John Reimer - "whatever happened" to my Mk II?

Greetings South Australian Jaguar Drivers, from Sydney.

My name is John Reimer, and this is a ***"what ever happened to"*** request for information about a Chev engined MkII Jaguar that I sold to a fellow in Adelaide in early 1996.

The car was a 1963 Mk2 which had been a 3.8 manual overdrive, but which I bought in early 1995 as a rough engine swapped car. The best thing about the car/swap was the quiet exhaust, obviously fitted by a craftsman who knew exactly what he was doing.

Restoration/Upgrade

Over the course of a year, the car was straightened and resprayed by Gary Hopwood, who had taken a custom car to the USA where he won numerous trophies in the car show scene.

The interior was renewed in leather and factory materials generally by a chap whose name escapes me, but who did wonderful work.

The mechanicals, including tidying up of the engine mount/driveshaft geometry, were completed by Bob Davidson, who had worked with Emerson Fittipaldi in the USA.

The the output of the V8 engine was never measured on a dynamometer, but Bob thought the mildly tuned 350 cu in (5.7 Litre) was putting out around 300 horsepower.

It had lots of torque and felt very strong. I personally put countless hours into the car, including in particular the modification of the suspension so as to incorporate a complete XJ-S braking system and rack and pinion steering.

Fundamentally, this involved fitting the XJS stub axle carrier and associated components (four pot callipers and discs) to the Mk2 ball joints, and fitting the rack to the front subframe/crossmember utilising brackets machined up for me by a friend in the Jaguar Driver's Club. (Yes, some of the members still spoke to me).

I fitted the XJS pedal box with integral booster to where the battery had been, and moved the battery to the boot. I was deeply conscious of the limitations arising from the mixing of components in the front suspension.

I also completed the refurbishment of the woodwork, which came out exceptionally well, the tidying up of the wiring with emphasis on good earthing, the renewal of numerous connectors, and the fitting of various relays (of which I am a big fan).

I also attended to the replacement of the Turbo 400 auto with a Turbo 700, which of course had a 0.7 to one overdrive with a lock up converter.

I wired the lockup converter using the original overdrive switch on the dash, and it became a bit of a party trick to driving the car.

Just while I come to it, the car was fully "engineered" and registered in NSW with the engine swap. The engineer was actually quite taken with the car! It weighed 3,140lbs, which was a couple of hundred pounds lighter than the stock 3.8. Or even lighter still, depending on which figures one can find on line.

Adelaide Connection

Later in the year, I sought Bob Davidson's help to finalise the suspension but he had retired. This is where the Adelaide connection comes into play. My friend Geoff Stafford, who worked with K&A Engineering that built race cars, mainly Porsches, did fibreglass work on the cars, and assured me that his friends at K&A were the very best for the work I had in mind.

With my wife, I drove the car to Adelaide after Christmas, and the car did the mid-Summer trip easily. The only limit on cruising speed was the front suspension, the car suffering from significant bump steer, which I had to "drive around". (***Bump steer is the tendency of a wheel of a car to steer itself when one wheel hits a bump or rut)***. The work by K & A was absolutely outstanding. They really unleashed the potential of the car. It handled magnificently.

The brakes were the best I have ever experienced. The car accelerated like a powerful motorcycle. So, there you have it, a car which today would be termed a "restomod", a classic "sleeper".

It was in excellent condition, and standard looking apart from bonnet louvres, a bullet mirror on the driver's door, a radio aerial on the roof, and XJ6 Series Two wheels and hubcaps.

For better or worse, it also had a B and M Ratchet Shifter for smoother, more precise shifts. This was perfect for street racing, but clashed badly with the bowling club looks and general ambience of the car when not being used in anger.

I should say for completeness about this whole episode, that some very significant work was undertaken on the basis of a handshake, no paper, no bull, no consumer protection, just old school pride in workmanship and honesty. I could not speak too highly of all those who helped me with this amazing car, it brought out the best in all of them.

Offer Too Good To Refuse

I took a fellow named Peter Brown for a run in the car and he fell madly in love with it. He could not believe how well it went, and offered to buy it for any price I might care to name. For various reasons, I sold it to him for $30,000.

Sadly, Peter died in a motorcycle accident some weeks after he bought the Jaguar. I do not know what became of the car, but would like to think it went to someone who could appreciate it for what it was.

Does Anyone Know the Car?

My phone number is 0418 611 655, and my email address is *wheels_reimer@hotmail.com*

PS: On my return to Sydney, I bought a 1985 Porsche 928S. It was a pretty fair example, for which I paid $18,000. In all seriousness, the Porsche was an exceptional high-speed car, but under, say, 100mph, it felt slow compared to the Jaguar. Plus, my wife much preferred the Jaguar to ride in, and I sold the 928 after about six months.

I later owned a Daimler Vanden Plas, for some fifteen years.

John Reimer

Editor. Thank you for your Story John. If anyone has any information about this V8 MkII, please contact John and myself for a potential follow up story.

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