson says.

In 1999, he ditched the Mitsubishi to pay \$28,000 for a 1997 Toyota Vienta Grande. He was 26.

"It had pretty much everything," Hanson recalls.

Alas, the purchase was a couple of weeks too early as a ferocious hailstorm in Sydney tore the care apart, making it almost a write-off.

"I was actually sitting in it at the time," Hanson says, laughing. "It was quite a noisy and surreal experience but it took a long time to get repaired because the panel beaters were so busy at the time fixing all the cars damaged from the storm."

Hanson was now looking further afield for his next wheels, even contemplating an import from Japan in the form of a twin-turbo Toyota Soarer.

"I looked at all the costs of everything involved and it was quite a viable option," Hanson recalls.

In 2002, Lady Luck smiled. There were a swag of imported Soarers and Hanson pounced, buying a 1993 model for \$18,000.

"It's essentially a Lexus badged as something different, I guess," he says.

Yet his heart changed again when he returned from the Athens Olympics in 2004, the year he bought his current car: a 2000 Holden Statesman for \$22,000.

He was looking for something with space, perhaps a Honda or Subaru, to cruise around his hometown of Maroochydore.

"We were looking at our car options but I'm 2m tall and they just were never going to work," Hanson laments.

"So I bought the Statesman. We were going to get a new one a couple of months ago but it would have been ridiculous with the kids and the sand and stuff when we go to the beach.

"We'll probably get another Statesman in a couple of years once the kids are older."

And when they are old enough, maybe even a dream car, a Holden HSV WM Series Grange. Price tag: \$82,990.

"It's an Australian car that offers great value and seems to have everything going for it. I've never had any dramas with my Statesmans so I have found Holden to be a very reliable car.

"That's what I want really: something that has a bit of space and doesn't cost a fortune to get serviced down the track."

Patrick Lion

A team player

OLYMPIC rowing medallist Bo Hanson is the managing director of Team 8, a corporate training business using rowing as an experience activity to openly explore teamwork and leadership issues. Team 8 aims to assist organisations in the workplace to achieve and improve team performance by defining team cultures and identity and addressing leadership, communication, conflict management and goal setting.

