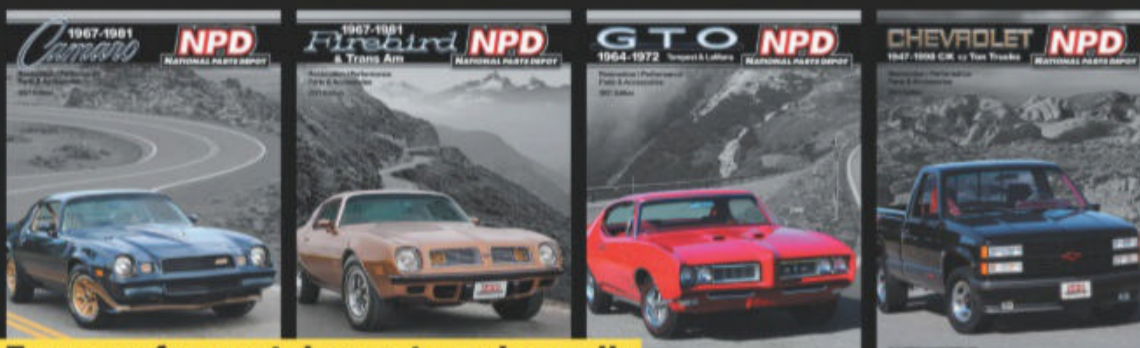


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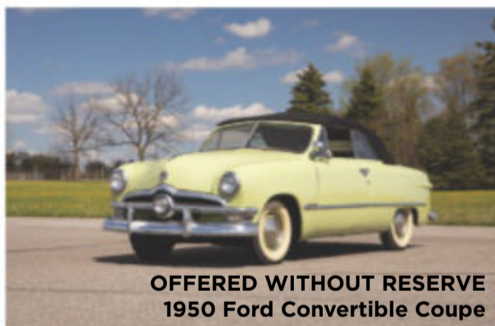
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## A Sporting Charm

Our cover car, a Triumph TR3A, is certainly a bit of a departure for a magazine that had been dedicated exclusively to American models from its launch until 2019, but it seemed wholly appropriate. If ever there was a genre of automobile from another shore that spoke to Americans, it was the sports cars of Great Britain.

The popularity of these engaging little cars in the U.S. is often attributed to the exposure American servicemen had to them while stationed in Europe during World War II. When the war was over and those soldiers got back home, they wanted to continue experiencing the thrill of running around in a low-slung, two-seat, open-top car; the sort that could make a run to the store for a quart of milk fun.

The concept wasn't entirely new to us Yanks. Well before Pearl Harbor, some American car manufacturers had produced sporting machines intended for speed, sometimes with minimalist coachwork and just enough room for a driver and possibly one rider. At the same time, many enthusiasts had built their own "speedsters" out of cut-down Model Ts and other work-a-day cars that had been retired from regular transport duties. The common objective was always to get light and low, and then harness as much engine power as was feasible.

But in the postwar period, American carmakers were focused on producing modern coupes and sedans, moving in the opposite direction by making them steadily larger and cushier. Meanwhile, the Brits had just the ticket, with brand-new, factory-built sports models that offered the right driving dynamics paired with the bonus of a certain charm that Detroit simply didn't provide.

The appeal of those British sports cars is not lost on me. Despite being fascinated with American iron from a very early age, I can still recall how intrigued I was by the MGBs my friend's big brothers were always tinkering with when we were kids. Between the two brothers and their buddies, there were quite a few sports cars around. This was in the late '70s, and even though MG was just wrapping up its production, the MGB already seemed vintage—we sensed even then that it was a carryover from an earlier time. And given the state of the auto industry at that moment, anything that harked to the motoring of the '60s was like a ray of sunlight through the haze.

The MGB/GT in this issue took me right back to the one my friend's oldest brother put together back around the summer of 1980. He was a college student by then and an able wrench, and he put extra effort into this one. When it was first running again, he took me for a blast around the neighborhood, and I recall being amazed at how much speed he could maintain going around corners. It was my first real experience with a nimble-handling car being pushed to perform, and the impression really stuck with me.

Around that time, one of the brother's older friends showed up with a Triumph TR3, a memory that came rushing back to my mind when I first saw this month's cover car. The one from years ago was also white with red interior, but sported red-painted wheels. I recall thinking that you could probably touch the ground while sitting in the car, and wondered what it would be like to zip along with such a tiny little door the only separation from the pavement. Sadly, I never got a ride in that one.

The sporting nature of those cars was the most obvious aspect of their allure, but there were other elements that served their endearing nature. Details like the racy instruments, the toggle-like switches, the aroma of vintage leather... To this day I think I can smell that particular petroleum cocktail that emanated from so many of those cars—somehow unique, and distinctly different from even the leakiest aging Chevy or Ford.

As I've said, even at the dawn of the '80s, those cars of the '60s and early '70s seemed like they were from a long-gone time, one that would never repeat. In 1980, it looked like the future held only practical cars, and not particularly attractive ones. Lots of enthusiasts obviously felt the same way, and efforts to restore and/or preserve the classic sports cars of England's past have been going on since before I'd even gotten a ride in that MGB.

Of course, we know now that things did get better, and even the traditional spartan sports car would make a return to showrooms, though it arrived by way of Japan. Meanwhile, that British charm remains exclusive to the originals, and they're as endearing as ever, still capable of providing simple thrills and effortless smiles. And though they come from a continent away, they still somehow seem very much a part of the fabric of the American motoring experience. 🏎️

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## Corvette Exhibit to Present Every Generation

**A DRAMATIC PRESENTATION OF** Chevrolet Corvettes is now available for viewing at the Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan. *The Greatest Generation* shines a light on all iterations of the Corvette from 1953 to

present day. From the fiberglass-bodied roadsters with inline-sixes and two-speed transmissions to today's mid-engine C8 Corvettes with 495 horsepower and top speeds approaching 200 mph, all will be represented. Unveiled at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York in January 1953, Chevrolet's Corvette has had a faithful following throughout its lifetime.

*The Greatest Generation* was curated with help from Corvette expert Werner Meier, renowned as one of the most experienced restorers in the world. Several of Meier's own Corvettes are a part of the exhibit, along with nearly two dozen other rare and significant Corvettes from across the country. "The Corvette has an amazing legacy and an incredibly passionate group of owners and admirers," said John Russell, executive director of the Gilmore Car Museum. Some of the cars on display include a GM Motorama presentation of two 1954 Corvette concepts, a rare 1969 L88 Stingray coupe with its high-performance 427 V-8, plus six concept, styling, and development cars that have never been displayed together. Guests are welcomed at the museum, but please be aware that COVID-19 social-distancing rules are still in effect. For more information, visit [gilmorecarmuseum.org](http://gilmorecarmuseum.org).

## Cars & Coffee at ACD Museum

**THE CURATORS AT THE AUBURN CORD DUESENBERG** Automobile Museum have announced that "Cars & Coffee" is back. All car enthusiasts are invited to bring their cars to this event—anything from customs, to antiques, to high-performance machines—and meet at the Education and Exhibit Plaza located across from the museum. Free coffee and donuts will be provided, and members of the museum staff will be available to answer questions. Tours of the museum's Collections Conservation Center, the shop used to maintain the museum's collection, can also be arranged by request. In addition, tickets will be available for a chance to win a 1963 Corvette "fuelie" that will be on display. The drawing will take place December 27. Cars & Coffee gatherings will take place on the third Saturday of each month through September. Visit [automobilemuseum.org](http://automobilemuseum.org) for more information.



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**THE QUAIL, A MOTORSPORTS GATHERING** will return to the Quail Lodge & Golf Club in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, on August 13, during Pebble Beach weekend. The gathering will honor the "50th Anniversary of the Alfa Romeo Montreal" and "Automotive Couture, French Cars Featuring the 50th Anniversary of the Citroën SM." In addition to these special featured classes, expect to see the familiar traditional classes ranging from "Pre-War Sports and Racing Cars" to "The Evolution of the Supercar."

"The Peninsula Signature Events team is excited for the return of *The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering* during the world-famous Monterey Car Week. Our 18th-annual celebration will bring together like-minded collectors and enthusiasts to share their passion for the automobile and celebrate the golden anniversaries of several iconic vehicle models," said Kai Lermen, general manager of Quail Lodge & Golf Club.

In addition to attending the car show, guests will have the opportunity to hear from motorsports legends, discussing the future of racing and the hobby of car collecting. Each entrance includes an invitation to attend the Bonhams Quail Lodge Auction that will take place concurrently with the car show. Social distancing and safety protocols will be in effect. Visit [peninsula.com/en/signature-events](http://peninsula.com/en/signature-events) for more details.



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## 2type T

**WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, VANS AND WAGONS AND PICKUPS** are configured to put the cargo in the back. Still, somebody decided to play what-if with a welder and a Volkswagen Type 2, as we see in this pair of photos that the inimitable *Truque* blog recently posted (original source unknown—clue us in if you have more details).

The images could've been altered, but if that's the case our hats are off to the artist because they're convincing. Yet we see a steering wheel in the location we would expect to find it, relative to the windshield, the driver's door, and the back of the cabin. And some close inspection of the chassis seems to show swing-arm rear suspension components where one would expect and a beam front axle at the other end. Of course, one should never assume anything with a vehicle like this, but we're pretty sure it's meant to drive forward in the direction of those headlamps.

To the extent of our knowledge, only one vehicle was ever built in this configuration: Volkswagen's Plattenwagen, a Type 1-based cargo hauler that Volkswagen built for shuttling parts around its Wolfsburg factory from 1946 until 1973. Could Volkswagen have built this Type 2 as a Plattenwagen replacement? Where is this vehicle today? And, as we all surely want to know, what's it like to drive?



## LaDawri EV

**GIVEN THAT MANY OF THE EXECUTIVES AND SCIENTISTS WHO** helped launch General Electric had a great interest in electric cars, it's surprising that the company's interest in this segment extended only as far as the mercury arc rectifiers used to charge early EVs. It apparently took until 1959 for GE to even begin to consider building an electric car—or, at the very least, leveraging the company's vast experience with electric devices to piece one together.

That was the year that Edwin Emil Kolatorowicz convinced his superiors at GE to buy a LaDawri Conquest, so they could electrify it. According to Michael Puma, the current owner of the car, Kolatorowicz used entirely off-the-shelf components, including a Truck-O-Dyne traction motor directly driving the rear axle with a 5.75-hp Briggs & Stratton gasoline engine turning a GE generator to feed roughly 1,000 pounds' worth of eight 6-volt lead-acid batteries.

Puma, a historic preservationist, bought the LaDawri directly from Kolatorowicz's family and has just started down the path of researching and understanding the car—he's not yet sure exactly which batteries GE used in the car—before he makes any attempt to take it apart to start the preservation process. Eventually, he said, he'd love to have it up and running again.



Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car? Let us know. Photographs, commentary, questions, and answers should be submitted to Lost & Found, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car*, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201, or emailed to [dstrohl@hemmings.com](mailto:dstrohl@hemmings.com). For more Lost & Found, visit [blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found](http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found).

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— H., Arvada, CO



## REGARDING PATRICK CURRAN'S

question about manual rear windows on a 1967 Eldorado, at best I have a guess. But I did see this on another top-of-the-line vehicle: a 1990 F-350 XLT Crew Cab dually, 460 V-8, fully loaded, sans rear power windows.

My guess is that, in keeping with their pattern, Detroit's bean counters decided that they could get away with it. The irony shouldn't be lost on anyone that they had the nerve to do this, even on a flagship vehicle. It was a much easier pill to swallow when I saw a Studebaker Lark sold new with a driver's-side-only sun visor.

Here's another odd thing to contemplate: General Motors sedans and wagons manufactured between 1978-'87, with permanently sealed windows on the rear doors, and only the vent window able to open. For Buick, this included 1978-'83 Century/Regal wagons and 1982-'84 Regal sedans. For Chevrolet, it was 1978-'83 Malibu wagons and 1981-'84 sedans. Oldsmobiles included 1978-'83 Cutlass Cruiser and 1980-'87 Cutlass Supreme sedans. Pontiacs were 1978-'81 Le Mans wagons, '81 Le Mans sedans, 1982-'83 Bonneville wagons, and 1982-'86 Bonneville sedans.

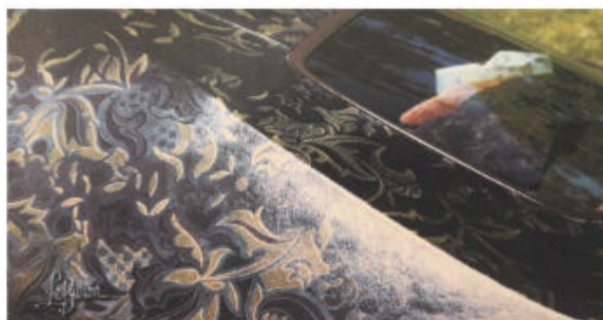
Back when I sold used cars, I actually had in my inventory a 1984 Cutlass Supreme with manual front windows, permanently sealed rear windows, and a power-operated rear vent window. It was baffling that anyone would build a car this way, let alone purchase a sedan or wagon with permanently sealed windows on the rear doors. GM probably sold over a million cars like this. When they were new, it might have been okay, but by the time they became part of my inventory, not one of them had a working air conditioner. All sold quickly, and not once did anyone (aside from myself) find something odd about these vehicles.

Louis Urcinoli  
Newark, New Jersey

## I ENJOYED READING THE ARTICLE

concerning the 1969 Plymouth with the vinyl "Mod Top" option in the April issue of *HCC* (#199). I remember seeing only one when these cars were new. I always felt that admiration for the Mod Top was an acquired taste. Would I still like it when the car was 10 years old and out of style? I couldn't answer this to myself.

In 1985, I discovered a well-worn 1971 Imperial with a paisley burgundy



top in an idea similar in style to the Mod Top. I have never seen another before or since, and I, fortunately, photographed the car featuring its roof. Since that discovery, I have always wondered if that car was factory original, or someone's idea for a unique and trendy statement. Perhaps someone from your readership can provide answers.

This much I know: The 1971 Imperials were available with a burgundy vinyl roof covering at introduction, but this availability was cancelled before the middle of the model year according to Chrysler's product changes bulletin. However, the changes bulletin, the sales literature, and the color and trim selector for the Imperial make no mention of the burgundy being supplied with a paisley print. So, I am not able to confirm the legitimacy of this vehicle. Again, I ask if some reader can provide any substantiation for this Imperial.

You printed an authoritative article on the Mod Top. Keep up the superb reporting!  
David Fluck  
Quakertown, Pennsylvania

## I HAVE ALWAYS DREAMED OF RE-

storing an old classic, and since retiring, I have been looking for one to try. I have never written to a publisher before; however, the column "Restoration Conundrum," written by Matthew Litwin, has gotten my insides all twisted up (*HCC* #201). And then, I turn the page and read "The Perfect Solution to the Effects of the Pandemic," written by David Schultz. And now I know I will never restore an old classic. I have an older 1987 Subaru wagon that I love to drive, and I am looking for the classic of my dreams, even if it isn't running. I will

enjoy repairing it and driving it way more than I possibly could enjoy restoring it and showing it. And for many years to come I will savor my time behind the wheel ... as I smile and shake my head.

Lloyd Barber  
South Prairie, Washington

## I ALWAYS ENJOY PAT FOSTER'S AR-

ticles, as they are both interesting and informative. His piece in the June issue, "Hauling Harvesters," immediately brought to mind a Golden Book I received as a child in the '50s. The title was simply *Trucks*. It was the story of a farm family with a young son who needed to upgrade the family sedan to a pickup truck, to haul product to market, pick up supplies, and so on. They visited the local International Harvester dealer, who suggested a tour of the plant where they were built to help them in making a decision. The tour included not only the assembly line, but the proving grounds as well. Naturally, when they returned to the dealership, they purchased a new, red IH pickup.

Unfortunately, my original book went the way of too many childhood memories. But fortunately, a copy of *Trucks* appeared in a recent online auction, so I purchased it. It is in good condition, but minus the two paper-cutout trucks that were included with the original. It is a great walk down memory lane for a car—and truck—guy.

Also, I did not know about the meaning of the IH logo and how it was conceived, and appreciate Pat including that bit of historical perspective.

Skip Panowitz  
Bel Air, Maryland

## THANK YOU, THOMAS DeMAURO AND

your excellent work, with *Hemmings Classic Car* magazine, and thanks also to *Hemmings Motor News*, both of which have rekindled my interest in, and helped me find, that special car I've always liked. Allow me to explain.

I'm a long-time subscriber to both magazines, an early baby boomer, and have spent 40 years dabbling with and restoring old Chevys as a pastime. Lately, I've gotten a little older and slower, and have felt it would be nice to have an oldie that I could just get in and enjoy, without having to work on it. This is where Mr. DeMauro enters the picture.

Last year during COVID, we were virtually cut off from family and friends in Dallas; it was very frustrating. Well, with little to do, I began scanning back issues of *Hemmings Classic Car* and remembered DeMauro's September 2019 (*HCC* #180) article entitled "Nearly Forgotten Flagship, 1954 Chevy Bel Air." His description of that model's attributes clearly set it apart as being transitional between the early Fifties models and the later slab-sided "Tri-Fives" that are now so ubiquitous (and expensive) by comparison.

Your article brought back happy memories of riding in my college buddy's '54 Chevy in the Sixties. Back then, it was just an old car, but was solidly built – and lots of fun. That did it. I got that old itch again. Soon, I was scanning *Hemmings Motor News* — even the back issues — for a decent '54 Chevy. Lo and behold! A '54 Bel Air four-door sedan, recently restored,

and owned by a younger man who'd bought it for his father, a retired Navy physician. Unfortunately, his father had recently passed away, so the car was now for sale. After several conversations and pictures sent by Chris, the owner, I really got the itch.


Also noticed were the license plates that read "Doc's 54." I mentioned to Chris that I had been a Navy Medical Corpsman with the Marines in Vietnam, and some of my old buddies still call me "Doc," so if I bought that car, that New Hampshire license plate would be displayed against the car's backlight in honor of his father. That began a long-distance friendship, we came to an agreement on price, and now I own that beautiful white-on-blue Chevy.

So, thanks again to Tom DeMauro for that article, and to *Hemmings Motor News* for helping me find that beautiful Bel Air. Thanks also to Car Shippers U.S.A. (also advertised in *HMN*) for shipping my car trouble free and on time.



By the way, on Saturday, April 10, we entered the car in a competition (for pre-1969 unmodified originals) at the American Legion car show in Lindale, Texas. That little car won a trophy: second in class! And all I did was wash it beforehand. Dang, I feel like a little kid who got what he wanted for Christmas. It drives like a dream.

Darrel Keller  
Grand Saline, Texas

 To have your letter considered for Recaps, you must include your full name and the town/city and state you live in. Thank you.



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## Fun Lil' Brit!

Conventional wisdom would have you believe that, in the late Sixties, a family heavily invested in cars bearing Ford's Blue Oval wouldn't dare fall for the temptations of a competing company, let alone succumb to the rising tide of the British invasion. Once a Ford family, always a Ford family – right? Besides, Henry's namesake company offered sporty cars for the funseekers, utilitarian transport for the economy-minded, and plush steeds for those who needed commuting comfort. Unfortunately for executives in Dearborn, my parents felt differently – albeit briefly – about single-make ownership.

Right after the calendar flipped to 1970, Dad had already settled into his heavily optioned 1969 Ford LTD Brougham while commuting to work at the utility company. Meanwhile, Mom was completing her final year of nursing school. Their June wedding was fast approaching. A modest house had been purchased. The future was bright, save for one, tiny catch: Mom didn't have a car. Not that she couldn't, or wouldn't, drive. It was just that, until that time, it simply wasn't a necessity.

Mom decided to buy a "fun" car. Something that was affordable and could get her from the dorm or home to career obligations, but still provide an enjoyable ride during weekends. Something like, say, a Datsun 1600, or an MG Midget. The Datsun cost \$300 more than an MG, so Midget it was, and in May my parents walked into a Rhode Island dealership to finance a new model, one painted British Racing Green, no less.

According to Mom, "I hadn't even graduated yet. I walked in, told them that I was getting my nursing degree, and they simply said, 'Oh, okay—you're all set. Sign here.' It was that easy to get the car. The funny thing was, as I was leaving the dealership, I had just learned how to drive a manual transmission; I barely knew what I was doing. It was a lot of fun revving the engine at a stoplight and waiting for the last second to change gears once I got going. One of my classmates and I were just about the only people at the dorm who had a vehicle, so I often drove a lot of my friends around."

It's important to recall that the mighty MG Midget was, technically, just large enough to accommodate two people. My parents still boast of fitting up to six. It was easy since the top was rarely up. The folded apparatus conveniently doubled as a parade boot for others to sit atop, with their legs dangling behind the bucket seats. Safety, after all,

was often limited to turn signals and the driver's own collision avoidance back then.

The compact Brit, it turned out, could also accommodate enough food and libation for a weekend at Lime Rock Park to take in the sports car racing. Of no surprise to us, Dad was politely asked to administer a "slow-to-a-stop" maneuver by a local constable, and when asked to retrieve the MG's registration, Dad – no doubt acting innocent – had to remove an ample supply of beverages from the trunk to retrieve the paperwork from the tiny tackle box tucked in the one recess it would fit. I guess it

didn't occur to him there'd be a need to display the official state document.

While tales of overstuffing the storage capacity of the MG and exceeding posted limits conveys the sort of enjoyment my parents had with their MG during those summer days, the Midget reportedly had two drawbacks. The first quickly became apparent as soon as it started raining. My parents report that it leaked like a sieve through the cowl, completely soaking occupants from the knees down. Despite attempts to prevent the unwanted interior torrent, this was soon just an expected facet of the experience.

The second drawback made itself known as soon as the first hints of chilly weather hit. As outside air temperatures dipped below 40 degrees, the MG would not start. Almost overnight, the dilemma led to a daily morning routine that commenced with Dad starting his LTD to jump-start the MG for Mom.

That routine mercifully came to an end in early 1971, when my parents made an appointment with Simon Ford to take the Midget in trade for a new Maverick. As Murphy's Law would have it, the sale took place on a rather chilly and torrential Friday afternoon. My parents scrambled out of the Midget to the dealer's desk, soaked to the skin from knees down, the dealer none the wiser by a stroke of luck. When they left in the new Ford, a host of mechanics learned the hard way never to shut off an MG on a damp, raw day. Dad later read that swapping in a Diehard battery, which had superior cranking power, would eliminate the cold-weather-starting conundrum he had endured.

Five decades later, though, the Midget's water-soaked accommodations and temperamental electrics have become mere footnotes to the summer of British sports car fun that is still fondly remembered with reverence. 🏎️



//

I had just

learned

how to drive

a manual

transmission;

I barely knew

what I was

doing.

//

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***—Kent C., California***

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of appealing

to America's

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## AMC's Barracuda

The 1964 American Motors Tarpon concept car is often called AMC's Mustang could-have-been, but in my opinion, it's not, really. I think its real place in history is as AMC's should-have-been Barracuda.

Ford's Mustang is usually referred to as the first "pony car" and it was; the whole pony car segment designation derives from the Mustang's name. However, as sporty compacts go, the fact is that Plymouth's Barracuda debuted ahead of the lithe Mustang.

The reason sporty compacts are called pony cars and not fish cars is because Barracuda's relatively modest success was eclipsed by Mustang's overwhelming popularity – it was the hottest new car on the market. Reference books say the Barracuda debuted around April 1, 1964, and about 23,443 were sold the first season. In comparison, the Ford Mustang debuted April 17 and, igniting an incredible response from buyers, sold more than 400,000 cars its first year.

Actually, though, another sporty car beat both of them to the public: the Rambler Tarpon, a stylish fastback coupe based on the new Rambler American. The Tarpon, an evolution of an unshown 1963 concept called the Sceptre, was designed mainly by the late Bob Nixon under the direction of Studio Manager Chuck Mashigan and Styling VP Dick Teague. The idea behind Tarpon was to introduce a compact car that could sell at a premium over what the prosaic Rambler American fetched. In other words, a small car that was more profitable because it sold on looks rather than a low price or good fuel economy.

The youth market was heating up rapidly and AMC recognized the importance of appealing to America's young people. The Chevrolet Corvair Spyder and Monza, and Ford's Falcon Futura and Sprint, had already proved that young buyers were looking for sportier cars with bucket seats and great styling. Tarpon was designed to be a young person's car.

AMC's Sceptre/Tarpon was constructed during 1963 in a rather novel way: According to Nixon, the modelers took a stock Rambler American convertible and added a handmade

fastback roof to it. With an overall height of 52½ inches, it was more than 2 inches lower than a standard American, its smaller 13-inch aluminum wheels contributing 1-inch to the reduction. New sculptured quarter panels stretched out the overall length about 3 inches, to 180 inches total.

Inside were four bucket seats, a console, and a pair of levers to operate the Twin-Stick overdrive transmission – AMC lacked a four-speed at the

time, but its clever three-speed plus overdrive with two shifters provided five forward speeds.

The Tarpon was initially displayed at the Society of Automotive Engineers convention in 1964 and made its public debut a few

weeks later at the Chicago Auto Show. It created a sensation in the Windy City and several onlookers offered to place immediate orders. AMC had a hit on its hands.

But several factors conspired against Tarpon becoming a production model. The compact American platform was designed to carry the company's straight-six engine, and underhood space was too tight for AMC's large first-gen V-8 engines. Reportedly, product planners also felt that a sporty car without a V-8 option was a nonstarter, but I don't buy that. AMC had built its rep on sixes, and its new 232-cu.in. six was a potent little performer that would have appealed to many. Besides, the American was going to get a more spacious front clip for 1966 anyway, so the Tarpon would have been V-8-less for maybe a year.

In my opinion, the reason the Tarpon didn't make it is that CEO Roy Abernethy didn't want a sporty compact. A former football player, Abernethy believed a midsize sporty car – it became the Marlin – would sell better. In that regard, he was grievously wrong.

In any event, even if the Tarpon/Marlin had been produced as a compact, I doubt it would have sold any better than the Barracuda. Both cars suffered from being too close in appearance to their donor cars; Barracuda looked like what it was: a fastback Plymouth Valiant. Tarpon was obviously mostly Rambler American. Mustang was successful, I feel, because it had a gorgeous, unique body with no visual connection to the Falcon.

That said, a compact Tarpon certainly would have sold better than the bigger Marlin. 🐉



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# Long-Haul Thrill Ride

*A twice-resurrected 1958 Triumph TR3A has charmed its owner for more than four decades*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF JOHN SWAUGER

While on vacation in Ocean City, New Jersey, with his parents in 1960, eight-year-old John Swauger snapped a photo of a Triumph TR3 simply because the British sports car's low-slung appearance appealed to him. So began his lifelong admiration for the marque and the model. The Indiana, Pennsylvania, resident's career would ultimately be dedicated to the brand as well, spanning 35 years at The Roadster Factory in Armagh—a restoration parts manufacturer for Triumphs and MGs.

In 1971, John purchased a red 1969 Spitfire during his sophomore year of college. He also owned a British Racing Green 1960 TR3A project car for a short time.

John discovered our featured Triumph in 1978. "I made an appointment to look at another Spitfire," he recalls. "When I got to the house, no one was there. On my way home, I stopped in Monroeville to look at a 1958 TR3A owned by a 19-year-old kid. It was white with black interior, but was originally Powder Blue with Midnight Blue inside. It was rough, but it did run, so a deal was made for \$600."

That same year, John attended a national convention of the "Triumph Register of America." Through a chance meeting with two friends at the event, he was introduced to Charles Runyan, who'd recently founded The Roadster Factory (TRF). In 1980, John became its first employee.

The object of his automotive obsession was a product of the Standard-Triumph Motor Company and was built in Coventry, England. Affordable, stylish, and fun to drive, the TR3 had evolved from its progenitor, the TR2, and was produced from October 1955 to 1962. It enjoyed sales success primarily in the U.S., as intended, and also exhibited a propensity for amassing road-racing and rally wins worldwide.

In September of 1957, the TR3A—as it's referred to by enthusiasts—was intro-

duced. Among its several revisions was a new full-width grille that also housed the parking lights, the headlights were subtly repositioned, exterior door handles (that locked) were added, the sliding Plexiglas side-curtain design was revised (during 1958), and interior items were updated.

The 1,991-cc OHV four-cylinder engine (83-mm bore x 92-mm stroke) featured two SU H6 side-draft carburetors and an 8.5:1 compression ratio, and it produced 100 horsepower and 118 lb-ft of torque. A hydraulic clutch was ahead of a four-speed, with synchromesh in second, third, and fourth gears. The Laycock de Normanville overdrive was optional and could be actuated in those same gears.

A rigid boxed-steel frame with an additional X-type center section anchored the 88-inch-wheelbase undercarriage, which consisted of unequal-length double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic shocks, and a cam-and-lever steering system in front. A live axle, leaf springs, and lever-arm shocks were positioned in the rear.

Girling 11-inch front disc brakes were installed during 1957, making the TR3 the first British production car to receive disc binders, and their performance in conjunction with the 10-inch rear drums was praised by road testers. Fifteen-inch steel wheels (or optional wire wheels) were fitted with 5.50 x 15 bias-ply tires.

The TR3A was 151 inches long, 55.5 inches wide, and 50 inches high, and it weighed about 2,130 pounds. Road tests of the era posted 0-60 times of around 11 seconds, quarter-mile ETs of about 18 seconds, and a top speed of greater than 105 mph (110 mph was advertised). There were 58,309 or 58,236 (sources vary) TR3As produced, and 16,035 of them were built for 1958.

John's example was first restored from 1980 to 1983, but its latest and greatest resurrection was performed from 2010 to 2015. The first was prompted by a careless driver damaging the left front fender. While swapping on a pair of reproduction replacements—a Christmas present from Charles Runyan—the repair snowballed



Due to frequent road use since its first restoration was completed 27 years prior, the TR3A was due for a refresh by 2010.



After all the body-to-frame fasteners, the interior, wiring, and more items were removed, the shell was jacked up and supported by 2x4s and jack stands. Restorer Randy Phillippi is holding up the front end, as another jack stand/2x4 setup (not shown) will be positioned further forward of the first one.



The chassis, with the powertrain still intact, was rolled out from under the body.



Media blasting the shell took it to bare metal, and a chemical dip did the same for the bolt-on panels. Attaching the body to a sturdy scratch-built cart ensured that the structural integrity of the former would be maintained while it was reworked and the panels were fitted.



Reproductions for the trunk floor, passenger-compartment floors, and inner and outer sills (rocker panels) were welded in. The rear apron was partially replaced by portions of a reproduced panel. The bolt-on rear fenders and taillamps were test fitted before and after welding the new sections in.



As body filler work progressed, the door-to-quarter-panel gap was routinely checked. Though panel gaps would be set during the restoration of any car, John noted that TR3s weren't built like modern cars, so they require more hand-fitting of most parts.



Multiple coats of PPG epoxy primer were applied to the body and block sanded smooth with 220- to 400-grit sandpaper. Then came high-build primer and more block sanding using the same paper grades.



A coat of sealer was laid down prior to painting, and four coats of single-stage PPG Delstar DAR polyurethane acrylic enamel in Wimbledon White followed.



The rejuvenated chassis with the powertrain installed is nearly ready to roll back under the body. A red finish on the brake drums and calipers isn't stock, but John prefers the look. The Abarth muffler was swapped in later, so it's not shown.



New rubber pads (see previous photo) and mounting hardware were used to reunite the body with the chassis at the outrigger attachment points. According to John, varying the count of those pads to change their thicknesses can also aid in achieving the desired door gaps.



All the outer panels were painted at Prohaska Auto Body in Clarksburg, and the finish was wet sanded and then buffed and polished. The reproduction front fenders and apron that were installed during the 1980-'83 restoration were retained.



John pointed out that he had upholsterer Larry Learn use seat springs from TRF, because he's found that those available elsewhere are too stiff and they position the driver and passenger too high on the cushions.



Since one side of the Triumph's body is about a 1/2 inch longer than the other, according to John, Larry had to modify a few items like the upholstery for one of the dogleg rear inner quarter panels.

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into a body-off restoration when John and Charles discovered that the forward sections of the Triumph's inner sills (rocker panels) were rusted away.

Its frame was sand blasted, repainted black, and new suspension and brakes were fitted. Though the 1,991-cc engine didn't require a rebuild, Charles refurbished the TR4-spec, all-synchro, four-speed (it was in the TR3A when John purchased it) and he converted it to overdrive. Then he and John and TRF employee Deb Gawlas reinstalled the powertrain.

The body was stripped to bare metal and new floors, inner and outer sills, and a trunk floor were welded in. John recalls, "Bill Fornwalt, a local Triumph enthusiast, offered to reassemble the car, do the finishing bodywork, and paint the [exterior] for just \$1,200. I supplied the parts and

materials, and several months later, the Triumph came back sporting a shiny coat of Silverstone Grey lacquer."

John's longtime friend, Larry Learn, of Learn's Upholstering Shop, also in Indiana, installed a red interior consisting of items John procured from a TRF source in England.

In 1983, the TR3A returned to active road duty and served John and his wife Cathy faithfully for the next two decades, but when the clutch failed in 2004, the Triumph was parked.

In 2010, John's friend and talented restorer, Randy Phillippi of Homer City, suggested replacing the car's clutch and then simply scuffing and respraying the exterior. Nevertheless, history repeated when John instead decided to separate the body from the frame again to restore

the chassis. Randy found significant rust in the lower body, and new floors and inner and outer sills were required for a second time.

Once the metalwork was completed and the body was nearly ready for paint, John decided on another color change. A Jaguar XK120 in Olde English White spied at a car show provided inspiration. Its owner revealed that Ford's Wimbledon White, which is more readily available, was a very close match, so John chose that color in PPG Delstar DAR polyurethane acrylic enamel for the TR3A's exterior. The outer body paint was applied at Prohaska Auto Body in Clarksburg.

"The engine was rebuilt by my friend Ed Woods in Glenshaw," John says. "It was in very good condition already, so the work consisted mainly of disassembly,



The TR3A's 1991-cc engine had been upgraded to 2,138-cc years earlier, and an aluminum rocker cover was also added. Bearings, rings, seals (including a Viton rear oil seal), and other wear items were replaced during the engine rebuild.



A brace of highly informative dials adorns the instrument panel. The seats are upholstered in red leather, as are the door caps, but vinyl is used elsewhere, and a Wilton wool carpet set was installed.

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**I**n June of 1979, I met my future wife Cathy thanks to a Triumph. On my way home from my evening job at the A&P, I drove down the main street of our town to see if anyone might be at Wolfendale's, a local watering hole. Parked out front was the French Blue TR6 owned by Todd the hairdresser. I stopped in to have a beer with him. Cathy and one of her friends walked in soon after I arrived. Todd knew her friend and we all visited. I offered the girls a ride home. Cathy's friend said, "Yes," and Cathy said, "No," but she went along anyway, and we soon began dating. Had Todd's Triumph not been there, I would have continued home. Life would have been very different. —John Swauger

measuring, cleaning, and reassembly. The 86-mm A.E. Hepolite piston and bore liner set (installed in the 1990s), which increased displacement to the TR4's (and some TR3B's) 2,138-ccs, was refitted using new Grant piston rings."

Ed also rebuilt the carburetors, gearbox/overdrive, and 3.7:1-geared differential. John and Randy reinstalled the revived powertrain on the restored chassis, and then bolted the painted body back in place.

Learn's Upholstering Shop was called upon once again for a new red interior featuring leather seat covers and correct springs from TRF. Larry Learn also installed the Robbins Everflex convertible top. "Brenda Shields at The Magic Carpet rebuilt the factory side curtains, provided a red Everflex top bow boot, and a red

wool carpet set," John recalls. Paul's Chrome Plating in Evans City handled the brightwork.

Along with the color changes, over the years John also modified other areas of his Triumph to suit his tastes and/or improve the driving experience. The increase in displacement boosts power, and the alternator and negative ground upgrades enhance durability. A rack-and-pinion system makes the steering feel more precise, and a Falcon stainless-steel exhaust system with an Abarth second muffler swapped in, deepens its tone.

Triumph options added include a rear jump seat and the aforementioned overdrive for the four-speed. Dayton spoke wheels, which John reports look just like the factory-offered Dunlop spokes, were also installed, as were

165 x 15 Michelin radial tires.

John says, "During my years at TRF, I served in many different roles; sales manager, purchasing manager, and new products manager. I attended several hundred car shows around the United States, and my duties also included trips to England to visit vendors." Through his career, the TR3A was a mainstay. "I drove it to my first day of work at TRF in 1980 and drove it to my last day of work in 2015," John reminisces.

Since his retirement, his reverence for Triumphs hasn't diminished. "I still love this car," he confides. "My wife and I have driven it all over the country for my work and on vacations. After 43 years and two restorations, we wouldn't want to be without it. Life's too short to drive boring cars." 🏎️





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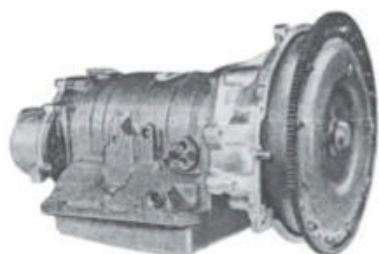
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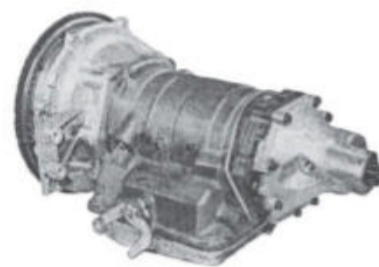
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# The Royal Treatment

*A 1958 Dodge Royal Lancer battles back from project car to show winner*



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BLACK

United States car sales slumped in 1958 due to a nationwide recession, but, on the heels of a successful 1957, Dodge rolled out an updated lineup. The division's 1958 cars were longer, lower, wider, more colorful, and sported an abundance of chrome. Plus, Dodge's model offerings consisted of the entry-level Coronet, the Royal, the Custom Royal, and a new, top-of-the-line Regal Lancer. Dodge described them as the "Swept-Wing" 1958s in all of its marketing brochures.





**Big fins and wide whitewalls were all the rage in the late '50s and no one did it better than the Chrysler divisions. Dual exhausts were an extra cost option.**

Phil Shaw, from Auburn, Nebraska, is a 64-year-old retired UPS driver and Mopar enthusiast of the first order. Phil was looking for a retirement project that spanned the 1957-'59 Dodges when he came across a 1958 Dodge for sale online. The owner was from Norway, the ad was confusing to read, and a gallery of low-quality photos made it difficult to determine the car's overall condition.

"The owner told me he had purchased the car online, from a seller in Bradenton, Florida, and then had it shipped to a shop in Rosenberg, Texas, to begin the restoration," Phil says. "But after some work had been done he halted the restoration. He found out a short time later that he was terminally ill with cancer and decided not to see the job through."

At that point, the car had also been completely disassembled and media blasted, and the shop had performed some sheetmetal repair on the floorpans and trunk floor. Reluctantly, Phil decided to bid on the '58, not sure exactly what to expect since he had not seen the car in person. He won the auction and purchased the car in January of 2011. No other potential buyers bid against him, which sent up another red flag.

"I picked the car up a few days later. All the window glass had been discarded, and all the parts were in boxes and not well

identified," Phil says. "I examined the bare body and saw that a lot of rust repair was needed around the back window, but the rest of the body seemed to be solid and in good shape."

Options and accessories on this '58 Dodge Royal Lancer included the 325-cubic-inch V-8 with dual exhausts, a three-speed TorqueFlite automatic transmission, a 2.92:1 rear axle ratio with a limited-slip differential, power brakes, power steering, pushbutton radio with twin antennas, dual mirrors, tinted safety glass, air-foam seat, windshield washer, backup lamps, deluxe wheel covers, and white sidewall four-ply tires. A very rare RCA 45-rpm record player completed the list of extras.

Phil jumped into the project almost immediately, believing he could get it finished in two years or less. "Boy was I ever wrong," he says. "Reproduction parts for the 1950s-era Mopars don't exist, and finding quality parts cars was extremely difficult at best. Even weather seal kits weren't available."

Still, Phil wasn't going to let a little parts search keep him from his goal. "After a lot of digging, I found a good '57 parts car among 16 other autos in a fence row, located not too far from home," he says. "The farmer wouldn't sell just the '57—no, I had to buy all of them to get the one car I needed! Luckily, I had a good friend who owned a junkyard who took the rest."



Once Phil had located that parts car, the restoration process gathered some steam as he was able to track down the other parts he needed. “I even found an OEM wiring harness up in Canada, and that was a great score,” he says.

Satisfied with the parts supply he’d amassed, Phil turned his attention to the engine. The previous owner said that the 325 had been rebuilt by the Texas shop, but that was not the case. Later examination revealed that the block was cracked, so a search for a replacement was next on the agenda.

Engine choices for 1958 ranged from the base-level 138-hp, 230-cu.in. L-head inline-six to the top-of-the line 361-cu.in. V-8 rated at 305/320/333 hp (base/D-500/fuel-injected Super D-500). Our feature car’s midline 325 V-8 — with a bore and stroke of 3.69 x 3.80 inches — was rated at 252 hp.

Once Phil had located a replacement block, it was bored .040 over. The crankshaft and rotating assembly was balanced and installed, then the engine was capped off with a set of 1957 Hemi heads equipped with adjustable pushrods and oversized stainless valves (the 325 block can accommodate either style of heads). Since no replacement camshafts were available, the original was sent to Isky Racing Cams for a regrind. Thad Harms of Mr. Automotive in Falls City, Nebraska, did the complete engine rebuild, and Phil estimated that the 325 was good for about 285 hp at 4,800 rpm.

Unfortunately, however, the first startup of the engine destroyed the heads. A quick teardown revealed that the valve seats installed by the machine shop had been bored too deep. “It took me another year to find a replacement set of heads,

this time in Oklahoma,” Phil says. “Then I had to get the engine back together, put it in the car, and get it running right.” The original three-speed TorqueFlite had been rebuilt previously by the shop in Texas, and the stock 2.92:1, limited-slip-equipped rear axle was also reinstalled, rounding out the drivetrain.

Once Phil had a good-running roller, the car was turned over to Randy Striggow of Striggow’s Southside Body Shop in

Auburn, Nebraska. Randy finished the remaining sheetmetal repair around the back window, sprayed on several applications of high-build primer, and block sanded the body with 80-, 120-, and 180-grit sandpaper until it was arrow straight. Next, the car was sprayed with a urethane primer, allowed to cure, and blocked with 180 grit, then wet sanded to 600. After applying an epoxy primer sealer, the car was sprayed in a match



**The 325-cu.in. V-8 made 285 horsepower with two-barrel carburetion and supplied ample power. The Delco-style alternator is a retrofit, as is the compressor for the upcoming A/C system.**



**An RCA record player was a rare option not found on many cars of this era. The 45-rpm player held 13 records and played them upside down, so that the weight of the record kept the needle from skipping.**





for its original two-tone yellow-and-black colors with multiple coats of Axalta ChromaBase and #7779 clearcoat. After a sufficient cure, the clear was wet sanded using progressive grits from 500 to 2,500, then machine compounded for a show-quality finish.

With the paint and bodywork completed, the car was returned to Phil for reassembly. He started by installing all the glass, window seals, window crank mechanisms, and exterior trim and bumpers. "The most difficult part was finding a good windshield, window seals, and trim mounting clips," he says. "I tried several different varieties of clips before I found some that actually worked."

Other tasks included rebuilding the front and rear suspension, installing a new gas tank, and running new fuel and brake lines. "I also upgraded to front disc brakes from a 1966 Mustang, so I could retain the stock wheels and tire size," Phil says. "I even installed self-adjusting rear drum brakes."

Rolling stock included reproduction 8.25 x 14 wide whitewall radials mounted on factory steel wheels with reproduction 1959 styled hubcaps sourced from Speedway Motors in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Moving to the interior, Phil was lucky as the front and rear seats had already been reupholstered by the shop in Texas. All the other components—including the carpet, headliner, and interior door panels—were in boxes, and he wasted no time getting them installed.

The restoration (and "Royal Treatment," as Phil calls it) was finally completed in September 2016, but that was a bit premature as Phil learned shortly after. "On my first outing that fall, I noticed that the rear main seal had started leaking, along with the transmission and the rear end. I spent all winter fixing the leaks, but had everything right by spring."

Phil has already put about 4,000 miles on his Dodge since the restoration, driving it at least once a week during the summer months. "I've taken it to five car shows already, earning five first-place and two best-in-show honors," he says. "Finally, after 5½ years, I can begin to enjoy the car and reap my rewards. It was sure nice to have the support of my wife Diane during this long ordeal." 🐾



The cockpit is well appointed in black vinyl and cloth and features Chrysler's three-speed pushbutton TorqueFlight transmission console at the driver's left. Chrysler didn't have a locking transmission, so these cars were parked in neutral with the parking brake set. The instrument cluster has gauges set in a polished aluminum face with an embossed dot pattern that is duplicated elsewhere. A centrally located clock was optional at extra cost.



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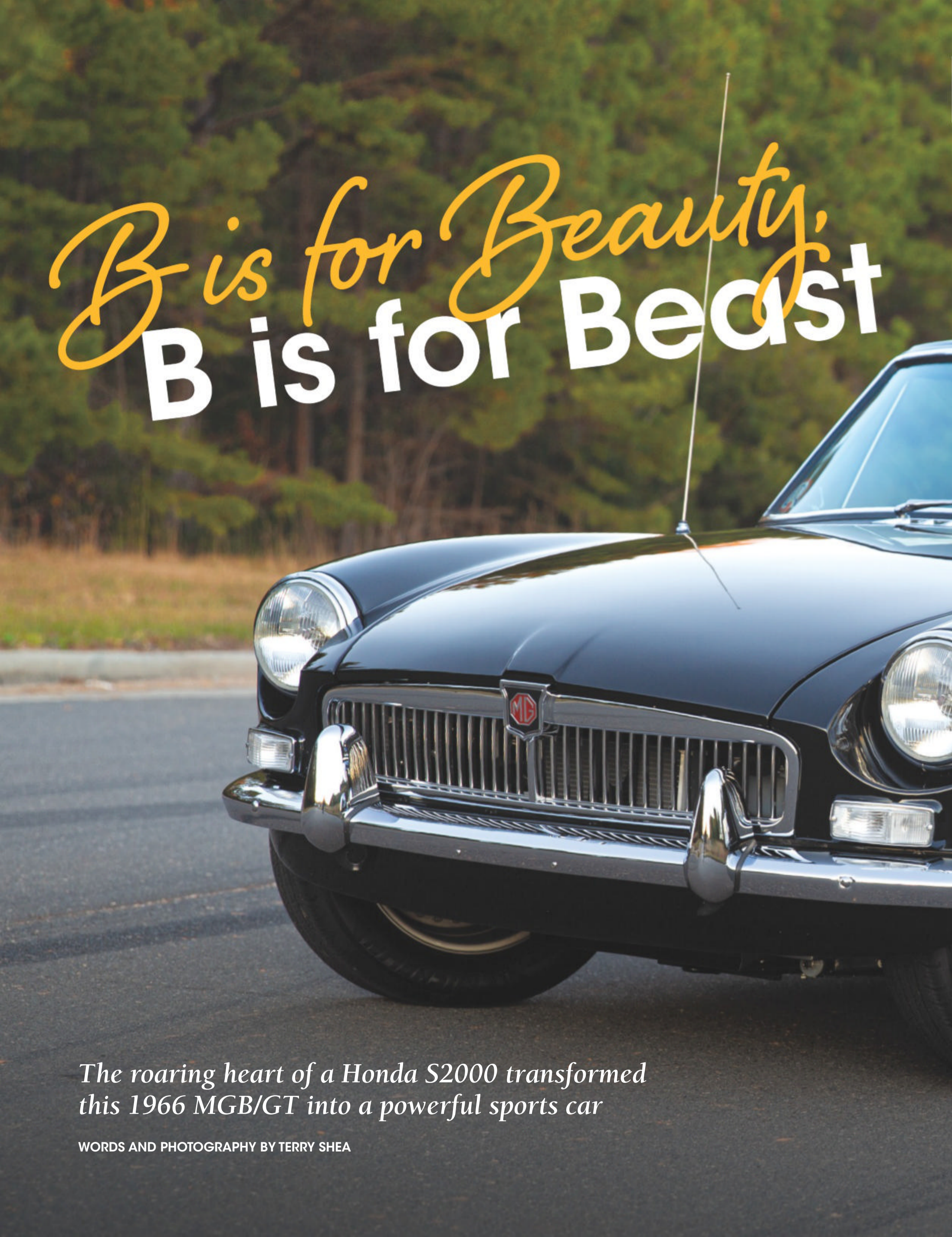
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# *B is for Beauty.* **B is for Beast**

*The roaring heart of a Honda S2000 transformed  
this 1966 MGB/GT into a powerful sports car*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA



In a surge of power that seemed to have no end, the needle on the tach in front of me rushed past 7,000 rpm in a blur, on its way toward a 9,000-rpm redline. Snicking through the six-speed stick, shifting a couple hundred rpm shy of that lofty redline—rather than taking a chance with bouncing off the rev limiter—I grabbed another gear and the surge of power started all over again.

If this had been a normal 1966 MGB/GT, its BMC B-series likely would have suffered catastrophic failure somewhere not too far north of 6,000 rpm. But this magical little GT was anything but a normal MGB.

Under its deliciously black hood, a Honda F20C engine was installed—rather snugly. Some 22 years after that engine debuted in the automaker’s groundbreaking S2000 sports car, the 2.0-liter, twin-cam, 16-valve powerplant remains a mechanical marvel. And that’s exactly what builder Zach Merrill calls the engine under the hood of this GT: “I think it’s a marvel, I really do. The engine is relatively compact and relatively lightweight. It’s extremely powerful for what it is—a naturally aspirated engine. It really gets with the program! It’s a potent motor.” Because this “potent” engine produces 240 horsepower in factory trim—roughly two-and-a-half times the output of MGB’s original 1.8-liter pushrod engine—Zach kept it bone stock, a challenge in and of itself.

Recently retired after a four-decade career as an engineer at

Michelin’s U.S. headquarters in Greenville, South Carolina, Zach is no stranger to project cars bred from unlikely sources. A few years back in *Hemmings Sports & Exotic Car*, we featured Zach’s 1955 Morris Minor Traveller, powered by a Japanese domestic-market version of Toyota’s legendary 4AGE 1.6-liter twin-cam four. Like that unusual matchup, Zach’s ’66 MGB/GT with the frenetically beating heart of a high-rpm Honda is a project car built to a standard that few factories would dare match.

Under the car’s hood there is no unusually routed plumbing or stray wires, but there are custom motor mounts and brackets to get the air-conditioning components to fit, a steel airbox lifted from a 1970s Jaguar to make the build look authentically British, and lots of other stuff fabricated in Zach’s garage. The same goes for the bevy of badges under the hood, a bit of a flourish from Zach’s imagination, which ponder what MG might have made had the British industry the resources of late 20th-century Honda.

The pictures only begin to show the cohesiveness of a project that Zach himself doesn’t dare estimate the hours he put into finishing. Following the success of the Morris, Zach recalls, “I thought, I could do that sort of thing... but different.” Different started with his fascination with the Honda engine he acquired first. The car followed in 2012, a “tired, but not rusty” ’66 MGB/GT with “water in the engine oil, transmission synchros shot, and a rear splined hub so worn it wouldn’t climb the hill in the basement driveway” it was rescued from.



Though largely stock appearing, the interior is full of custom touches, starting with the red leather seating surfaces. After the transmission tunnel was modified and the shifter linkage moved, even the carpets had to be modified to fit. Smiths tachometer has a custom face to match the Honda engine’s high-revving capabilities.



This entirely custom engine, assembled in a home garage, appears as tidy as anything that ever came from a factory. Don't be fooled by the Speedwell, Lucas, and MG badges that are part of this car's subtle underhood subterfuge. The powertrain is all Honda, with some additional electronics to keep the Honda ECU happy. The Coopers air intake comes from a 1970s Jaguar and strikes a better pose than the black plastic pieces from Honda while also giving a solid nod to the MG's origins.

Zach reports that all body panels are original to the car, save for the aluminum bonnet, which was from a different MG. While Zach's friend Robert Taylor painted the car, Zach did much of the bodywork himself, including the rather laborious task of sanding and buffing the two-stage BASF Diamont finish that included three coats of color and five of clear. With the brightwork refinishing farmed out to specialists, Zach also did the final assembly in his home garage. The result is a car that almost certainly looks better than the day it rolled off the assembly line. Even after 2,800 miles of use when we saw it, the GT's black finish still looks deep enough to dive into and remains unblemished.

The slightly oversquare, all-aluminum engine features an 87-mm bore against an 84-mm stroke. With forged pistons and an 11:1 compression ratio, and, yes, VTEC—Honda's unique take on variable valve timing, the F20C's peak power arrives at 8,300 rpm, with peak torque of 153 lb-ft at 7,500 rpm. The Honda S2000 roadster made do quite nicely with this peaky engine, owing to its relatively lithe 2,800-pound curb weight. Zach's MGB tips the scales in the 2,400-pound range, giving the car an Eighties-era

supercar power-to-weight ratio of just 10 pounds per horsepower.

All of that twist is sent to the rear wheels via Honda's own six-speed manual transmission, rowed by an MG shift lever grafted to the Honda gearbox's linkage. And that's where the Honda parts end. The rear end is an MGB unit with a clutch-type limited-slip differential.

After 40-plus years at Michelin, Zach knows a thing or two about chassis design. The front crossmember has been reconfigured and reinforced. Zach started with a Costello tube shock conversion kit and modified it, installing adjustable shocks, 400 lb-in front springs, and a 3/4-inch anti-roll bar. He personally calculated the custom camber and caster geometry. At the rear end, a Front-line five-link rear suspension with 200 lb-in adjustable coilovers helps keep the axle planted. Brakes are 10-inch ventilated discs up front and 10-inch finned aluminum drums in the rear.

Zach's selection of 195/60R15 Michelin MXV4 rubber may seem an unusual choice with a modest contact patch, given the car's potential. But that's by design, as Zach sees the tires as a limiting factor that allows him to explore the full envelope

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of performance of his highly personalized GT without pushing that limit to an exceedingly narrow margin of error. The Realm Engineering 15 x 6-inch Dunlop D-Type replica alloy wheels look absolutely natural on this restomodded MG.

Inside, red leather hides for the seating surfaces were sourced from Wipelli leather and installed locally by Billy Owens of Got-U-Covered in Greer, South Carolina. The interior panels, headliner material, and carpets were purchased from Moss Motors, but the interior required customization of even those parts, as Zach lined the car with “an abundance” of insulating material to minimize the intrusion of unwanted heat or noise in the cabin.

A big fan of the early steel-dash MGB, Zach had the dash in this car powder coated with a wrinkle finish. Just in front of the MG shift lever sits the custom air-conditioning duct he fabricated, complete with a made up Smiths-branded “Cool-Aire” logo straight out of Zach’s imagination. Look closely at that dash and you will see the 10,000-rpm tach, which you can be sure never came from Smiths that way. The tach and speedometer gauge faces are both customized to accommodate the massively expanded window of performance of the engine and car.

Beyond fitting a much wider engine, the swap required some sophisticated work with the engine management system. “Part of a well-behaved motor is its engine management,” Zach says.

### 1966 MGB/GT

BODY STYLE	Two-door, four-seat hatchback
ENGINE TYPE	Honda F20C DOHC inline-four
DISPLACEMENT	1,997-cc
HORSEPOWER	240 @ 8,300 rpm
FUEL SYSTEM	Multipoint programmed fuel injection
TRANSMISSION	Honda six-speed manual
WEIGHT	2,400 pounds
PRODUCTION	1
BASE PRICE	Unknown



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Disappointed with the lack of refinement in aftermarket units, Zach stuck with the original ECU. “The OEM folks put tremendous effort into getting that right. Not only trying to meet emissions, fuel economy, and all that stuff, but also just living with it—the driveability. I thought Honda had done a really nice job and I wanted to preserve that.”

With the catalytic converter and air pump removed and the evaporative emissions systems presenting a “very complex” challenge, Zach had his work cut out for him, particularly since the encrypted Honda ECU could not be cracked. “I had to make the computer believe it was still an S2000 in order for it to be happy,” he says. While he could accomplish some of that, he needed a bit of help. So, he turned to Izze-Racing, which developed simulators for the air pump and EVAP that fool the ECU into thinking they are present. But, given Zach’s attention to detail, the Izze-Racing “simulator” was not quite right. So, Zach made some suggestions to one of its prototypes to finally get what he wanted: OEM-level driveability.

And that’s exactly the feeling this remarkably refined project car delivers. The Honda S2000 is a stunningly thrilling car to drive. Throw its stellar driveline into a car 400 pounds lighter, with a far sexier design, and you have the makings of something really special.

The car fired up immediately and settled into a quiet idle, Zach clearly having done his homework with the ECU. The gearshifts were, understandably, Honda-smooth and S2000-short. The steering was direct and tight, with just the right amount of response coming back through the elegant banjo steering wheel. But on the twisty roads through rolling hills in the farm areas that mark the North Carolina/South Carolina border, there was ample opportunity to experience the F20C’s abundant power.

No amount of insulation will keep the mechanical music of an engine that revs to 9,000 rpm out of the cockpit, nor should it. With predictable handling from Zach’s custom setup and the Michelins keeping it stuck to the road, the joy of driving this car came from a rush of power that started just below 6,500 rpm and absolutely surged as it neared the redline. Through first, second, and third gear, over and over again, I explored that mechanical madness. It was a truly sensational thrill.

Not only did the car move about town leisurely with no drama or lumpy idle, it maintained its temperature no matter how heavy the traffic or my right foot. Zach reports regularly achieving 28 mpg on highway trips.

Zach is remarkably humble, often referring to his early years, essentially growing up at the junkyard owned by his father, where he had opportunity to begin honing the skills that would give him the ability to create such a complete car as this S2000-powered 1966 MGB/GT. But poke him enough and he’ll tell you how proud he is of this build: “I think I like that the package is very congruent,” he says. “Nothing about it seems terribly anachronistic in its environment. It’s pretty complete and a fairly coherent concept and that’s what I was trying to do.” 🏁



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# Money Changes **Everything**



*Currency devaluation and overseas work helped one owner buy a new 1968 Jaguar E-type. He kept it for 50 years.*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH





The dark blue leather interior was specified by the original owner to match the soft-top. Early E-types had a metal applique across the instrument panel, but, by 1968, it was gone, with low-gloss textured black plastic in its place.

**F**ranklin Sheffer was on a college field trip to New York City when he fell in love. “On that trip in 1962, I saw my first Jaguar E-type up close... It was way ahead of its time, and I determined that I would buy one as soon as I could afford one.”

Who could blame him? Jaguar’s E-type was an instant sensation when it launched at the Geneva Motor Show in the spring of 1961. In this country (where it went by the name XKE), most college kids weren’t quite in the market for one unless they cracked open the family trust. But Franklin was patient. Six years patient.

You could well argue that during those six years, the E-type had its bugs worked out. Jaguar’s flagship sports car had been enjoying a line of steady upgrades since its 1961 launch: punching out the twin-cam inline-six’s bore, raising displacement from 3.8 liters to 4.2 liters, offered the same 265 horsepower but

boosted low-end torque; it got a stiffer crankshaft, improved cooling, and an alternator replaced the original dynamo; a less-fussy, all-synchro Jaguar-built four-speed transmission with chamfered gears arrived in ’65 to reduce noise; the four-wheel-disc brake system was simplified; legroom was increased by altering the floorpans, and more generously proportioned seats were added. Starting in 1967, E-types lost their covered headlamps, and American models were given twin Stromberg carburetors, reducing power to 246 gross horsepower. Purists will always hold the earliest models aloft in their hearts, but there’s little argument that, as a daily-driven proposition, later models were dynamically and reliably improved—so much so that these have been dubbed “Series 1.5” by the enthusiast community. Just 1,994 Series 1.5 E-type convertibles were built for 1968, making them a rare breed of cat today.



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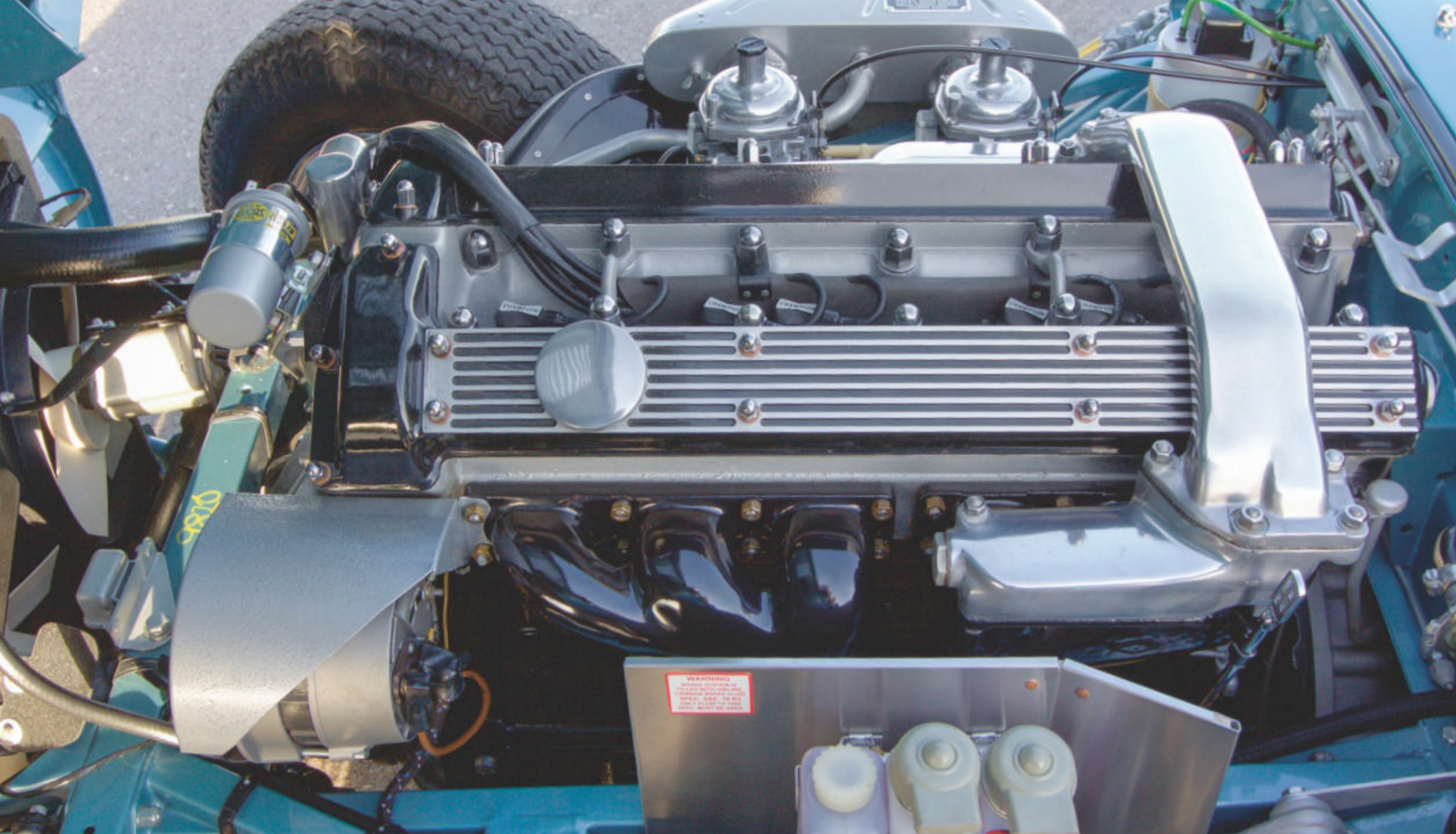
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But Franklin just wanted an E-type—and he was able to make it happen in the spring of '68 when a happy confluence of events allowed him to obtain the Jag of his dreams. The first event was a government-mandated devaluation of the British Pound Sterling in November 1967; locking the Pound in at \$2.40 U.S. dollars made for a 14-percent discount for Americans, literally overnight. The second event was Franklin walking in the front door of the factory and ordering what he wanted on the spot, rather than going home and ordering through his local dealer. “On my way home to the USA from a job in Liberia, West Africa,” where Franklin was working to develop an iron ore pelletizing plant as a joint venture between the Liberian government and two private companies (one American, one Scandinavian), “I stopped in at the Jaguar factory in Coventry, England, in March 1968, and ordered the car to my specifications.” And why not? An E-type roadster cost just under \$4,100 in England and \$5,372 in the U.S.—a 24-percent difference. That was a healthy chunk of change when it came time for Franklin to get his wallet out to purchase his first-ever, brand-new car.

The E-type was a pretty complete sports car as it sat, so Franklin’s specifications were hardly overwhelming. The order



**Jaguar’s twin-cam inline-six was a bona fide legend in its day; punched out to 4.2 liters, this American-market Series 1.5 version uses two side-draught Stromberg carburetors, rather than earlier models’ triple Webbers. Output was advertised as 247 horsepower.**

included Opalescent Blue Metallic paint, a dark blue interior and soft-top, a detachable body-color hardtop that would later more than pay for its initial \$165 cost, chrome wire wheels for \$114, white-wall tires for \$25, and tinted glass for another \$25—not much, all things considered. Stir in the cost of shipping to the Port of Newark, in New Jersey, along with some other miscellaneous sundries, and the total cost was \$4,693. So, Franklin saved money both by ordering from the factory and by

getting around official import channels. Even adding options, ordering direct from the factory saw it arrive at the dock at a total cost 13 percent cheaper than a base E-type brought in through conventional means.

“It was built April 26, 1968, and was registered in the U.K. in June of '68 with the license plate NWK 592F. It was then loaded on the steam ship *Moshill* at the Dagenham dock, U.K., and shipped to Newark,” Franklin told us. “I took receipt of the car at the Newark docks on October 21, 1968.

“I never had any difficulty with it ... there was talk about E-types getting out of tune and everything, but in 1968 Jaguar switched to the two-Stromberg-carburetor setup, and they stayed in tune for me. I never had trouble starting it. It was wonderful.

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"I drove it every day in Pennsylvania no matter what the weather, including ice and snow. Later, I courted my future wife in it, and we got married in September 1970. In September 1972, my son Sid was born, and he would ride in a car seat on the armrest between the seats. He had his first ice cream cone in that car. It wasn't really a family car, though, so we had to buy something larger. But even when we were going somewhere and we walked to the family car, he would still point at the Jaguar, telling us he'd rather ride in it."

The E-type still saw regular use, though — possibly too much. "Over the years, ice, snow, and salt took their toll, and it deteriorated as I drove it less and less. Then a truck backed up over the nose, damaging the raised center section of the bonnet. Later it was stored in a friend's warehouse." Cold storage, avoiding the eroding elements any further ... right? No. "A snow and ice storm caved the roof of the building onto it. It had the hardtop on it at the time, so it didn't break the windshield and frame — but it did put a bunch of dents in it." The hardtop probably saved it from being totaled.

Enough was enough. After having spent years collecting parts and investigating shops, Franklin says "I took it to Lou Ottaviano, who owned Lindley Motors and Restorations in Sanatoga,

*I drove it every day in  
Pennsylvania no matter  
what the weather,  
including ice and snow...*

Pennsylvania." The result was award-winning, but looking this good didn't come quickly or cheaply. "I thought it was going to cost X dollars, but he said it would cost 2x dollars. He finally finished it in the spring of 2006 at a cost of 6x dollars." And timing? "It was supposed to be ready for my son's high school prom and graduation... but it didn't make it. Then Sid went to Penn State and graduated ... and it still didn't make it. He then worked for five years and went to the University of Texas to get his MBA... but it still didn't make it.

"If I had to do it all over again, I would have started the restoration earlier and not let it get into the sad shape it was in when we started. I also would have taken better care of it originally. As it was, it would have been cheaper and faster to have found a car that didn't have as much damage, but this was the car that I had bought new. I would have stopped, but I had promised my son, so I persevered and had it finished." While the shop is still in business, Franklin tells us that this is one of the last cars Lou completed before his passing.

With that 6x dollar figure still rattling around in his head, Franklin shifted focus — from having a car that he could once again drive and enjoy as he did when it was new, to having the nicest E-type in North America. "Since I then had more money invested in it than I could get from selling it, I decided I'd show it

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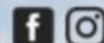
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and try to win a national championship."

A national championship, singular? No. From its 2006 completion, the very E-type you see here has won at least *four dozen* awards at JCNA-sponsored events across the country, including 16 Best in Shows, a nice round dozen national championships, and too many First in Class awards to count. "Usually the oldest car wins at these events," Franklin says, "but mine would beat out some of the older cars."

Alas, the car that captivated Franklin from new, and that had so bewitched his son Sid from an early age, moved on to a new home. Franklin had a couple of health issues, and had retired to Shreveport, Louisiana, some years prior. He decided he was

going to renovate his house; "To do that, I had to sell the Jaguar." Sid agreed—reluctantly, by all counts, since he was counting on it being his someday. It is a matter of public record that Franklin's E-type roadster was sold by Worldwide Auctions at Pebble Beach in 2018, for the jaw-dropping sum of \$247,500. "The buyer was a collector who has a museum in Elkhart, Indiana," Franklin recalled. "The auction wouldn't tell me exactly who bought it. They did tell me that one of the bidders was the Jaguar Heritage Museum—that made me feel pretty good, that they wanted to take it back to England.

"I wish I hadn't sold it now," Franklin says. "I miss getting out there and driving it." **89**



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# Fair-Weather Friend

*A 1962 Rambler American 440 convertible shows that simple pleasures are the best*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL

**H**ave you ever driven in a convertible? Or gone for a ride in a speedboat? There's nothing like folding back a simple canvas top, lowering the side windows, and just motoring around. Mix in enjoyable company, good music, and perhaps a snack at a scenic destination, and it's a recipe for a good afternoon. The kind of afternoon that can even extend into the evening.

People have written whole songs about the experience. Such is the appeal of fresh air (and, yes, smells on occasion—it's a part of the experience) enjoyed at speed.

Sometimes, it seems only motorcyclists know the appeal of open-air motoring anymore. The inherently primitive nature of it means the average person doesn't consider a convertible practical enough for daily use. With

ragtops consigned to mere novelty, whole generations now have missed out.

It doesn't have to be that way. Fun little driver-quality '60s convertibles like this could head off the whole self-driving car thing by themselves if you could get more people behind the wheel of one. They're not fussy machines to operate, especially if, like this one, they are equipped with an automatic transmission. Maintenance is equally simple and, dare we say, fun?



Our feature car is 1962 Rambler American 440 convertible, belonging to Bruce and Millie Wanner, of Ephrata, Pennsylvania. Ephrata is nestled in beautiful Lancaster County—perfect country for drives with no destination. The Wanners are lifelong residents of the lovely town and are such fans of the little “breadbox” Ramblers that they own three: this gold knockabout car, the largely unrestored black ‘63 Bruce bought new, and a Cape Cod Blue ‘63 he restored to AACA Senior Grand National Award level.

Each car has its own appeal and that’s why they’re all a part of the Wanners’ fleet. There’s a reason for each, and they all tie into Bruce’s involvement with the

Hudson Motor Company and eventually American Motors.

Bruce was practically born into Hudsons. His father and brothers owned Hudsons and, when Bruce was a junior in high school, his first car was a 1950 with the 128-hp straight-eight, then the most powerful engine in the Hudson lineup. The ‘50 wore the road-hugging “step-down” body that made Hudson so adept on the stock-car racing circuits.

In 1954, Bruce found himself working for the local Hudson dealer, Ephrata Hudson. That year would see the merger of Nash-Kelvinator and Hudson to form American Motors Corporation. Ephrata had both a Nash dealer and a Hudson

dealer, and in an unusual turn of events, both wound up as Rambler (later AMC) dealers. Bruce would work for the former Hudson dealer until the owner died in 1982, causing AMC to withdraw the franchise. His first AMC product was a 1956 Hudson Hornet, with Hudson Twin-H power in a Nash-derived chassis.

Hudson and Nash gradually lost their separate identities under AMC stewardship, and 1957 saw the last Hudson Hornets produced. Its replacement in 1958 was the “Ambassador by Rambler.” The ‘58 Ambassador’s clear relationship to 1957 Hudson styling notwithstanding, Bruce kept driving his earlier Hornet even once he was drafted into the Army in 1959—



**The 195.6-cu.in. OHV inline-six has roots going back to flathead designs before World War II. By 1962, it was rated as high as 138 hp, when topped with a two-barrel carburetor.**

only selling it upon his discharge in 1961.

Bruce was rehired by the service department of what was by now Ephrata Rambler Co. He was also without wheels.

"I was just out of the service and single," he recalls, "I thought, 'Why not buy a convertible?'"

The 1962 Rambler line was coming out. Neither the Ambassador nor the Classic were available in convertible form. Thankfully, the little, 100-inch-wheelbase American had a long heritage in convertible form, going back to its roots as the 1950 Nash Rambler. A dozen years on, essentially the same chassis underpinned AMC's second-smallest offering (the British-built Metropolitan was still around).

The little ragtop boasted lots of niceties not found in the competition—for one, a power top was standard. Even still, it seems an odd turnabout from a Hornet

until you contemplate the change from teen to adult, and the new considerations that come along.

"These Ramblers are nice, small, and fun cars to drive and park. I like the style and they are easy to work on," Bruce says.

That's still true and it's a big part of what makes them so great. Although it was also the top engine choice for the larger Rambler Classic 6, the 138-hp, two-barrel-equipped OHV straight-six doesn't sound like much, until you consider the American only weighs 2,855 pounds. Compare that with 40 horsepower pushing around 1,808 pounds of a Volkswagen convertible. On the Rambler, each horsepower has to move almost 21 pounds. On the VW, each horse hauls more than 45 pounds of weight.

We can attest that acceleration on the gold convertible—that Bruce swore was

out of tune at the time of photography—was at least on par with the competition of 1962 when similarly equipped. So, not world shaking, but more than adequate in most places, both then and now.

Part of the American's advantage may lay in its three-speed Borg-Warner automatic transmission, giving snappier acceleration than the two-speed units offered in the competition. It mates to a Dana rear with an open driveshaft, making it more familiar to modern mechanics than the torque-tube setups in larger AMCs of the era.

Likewise, the 15-inch wheels and tires, viewed as old-fashioned in 1962, were touted by AMC as an advantage over the Big Three. The taller rubber is both easier to find today and gives the same reduced wear and easier riding that Rambler advertised back then.

Servicing a Rambler six is a joy, though admittedly the parts supply has started to dwindle somewhat. That said, plugging into the effusive Rambler/AMC fan community will no doubt lead a devoted owner to whatever is needed in short order. Bruce doesn't struggle much with those issues, however.

"I have been collecting parts for many, many years," he says, "I worked from 1954 at the Hudson dealer and I'd been collecting all along." For example, all three of Bruce's Ramblers wear AMC's tough-as-nails Ceramic-Armored mufflers and tailpipes, equipped from his personal parts trove.

When new, the '62 was the ideal transportation for a young man. It was so good, in fact, that Bruce traded it in on the '63 he still owns today. So, this isn't that '62, but it's fair to say that it led to this one, and that perhaps Bruce had his first



**Ready access to AMC parts stocks over the years means Bruce had no trouble swapping out worn components for fresh inside the gold car when he first acquired it in the early 1970s.**





Bruce and Millie stand in front of their three Rambler Americans: The black '63 Bruce bought new, the blue '63 he restored to award-winning perfection, and the feature car on these pages.


'62 in mind when he acquired this one, back in 1973, from one of the mechanics at the dealership.

"It was in pretty rough shape, but it was a good car to drive around in. I installed new carpet; put a top and upholstery and paint on it; and replaced an inside door panel from a parts car I had purchased. I also installed power steering, which came from the parts car."

Good cars to drive around in are, of course, the best kind of cars. That's likely why it's still in the stable almost 50 years later. Having a driver also takes the pressure off that well-preserved '63. When the other '63 came along, more recently, it also meant that the blue car could be restored with exactitude and then shown without accumulating wear and tear.

First, however, even the blue '63 had its own turn as a driveable dream. Bruce

rebuilt the engine and turned the car over to his daughter to enjoy in otherwise as-found condition her senior year in high school. Then it was taken completely apart for restoration—a process indulged by Millie even as it stretched to seven years, but undoubtedly worthwhile, given the result.

This gold convertible plays into the triumvirate of Ramblers in the Wanner stable and it also says a lot about the appeal of all driveable dreams: the fun and carefree driving. That is, after all, what cars are for. 

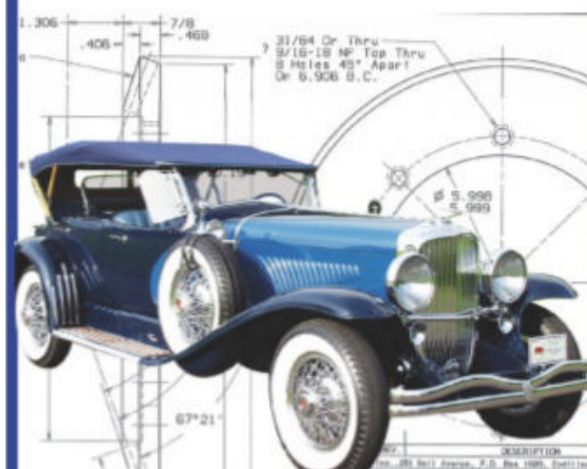


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spotlight  
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1959-'67 **Austin-Healey**

**3000**

*What to consider when purchasing this classic British sports car*

BY DAVID LaCHANCE AND MARK J. McCOURT • IMAGES FROM THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES



When the Austin-Healey 3000 debuted in 1959, Donald Healey's "Big Healey" had been in the public eye for seven years. In that time, its parent company, the British Motor Corporation, had revised the original 100 to make the 100-Six, adding two more cylinders and the availability of 2+2 seating. To keep this premium sports car fresh and appealing, BMC further refined it with greater engine displacement and increased occupant comfort, a winning combination that would see the 3000 through the end of its life, in 1967, as a powerful, luxurious touring sports car. Built in three series, or "Marks" (Mk I, Mk II, and Mk III), this Abingdon-assembled Austin was a legend in its own time, and remains highly sought today.

The 1959-'61 3000, retroactively named Mk I, was closest to Healey's original concept, with its side-curtains and removable soft-top frame. It was powered by a bored-out, high-

compression 2,912-cc (177.7-cu.in.) version of the 100-Six's twin-carbureted, cast-iron OHV BMC C-series straight-six. Standard front disc brakes were a safety improvement for this model, while Laycock de Normanville electric overdrive remained optional. Two-seat 3000 Mk I's wore the series designation BN7, while the 2+2 versions were dubbed BT7, and both featured a 92-inch wheelbase, making the latter a bit more everyday-practical for carrying parcels and small children, if not for adult occupants. Leather upholstery and full carpeting justified the price, which ranged from \$3,051 to \$3,371 (about \$27,800 to \$30,700 in today's money), some \$600 (circa-\$5,500) more than the contemporary MGA.

The 3000 Mk II debuted partway through the 1961 model year, and could be visually identified by its new vertical-bar grille (replacing the Mk I's wavy horizontal bars) and revised hood intake. Lifting that hood revealed a trio of SU HS4



carburetors, which had been specified for homologation of this Big Healey's world-famous competition variants. This series remained available in BN7 roadster and BT7 2+2 forms, and it underwent running changes that included an altered transmission shifter design—the traditional tunnel-side gearchange was replaced with a central lever—in November 1961 and June 1962's return to twin SU carburetors. That carb change brought a new model designation, BJ7, and this redesigned 2+2 was a true convertible that sported a lightly curved windshield and roll-up side (plus swing-out vent) windows in the doors; the two-seater roadster was sadly dropped.

It was February 1964 when the 3000 Mk III, aka BJ8, was unveiled. More power was available through a revised camshaft and larger SU carburetors, but equally impressive was this car's completely redesigned interior: A set of modern, black-on-white gauges sat in a rich-looking wood-veneer dashboard; the formerly standard leather seat upholstery became optional, replaced with durable Ambla vinyl; and the rear seatback could be folded flat to make a cargo platform. A brake booster lessened stopping

effort, while wire wheels were now standard fitment on North American-spec models. Just three months into Mk III production, BMC revised the car into the so-called Phase II, to address longstanding complaints about the vulnerability of the low-slung exhaust. This meant altered frame rails provided space for an updated rear suspension comprised of softer, six-leaf springs, and a pair of radius arms replaced the Panhard rod that located the rear axle.

Which 3000 is right for you? Decide if you prefer the two-seat roadster, the side-curtain 2+2, or the 2+2 convertible. The roadster is the most traditional design, while the convertible offers creature comforts and a top that's easy to fold and erect. If you crave rarity, the three-carburetor, two-seat Mk II BN7 had a scant 355 produced. And if you love torquey straight-six power and lashings of polished wood, you'll want a Mk III BJ8.

Big Healeys have long been in the shadow of Jaguar's E-types, and when the values of those seductive sports cars went stratospheric in the 2000s, the Austin-Healeys followed suit. Their market has cooled a bit over the last decade, though, and



**Mk I 3000 models like the 1960 BT7 on the opening spread sport horizontal-bar grilles, flat windshields, and pack-away folding tops and side-curtains, while Mk IIs and Mk IIIs like these have more substantial windshield frames, roll-up windows, and taller top stacks.**

in the last few years, values of concours-quality and near-concours 3000s have dipped, but they can still trade hands in the six-figure range. Knowing this, if you want to park a 3000 in your garage, you'll want to shop carefully—buying a Big Healey that's less than what it appears to be may turn into a very costly experience. For that reason alone, it's smart to join one of the Healey clubs (Austin-Healey Club of America, [healeyclub.org](http://healeyclub.org); Austin Healey Club USA, [healey.org](http://healey.org); Austin-Healey Sports & Touring Club, [austin-healey-stc.org](http://austin-healey-stc.org)) and find someone knowledgeable who's willing to help evaluate a particular car. Picking the right 3000 will bring you one of the finest British sports car experiences around, in a classic whose appeal will never fade.

## ROAD TESTS

Contemporary car magazines acknowledged the senior Austin-Healey's advancing years, but tempered their criticism with praise. Of the BJ7 Mark II, *Car and Driver* wrote in its March 1963 issue: "The ponderous nature of all the controls is a factor which lends a kind of appealing massive masculinity to the car. Again, this is traditional, harking back to those days when sports cars were meant for men only and the ladies rode reluctantly if at all or, better yet, stood timidly and admiringly by the side of the road."

England's *Autocar* tested the BT7 Mark III in its June 12, 1964 issue, and wrote: "The car has been through several variations of engine size, but now, like an ageing but still beautiful dowager, repeated face lifts can no longer wholly hide the ravages of time and progress." The article continued: "Although this comparatively unsophisticated six-cylinder engine must now be very near the end of its development, it

seems to have gained in flexibility and is virtually free from any temperament... Despite some dated features, the big Healey is still terrific fun to drive. Tractable, capable of an immense amount of hard work with reasonable economy, it will still have its devotees long after production has ceased."

## BODY

The 3000 features a semi-monocoque steel body, with aluminum hood and rear deck panels. It's constructed over a ladder-type, boxed cruciform chassis with a welded inner body tub and underslung rear axle. This car was built well before modern corrosion-proofing measures were devised, making it very susceptible to rust and accident damage; the complexity of the structure means poor repairs will be costly and time consuming to fix, but patches and full replacement panels are available, as are entire body tubs.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Inspect any prospective purchase with a jaundiced eye: Sight down the sides of the car to look for proper panel alignment, check the door gaps, and note if the swage line on the doors and fenders is consistent. Get underneath to inspect the frame rails' condition, to see if they or their welded seams are anything less than perfectly straight, and note if the front crossmember exhibits damage. Check the flange at the bottom of the front aluminum shroud for signs of filler. Examine the joints between the rear aluminum shroud and steel fenders for electrolytic corrosion. The rocker panels are constructed of inner, outer, and center components, and can rust badly. Note the splash areas: The doglegs behind the doors, and the lower front fenders behind the wheels, can both rust out from trapped moisture and dirt.



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The 3000 Mk I/early Mk II dashboard and offset transmission shifter location were carried over from 100 and 100-Six models.



The two-seater BN7 was dropped after mid-1962. Replacement leather upholstery is readily available, if expensive to purchase.



The BJ7 blended 2+2 seating with a central gearshift and early dashboard. Rear seats were best suited for kids or packages.



A new, wood veneer-trimmed dash, taller doors with roll-up glass, and Ambla vinyl trim with "chrome" piping marked Mk IIIs.

## INTERIOR

Thankfully for Big Healey fans, the 3000 enjoys great restoration parts availability, and this extends to the car's interior, where almost everything you might need to bring an example back to factory-fresh is available. That's not to say that major components like upholstery are inexpensive: New leather seat covers carry a four-figure price tag. The Mk III's standard Ambla covers had "chrome" piping, a twisted chrome core with a plastic sheath; some reproductions of this material are better than others. The Mk III added the beautiful but fragile wood-veneer instrument panel, which can suffer from exposure to the elements. These can be refinished, or badly damaged panels can be replaced.

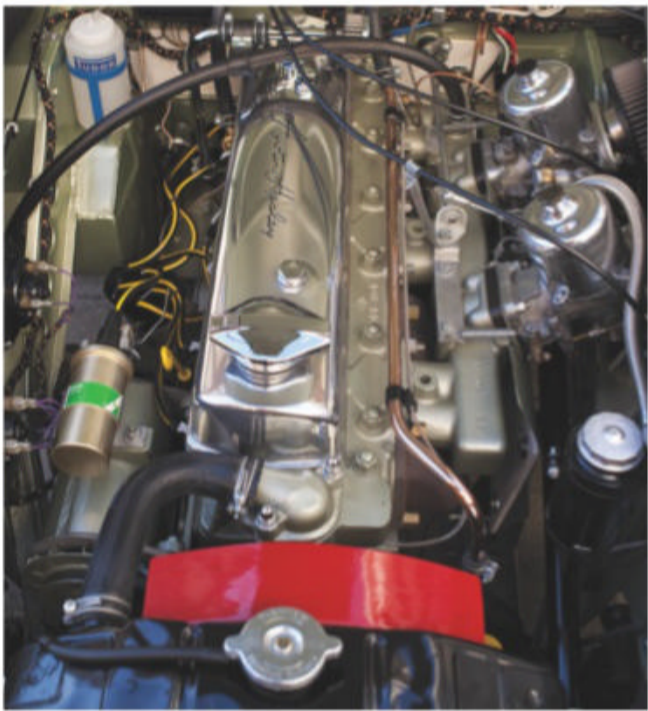
## ENGINES

The 3000's four-main-bearing straight-six is a simple and understressed engine, and it responded favorably to the tweaks it underwent throughout its production life. With a 9:1 compression ratio and two SU HD6 carburetors, the Mk I made 124 hp and 167 lb-ft of torque. The early Mk II sported three SU HS4 carburetors, which bumped horsepower to 132. The triple-carb setup proved tricky to keep in balance for street use, so BMC soon exchanged them for a pair of SU HS6s; this didn't prove much of a downgrade, as only 1 hp was lost, and performance actually improved. The Mk III's new camshaft and SU HD8 carburetors gave it 150 hp and 173 lb-ft of torque, enough to push this 2,600-pound car to 60 mph in 9.8 seconds, and on to more than 120 mph — both excellent figures for the day.



# REPRODUCTION PARTS PRICES

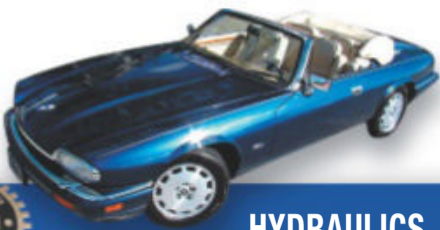
Brake disc.....	\$26
Bumper bar (front; reproduction).....	\$600
Carpet set (BT7, BJ7) .....	\$480
Clutch disc.....	\$100
Convertible top (BJ7, BJ8).....	\$460
Patch panel, fender (front).....	\$210
Piston and ring set (BJ7, BJ8).....	\$440
Radiator assembly.....	\$1,095
Sill assembly (inner; two pieces) .....	\$75
Windshield (BJ7, BJ8; aftermarket/OEM) .....	\$168/\$480




The 2,912-cc straight-six engine used in all 3000s is notably powerful, largely reliable, and enjoys great parts availability. It differed in carburetion and camshafts over the course of its nine-year life, and ultimately made 150 hp and 173 lb-ft of torque.

## WHAT TO PAY

	Low	Average	High
Mark I BT7	\$19,000	\$40,500	\$88,000
Mark I BN7	\$22,000	\$48,500	\$93,500
Mark II BT7	\$25,500	\$58,000	\$113,500
Mark II BN7	\$34,500	\$74,500	\$135,500
Mark II BJ7	\$29,000	\$65,000	\$122,000
Mark III BJ8	\$30,000	\$73,500	\$129,000





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## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Watch for blue smoke and listen for rattles and knocks, and ensure that oil pressure is at least 50 psi at speed. All is not lost if it's time for a rebuild; every part you might need is readily available. Watch the temperature gauge, too, as a silted-up radiator and block can lead to overheating. If the car is used in city traffic on summer days, an aftermarket electric fan might be advisable. A higher-capacity core that fits in the original radiator's space is available to improve cooling. A head modified for unleaded gasoline is a plus; ask to see receipts for any engine work done.

## TRANSMISSION

Austin-Healey built every 3000 with a four-speed transmission featuring a nonsynchronized first gear and a hydraulically operated clutch. The Mk I's gearbox was improved in March 1960, when a more robust gear-cluster was fitted. In November 1961, the Mk II was given a gearbox with top rather than side selectors, allowing the switch to a vertical gear lever. Electric overdrive was available every year, and is a highly desirable option for today's high-speed driving.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR


On a test drive, check the condition of the synchronizers; the second-gear synchro is often the first to fail, but the third- and fourth-gear synchros have been known to expire as well. Excessive noise or a tendency to jump out of gear indicates that it's time for a rebuild. All its internal components are available, and rebuilds are not complicated. If the car is equipped with overdrive, as most North American examples were, make sure it functions in third and fourth gears; inoperative overdrive may simply indicate a switch or a solenoid needs replacing.

## CHASSIS COMPONENTS

The 3000 used a traditional leaf-sprung solid rear axle and coil-sprung independent front suspension, a hypoid rear axle (with 3.545:1 or 3.909:1 ratios for four-speed/overdrive) worm-and-peg steering, and front disc/rear drum brakes. On the whole, these mechanical components can be restored or replaced.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Check for kingpin wear by jacking up the front of the car and looking for free play in the front wheels. Note the suspension has multiple grease fittings. A worn steering box can be rebuilt.

Check the idler arm for worn joints, too. Modern urethane bushings put more stress on suspension components, and contribute to a rougher ride. The 60-spoke wheels were introduced with the launch of the BJ7; if the car is equipped with wire wheels, remove them and check for dangerous worn splines. Though bias-ply tires can be fitted for concours use, radials provide better handling and wear better, too. The uncomplicated braking system needs only the usual checks. All of the parts, from master cylinders to new front rotors, are available to put the brakes back into good health. 



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**1931 Buick Series 60  
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**1967 Austin-Healey 3000  
Mark III BJ8**  
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**1953 Chevrolet 210  
Handyman Station Wagon**  
Sold for \$20,475



# Babbitt Begone

## *Fitting a Ford Model T rear axle with new, bronze thrust washers—Part 2*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL

**T**he Ford Model T bridges the gap between when cars were mostly built by hand to when mass-produced, interchangeable parts became the standard. Sometimes, that means that the most effective way to repair one is to go back to the blacksmith-like techniques of yesteryear instead of needlessly dragging the T into the space age. If you're used to the more modern approach, a Model T is refreshing to work on.

Last month, we introduced you to Bryan Cady, of Albany, New York, and his Model T speedster. The 1926 rear axle assembly under Bryan's car had revealed it still contained babbitt thrust washers—with somewhat catastrophic consequences. We ended with the axle disassembled and its various components on their way out for hot tanking.

We reconvened a few weeks later, when the required parts had been delivered, to reassemble and reinstall the axle—including a new ring-and-pinion, new axle seals, and copper-alloy thrust washers in the process. The downside to copper or brass washers is that they come oversized and must be fitted by hand, which involves lots of sanding. That said, there's really no superior way to do it and the effort invested will pay off in longevity.

Machining the thrust washers to size is a perfectly legitimate approach, of course, but the fit-and-try method of installation involved means that it's an inconvenient route unless you're pursuing the rear-end rebuild in the confines of your own machine shop. The beauty of a T, as noted, is that it's completely acceptable to work on one in the farmyard or, as in our case, in the driveway of Bryan's 1920s home.

With the thrust washers fit, the rest of reassembly provided relatively few surprises. Eleven decades have passed since the first Model Ts arrived on the scene, so almost inevitably some mixing of parts has occurred, but again, the simplicity of the Tin Lizzie lends itself to speedy resolution.



01



02

**1.** The driveshaft was driven back into the torque tube and pinned in place to minimize play. **2.** Once driven onto the driveshaft with a small mallet, the new pinion was secured with a castellated nut and cotter pin. With everything together, the driveshaft was tested with a crescent wrench to make sure it turned freely.



03



06



04



05

3. When installing new bearing sleeves, make sure the grease hole in the axle tube lines up with the hole in the bearing sleeve. Insert the sleeves wrong and you can't lubricate the bearings. A mark inside the axle tube aided alignment. 4. The differential gears were cleaned with kerosene and reassembled along with the new ring gear (note backward safety wiring in photo — oops). With that complete, it was time to begin fitment of the thrust washers. 5. Bolting the gear case together with the new washers inside resulted in a ring gear that refused to turn. The case was loosened just enough to allow movement so the thrust washers could scrape and show excess material

6. The washers were sanded more after each test fitting. After five attempts, it was determined a misaligned locating pin was skewing the results. 7. With the innards working properly, reassembly commenced with the torque tube reuniting with the gear case, followed by reattachment of the radius and brake rods. Two left-hand radius rods meant a hammer and pry bar were required to "persuade" the radius rod on the right to meet its backing plate. 8. As a final touch before the axle goes back under the car, outer bearing sleeves and modern axle seals were installed. 🛠️



07



08

# How I Got Two Packards

## I ENTERED THE AIR FORCE

through Air Force ROTC at the University of Massachusetts in 1963, and drove to my first assignment at Travis AFB, near Sacramento, California, in my black, four-door 1956 Packard Clipper. While at Travis, I got picked to be the aide de camp to the commanding general of the 1501st Air Transport Wing. Good times at the O club caused me to gain weight, so the general suggested I lose some. I did as ordered and lost 50 pounds using the Metrical diet (how many of you remember Metrical?). After losing the weight, I suggested to a fellow lieutenant that a celebration was in order.

We drove to the Sacramento area and stopped at a few bars located near the Sacramento River, ending up at what I think was a hotel called The Boondocks. The food and drink—especially the drinks—were enjoyable. If I recall, the house specialty drink was called “The Fogcutter.” It had more than one kind of liquor in it and was quite good.

Driving back to the base, the river fog swept in and we became lost. Somehow, we managed to end up on a river levee road and the fog had become worse. Riding along, I missed a turn and suddenly we were going along on what felt like a 45-degree angle! Fortunately, the Air Force required the installation of seat belts so my fellow lieutenant was hanging just above me in the car as we banged along the bank!

“Turn the wheel to the right,” he yelled. I did and the Packard slowly turned, stopping with its headlamps shining up in the fog. Upon opening the doors, we both realized a third of the car, the back, was in the river! We crawled up the bank on the dirt road. The night was pitch black and we walked for what seemed like miles, finally coming to a small town with a gas station where we spotted a tow truck. I woke up the owner and he said he could pull us out with

his wrecker. Off we went in a ‘50s Ford wrecker. It took us a while to find the car in the fog, but the lights were still on and he was able to pull the car out. The ride along the levee had destroyed parts of the driver’s-side fenders and rocker panel. The gas tank had been ripped open and was leaking. I realized the car was in bad shape and the gas station owner thought the same. “I doubt it can be fixed,” he said.

I arranged for a ride by calling the base and getting a lieutenant to come pick us up. All this action took place in the early morning. Driving back to the base, I made the decision that if there was a 1956 Packard in the car ads of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, I’d buy it. The two other lieutenants thought I was nuts. Sure enough, there was a black 1956 Clipper Super two-door hardtop in the paper. I called the dealer Monday morning (our wreck took place Sunday night) and then went down and bought the car.

Meanwhile, the gas station owner called on Tuesday and said, “I took a second look and if you can find a gas tank, and the rear quarter panel, with a little tin knocking I can fix this car.” I gave him the okay, and the following week I got the parts from a local junkyard.

That was back when you could go into the yard and remove what you needed, pay the price, and be on your way. After about two weeks, the Packard was ready, and I got a ride back up to the gas station. The car looked pretty good, all things considered.

I don’t recall how both Packards, shown in the picture, got parked in front of the officers’ club, but when I came out after lunch one day, a fellow lieutenant suggested I climb up, straddle the two Clippers, and he would take my picture, hence the photo. I did remove my shoes prior to the shoot.

Footnote: I drove the first Packard back to my home in Milton, Massachusetts, at the end of my three-year tour at Travis AFB in 1967. I had a followup one-year tour in Southeast Asia and then left the Air Force. I stored the second Clipper at the base and then drove the two-door Clipper back to Milton. I kept both cars until the 1980s.

I rejoined the Air Force in 1969 and retired in 1986. I missed the Clippers, but found and bought a 1956 Packard Executive in 1975 while assigned to the Pentagon. I retired from the Air Force in 1986 and sold the ‘56 Executive in 2008. 🐼



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Vintage automobiles then took center stage when Mecum hosted its 10th-annual Houston, Texas, sale, April 8-10 in the city’s NRG Center. The auction grossed \$21 million with an overall sell-through rate of 86 percent—a 40 percent increase from last year’s COVID-ravaged December show.

Of the 726 vehicles crossing the block, a 1968 Dodge Hemi Charger R/T emerged as the top earner, with a sale price of \$231,000. A host of imports were sprinkled throughout the top 10, including an attractive 1958 Mercedes-Benz 220S Cabriolet that sold for \$148,500, which was good for fifth overall. British sports cars, three of which we present here, were not excluded from the Houston sale and helped achieve the collective total of \$21 million. For a complete list of results and an up-to-date 2021 Mecum event calendar, visit [mecum.com](http://mecum.com).



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**Avg. Market Range:**  
\$31,000-\$55,500

MG already had a following among sports car enthusiasts by the time the TF roadsters arrived in 1953. Released in mid-1954, the spritely, fun, and relatively affordable TF-1500 featured an upgraded four-cylinder engine—enlarged from 1,250- to 1,466-cc—that helped bump output from 57.5 to 63 hp. This was one of 3,400 TF-1500 roadsters built through April 1955 (when production of the MGA began), and one that reportedly received a comprehensive restoration. All the typical hallmarks of the TF were present, of course, including the British Racing Green paint, tan interior, and luggage rack. It sold handsomely at the top end of the market range.



#### 1980 MG MGB

**Reserve:** None  
**Selling Price:** \$10,450

**Avg. Market Range:**  
\$12,500-\$22,500

From 1962 to '80, more than 523,800 MGBs were built, and among them were 6,688 Limited Edition roadsters, as seen here. Just 500 were planned for the U.S. market, but demand for the special black paint/silver stripe model dictated otherwise. So, the Limited Edition roadsters were offered in 1979-'80 and, in addition to the paint scheme, they boasted five-spoke alloy wheels and a front air dam, plus a leather-wrapped, three-spoke steering wheel. A few years earlier, the engines were detuned to meet emission regulations. Still, the Limited Edition was an attractive car, which helps to explain the enthusiasm from U.S. consumers. Just 20,430 miles showed on this example’s odometer, and an aftermarket stereo was installed. This looked to be a nice, low-mileage vintage driver that was bought on the cheap.



#### 1994 JAGUAR XJS

**Reserve:** Undisclosed  
**Selling Price:** \$9,350

**Avg. Market Range:**  
\$17,500-\$30,500

Interestingly, just two Jaguars were offered at the sale, including this XJS convertible, which was presented in what appeared to be remarkable original condition. Introduced in 1975, the XJS (in fixed-roof and open-top guise) attracted 115,413 buyers through '96. Key bullet points of this grand tourer included its fuel-injected 4-liter DOHC six-cylinder engine (rather than a V-12), four-speed automatic, a paper trail, and British Racing Green paint. Talk about a staggering result: Not only did this luxurious convertible sell well below market range, but it also went to a new owner for a fraction of the original MSRP. When new, this car as equipped cost \$61,570, which equates to \$109,996 in today’s dollars!

#### LEGEND

**Reserve:** Minimum price owner will accept

**Selling Price:** What the vehicle sold for (including the buyer’s premium)

**Average Market Range:** Values coincide with current market trends for vehicles rated from condition #2- to #1, respectively



GOODING & COMPANY

## "Geared Online" Nets \$16.2 Million

**ANOTHER OF GOODING'S "GEARED ONLINE" AUCTIONS TOOK PLACE** early in May, and it delivered more than \$16.2 million in total sales and a 97-percent sell-through rate, with 84 cars changing hands. The top sale from the auction was a 1967 Ferrari 275 GTB/4 alloy, the ninth of 16 aluminum-bodied GTB/4s built, which brought \$3,586,000. The car was originally finished in a Celeste-

over-blue color scheme, but this was changed to red during a lengthy restoration in the 2000s. The Ferrari was powered by its matching-numbers 3.3-liter Tipo 226 engine, according to factory records, and the sale included documents, a tool roll, and Borrani competition-style wire wheels. Chassis 10025 was last sold 20 years ago and has yet to be exhibited or judged since its complete restoration.

A more affordable sale that caught our eye was a 1956 Continental Mark II. It was part of a private collection in California and was used as an occasional driver during its time there. Finished in metallic white pearl with a black and white interior, the rare hand-built Mark II was mechanically sound with some visible imperfections, such as pitting in the brightwork and some minor cosmetic blemishes in the paint. When the bidding ended, the Continental found a new home for \$45,100. Full results from the May auction are now available at [goodingco.com](http://goodingco.com).

## More from Mecum Houston

**IN ADDITION TO THE BRITISH OFFERINGS HIGHLIGHTED PREVIOUSLY, AMERICAN CLASSICS FROM** the prewar years to 1960 raked in more than \$2.5 million at Mecum's Houston auction. Among those to find new owners was this 1929 Packard Series 633 Opera Coupe. An AACA first-place winner 36 years ago, the two-toned Packard was powered by a 320-cu.in. inline eight-cylinder engine mated to a three-speed manual transmission. It featured dual cowl lamps, three window shades, fitted luggage in the trunk, a trunk-mounted luggage rack, parabolic headlamps, and more. When the bidding ended, the Packard sold for \$34,100.

Also changing hands was a 1955 Ford Crown Victoria, believed to be one of 1,999 made with the transparent top. It was restored and kept in an Ohio museum for nine years, and had all of its original glass except for the windshield. The Ford had the 272-cu.in V-8, paired with a Ford-O-Matic transmission, and included power steering, pushbutton AM radio, front bumper guards, and wide-whitewall tires. The two-tone Buckskin Tan and Snowshoe White Crown Vic sold for \$56,100. Full results from the Houston sale are now available at [mecum.com](http://mecum.com).



MECUM AUCTIONS

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### 13-14 • Gooding & Company

Monterey, California  
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### 13-14 • RM Sotheby's

Monterey, California  
310-559-4575 • [rmsothebys.com](http://rmsothebys.com)

### 20-21 • New England Auto Auction

Owls Head, Maine  
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the seller pays only a \$99.95 listing fee. The winning bidder is responsible for a 5-percent fee on all completed auctions. The following are examples of auctions that transpired during the month leading up to press time. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, email Director of Auction Operations Terry Shea: [terryshea@hemmings.com](mailto:terryshea@hemmings.com)



## 1967 AUSTIN-HEALEY 3000 MK III

**Reserve:** \$41,000

**Recent Market Range:**

**Selling Price:** \$64,050

\$40,120-\$56,240

Final-year Big Healeys have long been the ultimate variants for their desirable blend of luxury trimmings and power, and this refurbished Colorado Red example provided a great entry into the world of Little British Cars. The BJ8-chassis 3000 wore a respray and a blend of new and rechromed original brightwork, while its restored, red-piped black interior appeared tidy. The heater was noted as nonfunctional, and the numbers-matching, twin SU-carbureted engine had small oil leaks, but the Laycock electric overdrive transmission was promised to operate without issue. This Mk III attracted nearly 13,000 views and 32 bids, and sold for a figure commensurate to its condition and presentation.



## 1937 CADILLAC SERIES 75 FLEETWOOD

**Reserve:** \$35,000

**Recent Market Range:**

**Selling Price:** \$36,750

\$34,250-\$46,510

In the late 1930s, a Series 75 Fleetwood told the world you hadn't just made it, you were well established. It was said this largely original Touring Sedan spent time in Hollywood, appearing in some blockbuster films; it also toured Europe. Save for the front fenders, the paint was claimed factory-applied, like the mohair seat upholstery, which in places showed signs of age and use. A bit of surface rust on the car was noted, but the rebuilt L-head V-8 promised to run and drive without complaint. Indeed, the seller urged flying in and driving it home! Three videos, more than 100 detailed photos, and historic images assured bidders this Cadillac was worth fair market value.



## 1965 CHEVROLET CORVETTE

**Reserve:** \$42,000

**Recent Market Range:**

**Selling Price:** \$58,800

\$46,230-\$56,520

Among fans of America's longest-lived, most beloved two-seat sports car, the mid-year models are hugely admired. This 1965 convertible ticked the boxes, being an original, unrestored Rally Red (plus white roof and black vinyl) 327/four-speed with fewer than 30,000 miles from new. There was minor wear noted on the carpets and some exterior paint chips, as well as a brake fluid leak that needed repair. The factory radio had been replaced, but went with the car. The seller was very responsive to questions, divulging some undercarriage corrosion, but noted that was superficial. This transparency, coupled with ample photographic documentation, led to nearly 20,000 views and an above-average hammer price.

### LEGEND

**Reserve:** Minimum price owner will accept

**Selling Price\*:** What the vehicle sold for, inclusive of buyer's 5-percent fee  
(\*sold as a Premium Classified following the live auction)

**Recent Market Range:** The low-to-high value range for the vehicle based on published results of similar vehicles sold at auction over the previous 18 months



## 1956 FORD THUNDERBIRD

Reserve: \$23,500

Selling Price: \$47,250

Recent Market Range:

\$21,320-\$32,410

It's not often that a highly desirable, largely original, low-mileage, 65-year-old two-seater comes on the market, and it's even less common to find one with known ownership and history covering that entire time. This automatic-equipped '56 Thunderbird ticked all those boxes. The happy auction winner got a 51,500-mile car that had one older, reputedly nice-appearing Colonial White repaint with some small flaws, a good-running engine with minor fluid weeps, and a recently refurbished suspension behind new wheels and tires. The fine, detailed photography, driving video, and generous descriptions used to craft its online auction helped push it to more than double its reserve.



## 1967 JAGUAR E-TYPE

Reserve: \$50,000

Selling Price: \$66,150

Recent Market Range: \$48,520-\$65,350

Complex British classics like the Jaguar E-type tend to work enthusiasts into a lather, and this recently restored Fixed-Head Coupe did just that for our bidders and commenters. It was said to be of great "driver" quality, with fresh Old English White paint, new leather-upholstered seats, and re-chromed brightwork that complemented new Dayton wire wheels. The 4.2-liter straight-six under the bonnet was a rebuilt replacement engine that was said to operate correctly, and it was mated to a four-speed. No rust repairs were claimed necessary, and the instrumentation, brakes, and cooling system were sorted. This sold well, and represented a lot of iconic premium sports car for the money.



## 1989 DODGE DAKOTA SPORT

Reserve: \$7,000

Selling Price: \$20,475

Recent Market Range: \$6,250-\$12,130

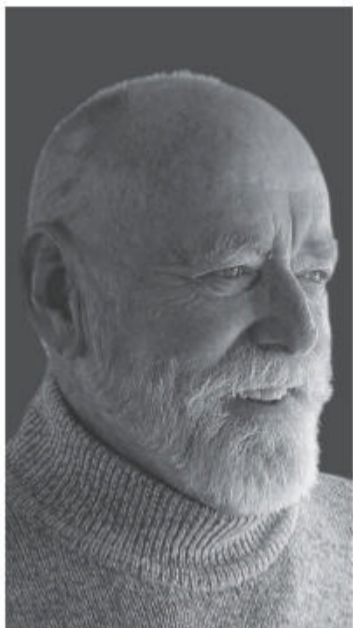
Chrysler has a tradition as being one of the most daring of all American automakers, and its late-Eighties introduction of a convertible pickup was true to form. This tidy Dakota Sport, carefully decapitated by the soft-top experts at ASC, appeared to be a low-mile creampuff in fine shape, outside and in. Its red paint and bold graphics were thought to be original, save for the resprayed bed, and the folding roof was said to operate properly. The 3.9-liter V-6 and automatic pairing was noted to have a minor leak after periods of sitting, but the suspension and brakes were claimed in fine functional shape. Original paperwork and a car cover went with it, and it hammered over market range.

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## Maserati Boogie and the Offenhauser Blues

My younger sister delights in telling the world what a weird kid I was. She points out that, while other teenagers holed up in their rooms and listened to music that irritated their parents to the edge of homicide, I holed up in my room and listened to engine sounds. I had a record album that included Maseratis, Mercedes, Jaguars, and Ferraris from the 1950s, all going up through the gears. It was music to my ears. It still is.

Probably the first engine sound I fell in love with as a toddler was from my Uncle Benny's T-bucket roadster. It had a '48 Mercury flathead. I would hear the unique sound of its starter, and then it would cough to life with that wonderful sonorous burble that only a flathead Ford V-8 can produce.

But that was soon eclipsed by the sound of a Cadillac-powered 1952 J2 Allard I saw at the fairgrounds in the early '50s that made a thunderous roar. In fact, in my mind, there is still no sound quite like that of a big American V-8 uncorked. That big-displacement and low-rpm rumbling was such a baseline accompaniment to the high-pitched Ferraris of the period. The Jaguar inline-sixes and early '50s Mercedes inline-eights had their own unearthly cat-like screams, too, but it was an octave above the American V-8s, and a couple of octaves below the Ferraris.

In an effort to make noise of my own as a lad, I built a GMC 270-cu.in. truck engine and put it in a 1949 Chevrolet. It had a hot cam, a milled head, a couple of Rochester carbs, and headers. Was it fast? Well, it blew the doors off stock 1949 Chevys. It was not a revver, but it made an unforgettable sound, and it was loud. Too loud, according to Officer Hollyfield, the local cop. There is nothing quite like the growl of a big inline-six, though.

Another engine that made an inimitably ferocious sound was the Meyer-Drake Offenhauser of Indy car fame. It was actually derived from a 1912 four-cylinder Peugeot racing engine that won at Indianapolis in 1913. The Peugeot—as well as its Offenhauser offspring—had the head and block in one casting, allowing for a 15:1 compression ratio for the Offy in order to run on alcohol without blowing a head gasket. The valves and pistons were inserted from the bottom of the engine. But the main secret to its performance was its dual

overhead cam, four valve per cylinder, cross-flow design.

USAC rule changes in 1982 ended the Offy's run, but this was not due to its performance. The last of the Offys were turbocharged and produced 1,100 horsepower! I had the great good fortune to get a ride in a fellow's Offenhauser-powered Model A Ford roadster pickup, and it was like nothing I had experienced before.

We left Cars and Coffee in Garden Grove, California, and drove around a suburban neighborhood to let the oil warm up in the engine. The driver advanced the spark manually, because the engine was not built for the street. And then we pulled onto a section of road with no cross streets for a quarter of a mile or so, and the driver hit it. We shot like a spat watermelon seed for a brief few seconds, and then we were at the next cross street. I had never experienced such acceleration before, and I have experienced a lot of acceleration in my career. And what a sound. Absolutely unearthly!

Since then, I have learned to savor engine sounds like some people savor fine wines. Of course, there are engine sounds that are downright unpleasant, such as the Wankel rotary engines used in the older Mazdas. They sounded obnoxious. And two-cycle engines sounded like popcorn poppers. They are irritating to the discerning ear, as well.

Which cars make the most beautiful sounds? How about a 1973 Porsche 911 RS? Just the snarl of it would humble the competition. But one of the best engine sounds of all time is from Italy—the country that gave opera to the world—the 1995 Ferrari 412 T2 F1 V-12. It has a hysterical scream that is haunting. It is a more modern iteration of the Ferrari V-12 that Enzo Ferrari pioneered in the 1950s. It is said he got the inspiration for it from the prewar Packard V-12s, though they were paragons of silence.

What is the most beautiful sounding engine of all time? In my opinion, it's the French Ligier Matra V-12. Jaques Laffite drove a Formula 1 Matra in the 1978 Long Beach Grand Prix, and I had the pleasure of witnessing it at full song. My hearing hasn't been the same since, but it was worth it. That was music to my ears. If you want to experience any of these engines yourself, you can find videos of them on YouTube. 🎧

I had never  
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such  
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before....  
And what  
a sound.  
Absolutely  
unearthly!

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