

English MGB Restor

In 1971 I was based in central Europe and after obtaining my driving licence I started looking for a car, but not any car. My dream was an MGB. I looked at a GT and a Roadster but due to their high price and rusty condition my father, a very sensible man, had the last word. "You are going to buy a Mini". So my first car was a 1968 Mini, but the MGB dream remained alive for 34 years.

I now live in Portugal and all the right conditions (my wife Olga agreed and I had enough money for the project) were present to realize my original MGB project. The first step was to become MGOC member and then I started looking for a good condition and reasonable price MGB.

In November 2005 the choice was made with the help of the MGOC advice and magazine; a White 1973 MGB was located in Guildford, Surrey. All the necessary arrangements were agreed with the previous owner and car was checked over mechanically at



MG after arriving back in Spain



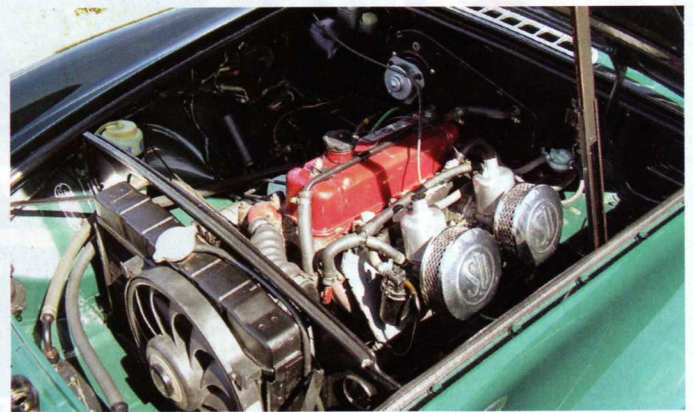
The shell stripped and resprayed



The hardtop under restoration



The shell stripped and resprayed



The refurbished engine bay

the specialist MG Garage Surrey, Sports and Classics.

On the 1st December 2005 my wife and I set off from Lisbon by plane to Heathrow and then we spent three days in London. At the end of the third day we travelled to Guilford by train and finally met up with the 1973 MGB.

There it was, the 32-year-old white "lady", in relatively good condition although in need of a full restoration. The owner Mr. Andy Davey and his wife kindly invited us to join them for a meal as if we were part of the family. After a road test the journey to Portugal started and we set off in the direction of the Portsmouth ferry. Everything went as planned, but it was a very hard trip due to the winter weather, it was cold and wet with strong winds all the way from Cherbourg to Portuguese border. We crossed the channel as planned (Portsmouth Saturday 21:30) got four hour's sleep on the ferry and reached Bayonne Sunday 20:00 (Spanish border) under heavy rain. We slept at Bayonne and crossed Spain on

Monday, so we arrived home (centre Portugal sea side) Monday 22:00 after 2000 Km.

The MGB "went like a bullet" and we managed to average 70-80 mph. However, the collapsed and worn MG seats were annoying as was the loud exhaust. Of course we also had to put up with a lot of water inside the car (it reminded me of my sailing days).

I kept a regular check of all the oil and water levels and only needed to add half litre of oil. Although the fan belt was loose and noisy it kept going until we arrived at our final destination. About ten kilometres from home the car started to run on three cylinders at low rpm, the engine obviously didn't like Portuguese petrol (I had to fill with 95 Octane fuel + the lead additive). Once we were home Olga announced that she would never sit again in the MGB again thanks to back pain from the collapsed seats and the big headache that the noisy exhaust had given her.

Registration in Portugal, or the nightmare, was started immediately

ed in Portugal

Rogério Simoes



Top specification interior

after the MG's arrival. All the original documents were forwarded to Customs, so the car stood in my garage waiting for the Portuguese licence plates.

The registration process is so complicated that the even a highly educated owner was obliged to pay for an accredited agent to fill the papers and deal with all the bureaucracy involved which included the Customs, Ministry of Transport (DGV), National MoT and the CPAA (Portugal's national old car club). Any or all of those "authorities" including the agent were capable of delaying the process, just to show their importance or to create the optimum condition for stubbornness.

In September 2006 the process was basically at the start point, every one involved was waiting for the other's document and the agent appeared to be sleeping on the job. By this time I decided to fire the agent and started complaining officially to every participant in the administration process. This was the right approach because I had successfully passed two hurdles, in the form of technical inspections the MoT and CPAA in September 06.

After that I've spent about three hours per week writing letters, preparing documents, pushing the lazy bureaucracy, all this to obtain a simple registration for a 32 year old MGB.

However, eventually all my efforts were rewarded when the national registration document finally appeared in my mail-box on the 16th February 2007, only sixteen months after the process started.

In the meantime the MG restoration had started, while the car was shut away in my garage. The seats and interior were sent to the re-upholstery specialist, while the bonnet, doors and hardtop were at the painting shop. I took care of the minor mechanical repairs, dashboard, brakes, electrical and overall parts removal for sand blast cleaning, painting and dismantling.

The body painting, interior trim and leather seats were mounted in May and June 2007. I will not mention the hours spent in this project because I'm sure that all the readers of *Enjoying MG* can easily quantify it. Driving this fantastic MGB is the owner's only expected reward.

My best regards to all MG enthusiasts and MGOC members.

PS: I would be glad if the previous owners of MGB SPP695L could contact me to know more about the car's history details. Very special thanks to the following whose great contribution was essential for the restoration project: my wife Olga, the MGB's previous owner Andy Davey and family, Jeremy of "Surrey, Sports and Classics", Roger Parker: excellent technical advisor at MGOC, Mr. Mané: friend and painting specialist, Santana-Portugal, Mr. Claudino: re-upholstery, Toco-Portugal.



Rogério with the finished MGB with its hard won registration plates



Olga who gave the project her support