

# A Cat On The Prowl - Jason Len's 1964 Jaguar E-Type



Jason Len and XKs Unlimited have been involved in racing vintage sports car long before they were vintage! Len started out his racing career as many did in the early days, by building and racing an HP Austin-Healey Bug-Eye Sprite eventually moving up the classes with an AP Corvette and finally a CP 1964 Jaguar E-Type in the 1970s. By the mid '80s, it was clear time and costs would prevent any further SCCA racing, beside the competitive SCCA cars were becoming so modified that they were hardly production cars anymore. Thus it was time to switch to vintage racing. While Len enjoys racing, he always thought the real interest was in the eclectic British cars he loved so much.

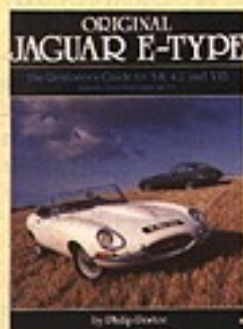
"The first step to making an ex-SCCA racer vintage legal was to remove the massive flairs, 10" wide Mini-lites, dry sump oiling system, crank fired ignition, and other modifications that any vintage racing group would frown upon," Len started.

"The next step of course is to make all the modifications you can possibly get away with within the vintage racing spirit. First the bonnet, doors, and rear fenders were replaced with aluminum material in order to save a good 300 lbs. off the car. Then, nice period factory light weight style wheels and rear fenders were installed to give the car an authentic European look. Next, good competition shocks, springs, sway bars, and polyurethane bushings were installed along with other subtle modifications to make the suspension work as well as an E-Type can. In the class the car runs in normally, it goes against big bore V-8s and it must be able to handle and stop, because it will never legally out power them," Len continued.

"Originally the car was raced with a 3.8 liter Jaguar motor that is the preferred power plant due to its smoothness and willingness to rev, but unfortunately vintage racing escalates in technology like all other motor sports and after a while the 3.8 was just not doing it. So this

## E-Type Reading

There are numerous Jaguar XKE books available. Here are several recent books on the XKE from Classic Motorbooks 1-800-826-6600.



**Original Jaguar E-Type - The Restorers Guide to 3.8, 4.2 and V12 - Roadster, Fixed Head Coupe and 2+2** by Philip Porter. Hardcover, 9 1/2" x 12", 96 pages 50 color photos ISBN 1 870979-12-5. This edition published by

MBI. Retail \$34.95. If you own one you will enjoy and use this book for upkeep and restoration. If you don't own one this will be a guide to purchase one or just enjoy the magnificence of the XKE in all its models.

**Jaguar E-Type - A Celebration of the World's Favorite '60s Icon** by Nigel Thorley. Hardcover 9 3/4" x 9 3/4", 160 pages, 250 color & B/W photos. ISBN 1-85960-813-2



Published by Haynes Publishing, Retail 434.95. The founder of the Jaguar Enthusiasts Club take the reader on a tour of the XKE world from its inception thru the astonishing reception, the production years and models and right thru racing the lightweight E-Type. A quick and fascinating review of the XKE. We are still waiting for the definitive book on the XKE in America including its racing history.

year we are converting it to a 4.2 motor. One thing about racing a Jaguar is that there is not nearly the aftermarket parts available as say a small block Chevy or Porsche 911, so most of the heavy duty parts we use, we develop ourselves. If they work, they wind up in our catalog, if they don't they become an expense for the R&D department! Over the years, we have developed billet cams, heavy duty oiling systems, big valve conversions, special lifters, competition dampers, custom exhaust headers, racing studs and hardware, and many other details to improve the Jaguar performance and reliability."



"I have owned the car since the 1970s and it's racing success has varied from year to year. In SCCA, I raced the Jaguar because that was my passion, not because it was terribly competitive in CP," Len says.

When it was converted to a vintage racer, Len raced it for about five years with several class wins, then a customer of his had to have the car and offered more than Len could refuse so the car went to Japan for about five years where it successfully raced in vintage races in Japan, Hong Kong and Indonesia. While the car was racing in Japan, Len built an XK120 which he raced very successfully, finishing up with a CP class championship in 1996. Then the XKs Unlimited customer in Japan now had to have that car so it was sold him and the E-Type came back in part trade much to Len's enjoyment. When it returned from Japan, XKs Unlimited gave it a full rebuild and started running it again. It has successfully run all over the West coast with its best finish being a USSRC Seniors Tour win two years ago at Laguna Seca against Corvettes and Cobras.

Len is currently building a new 4.2 motor that should be the most powerful yet and looks forward to a full season with the car starting in early 2005.

### Jaguar E-Type Development

The E-Type became to be as most sports cars of the day - a race car development program. It evolved from the D-Type and XKSS race cars. Prototypes were built and tested, however, circumstances in the racing world changed and the project gradually became a road car. The prototypes - the E1A & E2A were raced on a very limited basis. One major milestone achieved during the development of the E-Type was the independent rear suspension, an incredible feature of the later released production car.

The Jaguar E-Type was officially introduced in March 1961 in Geneva, Switzerland. There was an immediate enthusiastic reaction to the sensuous styling, which holds up even today.

The mechanical specs blew everyone away, especially in 1961! They included: a double overhead cam engine, fully independent rear suspension and four wheel disc brakes - inboard at the rear, usually only found only on race cars. The Jaguar E-Type was an advanced automobile from its beginnings. The price was around \$5,595 for the roadster and made the E-Type an exceptional bargain; the crude but powerful Corvette cost less, while similar cars from Aston Martin and Ferrari were considerably more. The E-Type was an automotive classic at birth.



### Jaguar Resources

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Primary Jaguar enthusiasts organization in

the US/Canada. 50 local clubs provide social

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Jaguar Journal.

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Jason with the E-Type in its original livery in 1983.



Jason with the E-Type in its current form.

