

Steve Veris' Birthday Gift - '60' MGA

By Steve Veris

Joy bought me the car for my 40th birthday and a little later I bought her Jaguar for her 40th. Both cars have served us well over the years, but I think I got the better deal!

IIRC, I ran across the car in an Autotrader ad and went to see it right away because it was nearby in Beavercreek. The owner was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force at Wright-Pat and was selling the car because his son was about to turn 16 and the guy didn't want him driving any sports car.



The car came from California, and then with him to Kansas, where he was stationed before being transferred to Wright-Pat. He claimed it was always garaged and I don't doubt him. Later, when I got the car apart for painting, you could literally eat off the insides of the rocker panels! They were that clean. I took it into Ziebart here in Dayton, and I doubt you would find more than a spec of rust anywhere.

Anyway, it was painted powder (Iris) blue when I saw it and had a slightly crumpled right front fender and a tired interior, but it ran pretty well. The original color was Black, but my Lotus was black at the time and we decided to change the color. I ordered samples of the 1960 factory colors Alamo Beige, Dove Gray, and Chariot Red. The beige was truly one of the ugliest colors I had ever seen, and it wasn't surprising to learn later that MG had to pay all its dealers to repaint the cars that were originally delivered in that color.

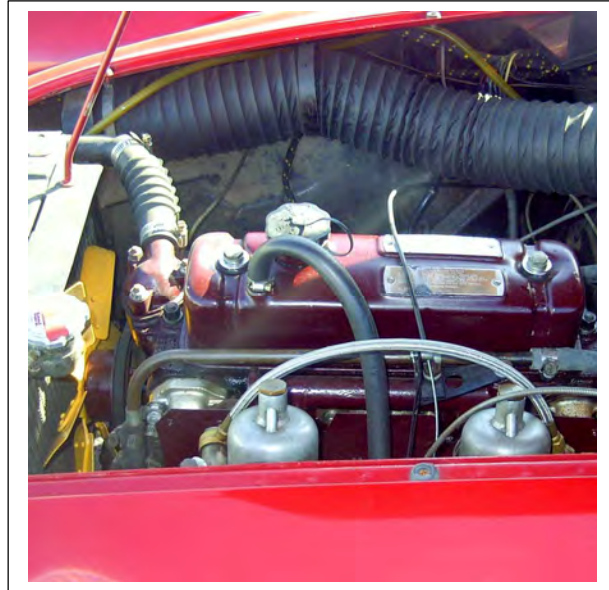


My dad and I drove the car to Chicago to drop it off with the painter who had done cars for me in the past. On the trip up, there was a visually exciting fire, with flames coming from behind the MGA dashboard. My father tried to beat out the flames with his hands and they subsided fairly quickly. Later, I managed to fix the short circuit and was able to

get the car to the painter. We almost went with the gray, but decided we couldn't go wrong with red.

After getting it back to Dayton, I decided the engine was tired and had MG Automotive do most of the rebuild. I had previously removed the head and decided to have the Genuine machine shop downtown do a valve job, before giving the car to Steve Miller to do the rest of the work.

With the engine back in the car, I had it towed back to my garage to finish doing the rest of the re-installation. Everything went smoothly and the car started right up. I ran the engine several times over the next few weeks before pulling it out of the garage for the rebuilt engine's maiden voyage. The drive only lasted about three or four blocks, after which a lock washer that Genuine had left stuck in the head somewhere shook loose, and found its way into one of the combustion chambers. It got stuck in the top of one of the pistons and literally beat the head to death.



Back to square one, I found a replacement cylinder head and Steve Miller happened to have a good used matching piston to use as a replacement. In retrospect, I guess I was fortunate to not have any damage to the one cylinder.

Marina Auto Interiors did the top, rugs, and seats for me, and I refinished the wood door sill pieces which many owners have covered with matching vinyl trim. I guess we like the wood look, even without a wooden dashboard.

The 48-spoke wire wheels were restored and tuned by the old Dayton Wire Wheels, back when they still did that kind of thing.



We drove it to the 50th anniversary All MG celebration in Indianapolis, in 2002, and entered it at GT 37, which the club hosted in 2012. It's in storage right now, waiting for me to install an oil pump because the oil pressure is getting a little low.

