

## MGBGTV8 conversion profile – built and owned by Mike Howlett



*Interior includes grey upholstery with leather facings, navy carpets, a burr elm veneered dash and white faced instruments from Speedy Cables*

Inspired by the V8 Roadster conversion built by Geoff King, I wanted a V8 GT that was tax exempt, and ended up building one from a rusted out wreck. Importantly, the car had not had any poor restorations done so I didn't have someone else's mistakes to overcome. I did all the work myself except for the final painting.

New panels used included front and rear wings, complete sills and floors, boot floor, valences, doors and an RV8 bonnet. The bulkheads were cut back and re-welded, the radiator brackets moved forward, engine mountings changed, gearbox cross-member altered and the tunnel height was raised.

The interior includes grey upholstery with leather facings, navy carpets, a burr elm veneered dash from Classical Dash and white faced instruments from Speedy Cables.

The 3.9 litre engine came from a 1991 Range Rover and was bought on eBay. Real Steel rebored, reground and balanced the components, and supplied a Viper "Cyclone" camshaft. Peter Burgess supplied "Econotune" cylinder heads. The standard contact-less distributor is retained with an external ignition amplifier. The Hotwire fuel injection is as standard except for an "Optimax" chip in the ECU. Fuel is pumped by a low pressure Pierburg pump from the tank to a 1 litre swirl pot, and from there by a high pressure Bosch pump to the fuel rail. Fuel returns from the engine to the swirl pot which overflows back to the tank. The pot and pumps are in the righthand battery bin. A single 12v battery occupies the lefthand bin and has proved more than adequate, even in winter.

The exhaust is a Clive Wheatley system using RV8-style headers and a straight through design with a single tail pipe. A local exhaust specialist has fitted a slim centre silencer to reduce the sound a little.



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A standard Range Rover clutch drives an R380 5-speed gearbox, overhauled by TM Transmissions. A custom drive shaft connects to a Ford Granada differential with a 3.14:1 ratio. Shortened Ford Sierra driveshafts take the drive to the wheels.

Suspension front and rear is from Hoyle Engineering. The rear is fully independent with coil-over-shock units controlling upper and lower wishbones with Hoyle's design of aluminium hub carriers, the whole assembly being mounted in a frame that bolts up using the existing mounting places on the MGB shell. The front suspension also uses coil-over-shock units with Hoyle's tubular upper and lower wishbones. A ¾ inch antiroll bar is moved forward to clear the engine front pulley. Both front and rear suspensions are adjustable for camber.

Brakes use the late model MGB dual circuit master cylinder with in-line servo. At the front wheels are Hoyle supplied ventilated discs with 4-pot callipers, and at the back standard Sierra rear discs with integral handbrake mechanism. Silicon brake

fluid has been used from day one without problem. Wheels are 6 x 15 inch alloy wearing 195/60 x 15 tyres.

Extras fitted include Audiovox cruise control, the switch panel being mounted on the extreme right of the dashboard, where the overdrive control would be on a 1969 car. Recently I installed an EZ power steering system which makes the car much easier to use.

The car is a pleasure to use and can work through traffic without fuss. The twin fans have never let the car get too hot, even in really warm weather. It is astonishingly quick to accelerate when asked, and has so much torque that gear changing can be minimised. This is just as well as the change is not slick and some of the ratios are not ideal, particularly first and second, which are too low in my opinion. Once the engine has warmed up, I seldom use first gear except on hill starts. Fuel consumption averages about 26 – 28 mpg, and it runs happily on standard supermarket unleaded.



**The V8 Roadster built by Geoff King** was the inspiration for my MGBGTV8 conversion. Both conversions have the Hoyle front and rear IRS upgrades which transform the handling of the car.

Mike Howlett