



Spax settings on an RV8

Shortly after bespoke Spax Krypton replacement shock absorbers were made available by Clive Wheatley in late 2007, Rob Collier reported his experience with fitting them and the pleasure driving an RV8 with much better handling and ride. In a V8BB thread in July 2012, Angus Munro reported his experience with softer settings on his replacement Spax shockers. It proved an interesting topic as Angus relates.

A little while ago I had John Cumming as a passenger in my RV8 and he asked me what setting I had adjusted my front Spax shock absorbers to. In fact I had them set to 12, which is what conventional wisdom seemed to indicate to be normal: **12 to 15** is what many people use I believe. John advised me to reset the Spax units to **3**, yes THREE! - and I have to tell you that I was very sceptical about this. With the Hoyle IRS upgrade on my car I only have the replacement Spax shock absorbers on the front and the banging and crashing from the front, combined with a certain amount of pattering on bumpy roads, was what I thought to be normal for an RV8.

Having just returned from a walking trip in the Yorkshire Dales, with one day touring in the car, I am absolutely astonished at the difference in the ride quality. No more banging about or pattering over the rough lanes, but now a much quieter car that has become a pleasure to drive through the country lanes or along the faster roads that we experienced in Yorkshire and on the way there and back to Norfolk. The point of this note is to try to persuade those of you with the replacement Spax units on your car to try a very much lower setting if you are using **12 to 15**. Try them at **3**. I wanted to work my way down in even increments to see what the incremental difference would achieve, but John was quite adamant . . . to the point that he adjusted the settings to three for me.

Thank you John for the good advice and apologies for my being so sceptical.

Hopefully John will post to indicate what your rear Spax settings should be.

Simon Austin, an RV8 enthusiast in Canada, commented "I installed the Spax shockers on #590 last year, I set them to 7. Did the trip to Reno, NV and found the ride smooth enough. I should have experimented with settings but getting under the car for adjustments can be a challenge. I've since reset the rears to **5** for experimenting but haven't driven the car enough to notice a difference. Good information from Angus and John regarding setting 3. Will have to try that one.

Victor Smith recalled the earlier RV8NOTE278 from Rob Collier with his encouraging feedback on fitting a set of the new front Spax shock absorbers to his RV8 and a few days later some rear Spax too. His comments then on the settings he had used were "the ride is very much improved and the handling much tauter. There is a dip on an A road near to me and I no longer take off from the seat and bang my head on the hood rails! I have adjusted the front shocks to **7** and the rear to **9** and this gives a taut ride without being 'jiggly' at low speeds. I may experiment with the settings as the rears can be adjusted with a knurled knob by simply reaching around the rear tyre, whilst the front can be adjusted with a screwdriver when full lock is applied." www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE278.htm

Hugh Boddington added a note on the thread saying "Angus - you have changed my life! I have re-set my Spax to **3** front and **6** rear. The ride has been transformed and far more comfortable for normal use - an even greater pleasure to drive."

Robert Crowson has an RV8 with a Hoyle IRS upgrade like Angus and wanted to know what settings he had for the Gaz rear shock absorbers. Angus replied that they were set to eight and provided a very good ride at that setting. But since selecting that setting some time ago I have replaced the rear springs from the original 300lb/in to 350lb/in. It was the spring change that made the most dramatic change to the car: gone now is the tail dipping and general soggy feeling on acceleration and corners. The ride is now simply superb but, of course, we are no longer comparing apples with apples as we have different spring rates.

Rob Collier added "whilst I no longer have my RV8, my car had Clive Wheatley polyurethane bump stops and new front springs, but I found that my RV8 had very

little (about 15mm) suspension travel before the bump stops 'bottomed out'. I found that too soft a setting on the front Spax shocks actually gave a worse ride as the suspension reached the end of its travel and bottomed out. So 7F and 9R worked fine for me." Rob later added that "perhaps I should have mentioned that my car also had 17" split rim wheels with correspondingly lower profile tyres. My car drove very well indeed with 7F 9R, but of course the beauty of the Spax shocks is that they can be adjusted to personal preference!"

Bespoke Spax replacement shock absorbers for the RV8

The replacement Spax shock absorbers available from Clive Wheatley are a bespoke set of front and back units developed specifically for the RV8. They are the result of the skilful development work and thorough testing carried out by Spax in late 2007 which was commissioned and funded by Clive who also provided an RV8 for Spax to work on for a number of weeks. The result an even better replacement than the earlier upgraded Konis - in fact a complete and balanced set of front and rear shock absorbers created especially for the RV8 which has further improved the ride and handling of the RV8.

The managing director of Spax, Franck Michaux, was delighted with his bespoke units saying "we were commissioned by Clive Wheatley to design and develop dampers specifically for the RV8 to do a specific job - improve the ride quality at low speeds and improve the handling throughout the speed range. This involved design, prototype builds, testing, etc. After many thousands of pounds worth of costs, the bespoke finished product was launched a few weeks ago. Both Clive Wheatley and I drove the donor car before (on Konis) and after (on Spax) and I was more than happy to sign the dampers off. I believe the improvements are significant. In my opinion, it is a transformed car on SPAX that is safer and much more enjoyable to drive. There has been some feedback elsewhere on this forum to confirm the improvements. The rear dampers are valved specifically for the car and exhibit quite different and superior characteristics to the standard KSX range that we offer. The rears also have a bush that was specifically chosen to improve low speed compliance and reduce noise. There are also spacers included that ensure exact fit - not available on the KSX range. The front dampers are entirely bespoke in both construction and damping characteristics and there is therefore no KSX size equivalent."