

**THIS ENTHUSIAST REMEMBERS THE DATE OF HIS BIRTH
BY THE YEAR OF HIS MG**



I'm not certain if it's a matter of vanity or forgetfulness. But it seems as one grows older, they sometimes forget their age.

Fortunately for Charlie Collins, he only has to remember the year of his very special MG YA, when asked his age. The stunning sports sedan was constructed in 1950, the same year he was born.

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And that's one of the reasons this car is so special him. "I was interested in buying a car from my birth year, and it needed to be an MG. The fact that I did all the work on this car makes it very special for me."

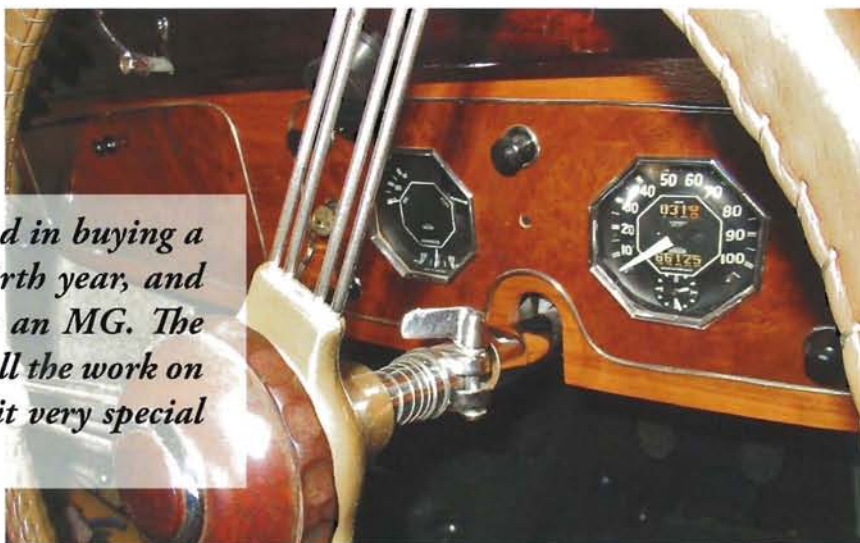
He and his wife, Brenda, discovered MGs in the 1970s while living in Fort Smith, AK. "There was an MG dealership not far from where we lived. One day, we decided to test drive an MGB roadster."

"That's when the bug bit us," he recalled. "We really couldn't afford another vehicle at the time, so we had to pass. But, we've made up for it since then."

Today, the couple is the proud owner of five MGs -- an Old English White 1958 MGA 1500, a Tartan Red 1961 MGA 1600, a British Racing Green 1970 MGB GT, a Tahiti Blue 1972 MGB roadster and the two-tone Green 1950 MG YA.

Charlie Collins said he acquired the YA mostly out of curiosity. "I had considered Magnettes, but never connected with one. In the early 1990s, we attended an MG meeting at Silverstone in the UK. That's where I first saw a Y-type in the flesh. At that time, I thought how cool they were."

And so the search began. "I had come



close to buying a 1950 YA that was being marketed in the Orlando area. I was still traveling like crazy with my job then and I could never make things work out. And we were in the process of buying a new house."

Fast forward to retirement and Charlie Collins learned about a YA for sale in the Fayetteville, AR area. "I live in Little Rock, AR, so the logistics were very simple. Plus, I knew the person selling the car."

Collins bought the car, which was driveable, but had its fair share of challenges.

There was rust in the doors, the interior was worn, the steering wheel was crumbling and the wooden dash was cracked and peeling.

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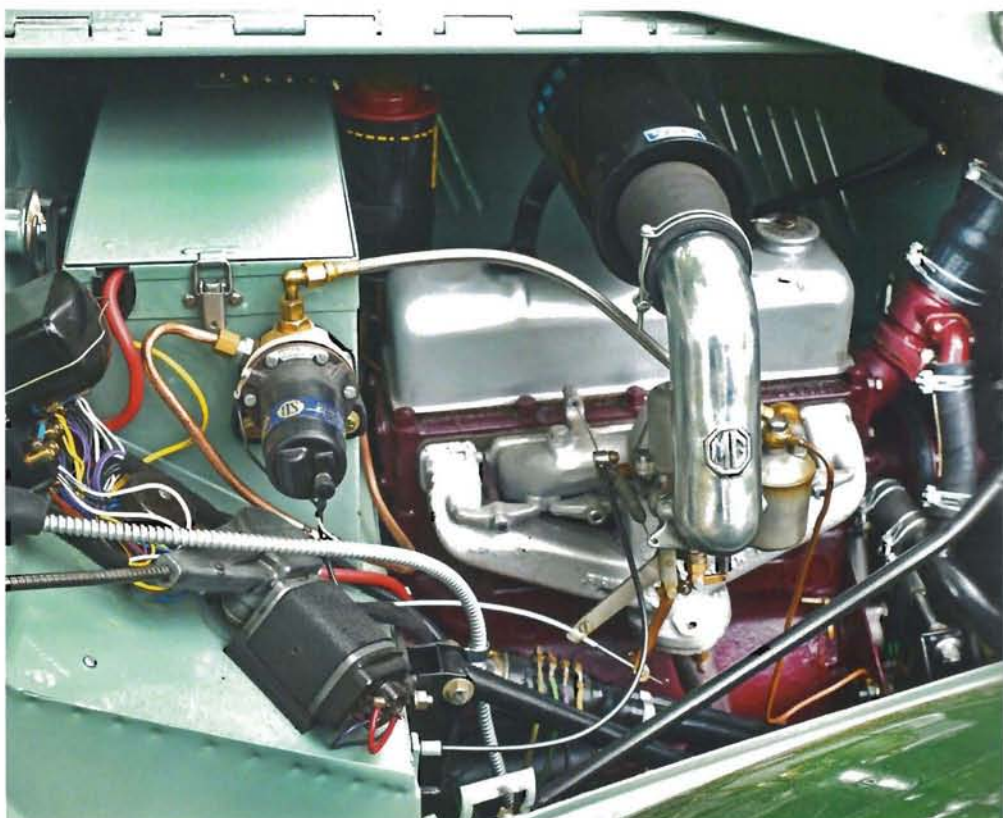
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After gutting the interior, he used his car lift to separate the body from the frame, which allowed him to concentrate on the frame.

"Overall the frame was fairly solid, but I did have to weld some metal plates in a couple areas. The frame and all associated parts were taken to a local specialty shop where they were sandblasted and powder coated.

The engine and transmission were in good order, but brake and clutch components needed attention. Shock absorbers were repaired and coil springs were replaced.

"I reassembled the chassis after adding a new Panhard bar, restored fuel tank and new stainless steel exhaust system."



A number of body panels were cut out and replaced with new metal welded into place. Some were just replaced. Eventually, the car was sealed with epoxy primer and painted.

After reviewing the original paperwork for the YA, Collins decided to duplicate, as much as possible, the two-tone colors, which he knows as "Duo Green".

"The light green is actually named Elizabeth Grey and the darker green is a version of British Racing Green. It is a basecoat, clearcoat paint, which was ultimately sanded and buffed. I did all the work in my shop."

As for the interior, new carpeting was installed and a number of pieces of brightwork were rechromed. The front and rear seats were restored, the dash was replaced and gauges were restored.

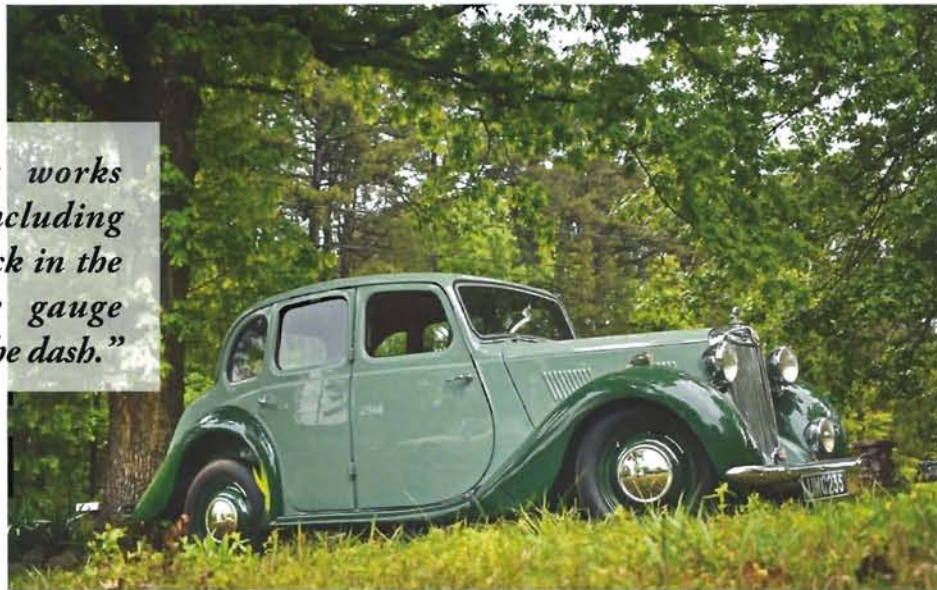
The headliner was replaced and the sunroof was repaired and resealed. The front glass was replaced and all window seals, including those on the door, were replaced. The wood trim that surrounds most of the glass and sun roof was restored and refinished.

The YA's headlamps and driving light were restored, and rear taillights were replaced. The wiring harness was rewired to accommodate two brakelights and two taillights. A third brakelight was added and new front and rear bumpers were installed.

Charlie Collins is thrilled with the outcome of this 1950 MG YA. "Everything works like new, including the small clock in the speedometer gauge mounted in the dash." ○

WORDS: LARRY SANATA
PHOTOS: CHARLIE COLLINS

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