

Member Featured Car of the Month

Leslie Hunter's 1958 MGA so Bill could have it!

By Leslie Hunter

There's an old saying my mother often joked – "I know a guy saying he had George Washington's original axe which was used to chop down the cherry tree. The handle has been replaced a couple of times, and the axe head has been replaced once – but it's his original axe."

Our MGA is a little bit like that story. It's all original even though a few parts have been replaced and several upgrades have been added as well. Our MGs are named Lucy and Ethel (red and white)

I've always been a little bit of a car enthusiast. My mother and father have owned a 1930 Model A Ford for several years and I've enjoyed many parades, car shows and club meetings with them. Bill and I have also enjoyed many trips over the years with our MGB. When we became aware of Steve Powell selling his MGA – we were both excited and decided to add it to our collection.

Steve got the car in 2008 and over the next several years made several repairs, replacements and upgrades to the car. As I recall, the car was from the Xenia area prior to Steve's ownership and Steve had even worked on the car for a few years prior to ownership. The previous owner was a client of Steve's practice and the car had been discussed several times.

Steve replaced the engine and transmission shortly after the purchase as the original engine never performed satisfactorily. Sixteen years later, it's still running strong.

Additionally, a new windshield, gaskets, fuel pump, master cylinder, distributor and rear spring bushings were also replaced. Throughout time, regularly scheduled maintenance was completed on schedule.

One of the bigger improvements Steve made was opening a portion of the front valence to increase air flow to the





radiator and engine. Further modifications were made to the front duct panel to direct air to the radiator for improved cooling.

The theory is that the current front grill forces more air over the top of the car than through the grill to help cool the engine. By opening a portion of the front valance more air can get to the radiator for cooling. In addition to this modification, a new 160-degree thermostat was installed at the same time. This modification worked well for me and although I did replace the thermostat and radiator cap in 2025 but have had no issues otherwise.



One other addition made was the addition of a “clutch extender” which Steve designed and installed. I believe these are still available through Steve Miller at MG Automotive and I highly recommend adding one if you have not already done so.

The lesson we’ve learned from all of this is to always maintain your vehicles as required and on schedule. Address the ‘little things’ that creep up so they don’t get worse and create larger problems. Upgrade when and where possible – you’ll be happy with the finished product. And finally – decide to do ‘one big thing’ every year. Whether it’s replacing floorboards, swapping out the chrome parts with poor finish with newer, fresher parts, upgrading lighting or anything else – one big project each year will be a long-term upgrade to the car.