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MG

Robert Hawkins drops in on the day a rebuilt Californian Y-Tourer takes to the road

California Dreaming

MICK GREAVES IS A FAMILIAR FACE IN the concours world of MGs. He's restored a total of eight MGs to date and has recently turned his hobby of restoring cars into an occupation. You may recall Mick's MGA Deluxe featured on the front cover of *MG Enthusiast Magazine* back in July 1995.

The latest restoration project to roll out of the Greaves garage is a 1948 Ytype tourer. This rare example is one of only 640 made during the car's production life between 1948 and 1950. Most models were made for export although rumour has it that approximately 30 vehicles were made for the UK.

Mick's YT is Californian by origin, but was brought back to England last June. Its condition was typical of most Californian projects

- sound bodywork but dead mechanics.

Mick's import looked reasonably tidy on the outside with its black paintwork, but under the skin a seized engine and gearbox were only the start of things to come. Fortunately the previous owner hadn't done much damage and the owner before that had bought the car as new!

"I've got the original bill of sale," says Mick, "and it was in the same family for approximately twenty years. The car had initially been taken to bits and a little bit of work done on it. It had been laid up for about ten years!" Mick spent the next few months and a total of 950 hours stripping the YT down to a bare chassis, rebuilding everything in sight and then putting everything back together again. Luckily Mick is no stranger to Y-types. He's rebuilt a YB and is about to start work on a 1953 YB and a 1952 YA.

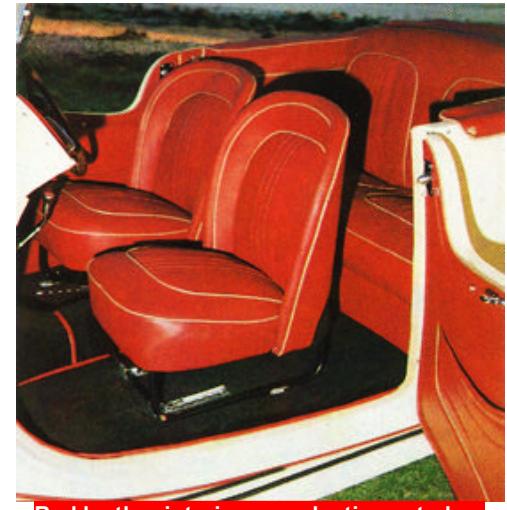


Immaculate restoration of California Y-Tourer could make the car the best in Europe.

"I didn't think it would take me that long," explains Mick concerning the amount of time he put into the YT. "The YB took me over 1,000 hours but there's



1250cc XPAG engine is both lively and responsive.



Red leather interior was plastic coated on arrival.

more work on the interior of a YB because there are four doors and all the winding mechanisms, head lining and sunroof."

Fortunately there were no major problems with the restoration. The twenty seven panels which make up the body came off easily, were hand stripped, painted in two pack ivory and fitted back together. The back axle still had plenty of life left in it.

The seized 1250cc XPAG engine needed a rebuild along with the gearbox. The drum brakes needed overhauling, a few bits were missing from the twin carburettors, but in brief, there were no major headaches.

Mick was fortunate to buy the car complete with hood and frame. The hood was a little moth eaten but the frame had survived. Unfortunately there were no side screens, but Mick had an answer.

A friend of mine had half a YT with side screens. He lent me them to make a pattern and I got some made up. The hood is double duck and made to fit. I've also put a half tonneau on it."

An attempt had been made to revive the interior of the YT when it was in California. "The interior had been re-covered in America in plastic, so I completely stripped it off and refurbished it in mulberry red leather with beige piping."

On the dashboard all the dials are present. These are similarly positioned on the TC and include a rev counter with a clock, speedo, ammeter and oil pressure.

On the day of visiting Mick and photographing his YT, the car had just received its registration plates. A trip to the MOT testing centre were the only miles on the clock since it had been rebuilt, so Mick took it easy on the road to let everything shake down properly. The brakes got a little hot as the shoes bedded in, but otherwise the YT showed no teething problems at all.

The 1250cc XPAG engine with its TC camshaft is quite lively. With only first gear to crash through, the gearbox is smooth on the move and the steering is responsive enough and direct - Mick wasn't having a hard time with the steering.

The YT's suspension is surprisingly luxurious. You can almost imagine a forties family packed into the packed into the car, complete with luggage. The springs and wishbones up front soak up any lumps and bumps in the road and the seven leaves on each side for the cart-horse style leaf springs give quite a bouncy ride at the back.

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This really is quite a high class family car of the forties and fifties. The engine is powerful, there's seating for four and boot space for their luggage, and to top it all if you get a puncture you don't need to mess about heaving a jack around to the correct corner of the car because they are already fixed to all the four corners! Simply wind up the corner for the punctured tyre and pop the wheel off.

However, the biggest luxury has got to be wind in your hair motoring for all the family. Open top motoring is more suited to California than cold and cloudy Britain, but fortunately the hood and side screens will keep the draft out for the remaining 364 days of the year when the sun doesn't shine.

Mick has certainly put a lot of time and effort into restoring this YT. With so few of these models made, the big question on everyone's lips is, 'how rare are these cars?' Well, Mick has delved into the YT Register to find that the UK only has seven known examples. Out of these he suspects that only one or two are in good condition.

It is probable that Mick's YT is the best in Britain. Mick states that he has restored it to its original condition and colour. If everything is correct, then surely we are looking at one of the cleanest in existence? **MG**

TECH SPEC LIST

Make and Model: MG YT

Year of Manufacture: 1948

Engine Size: 1250 XPAG with TC camshaft

Gearbox: 4 Speed

Brakes: Drums all-round

Wheels: 16 inch

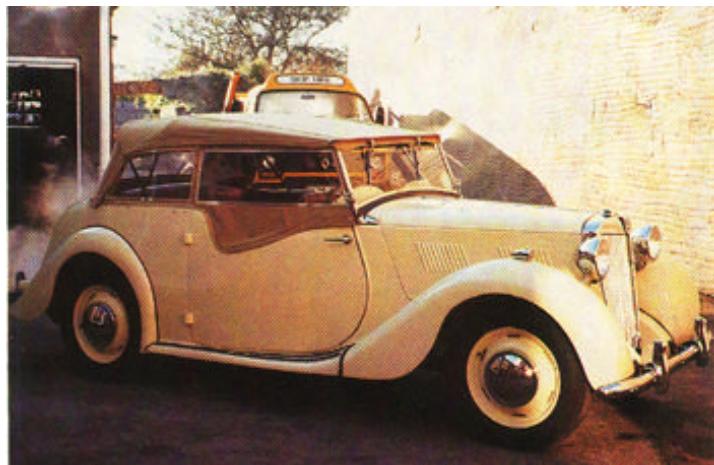
Carburettors: Twin set up

Front Suspension: Coils and wishbones

Rear Suspension: Leaf Springs



Back from California with sound body but dead mechanics.

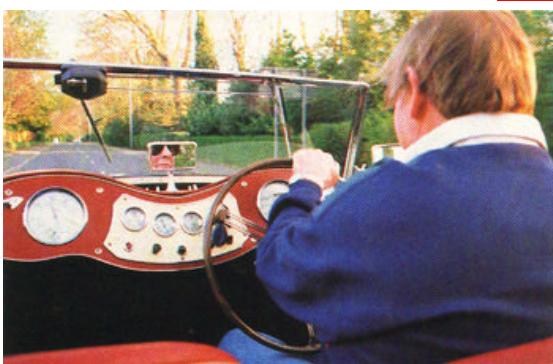


YT takes to the road for the first time after 950-hour rebuild.

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Not quite the Golden Gate but as the evening sun dips low the Y-Tourer is captured in perfect setting with the Humber Bridge providing an ideal backdrop.



Mick Greaves behind the wheel enjoying the fruits of his labour.



Not quite the Golden Gate but as the evening sun dips low the Y-Tourer is captured in perfect setting with the Humber Bridge providing an ideal backdrop.



Shades of California as the Y-Tourer basks in the evening sun.