

What does a typical page look like in the new buying guide?

So you want to buy an MG RV8?



Two early development cars known as DEV2 and DEV3 prepared at the BMH body plant, then at Faringdon in Oxfordshire, before the ADDER project was taken on by RSP (Photos: DEV2 Trevor Ripley and DEV3 Alan Torbett)



RV8 engine bay is packed but neat.



The cleverly fashioned bumpers in the body colour suit the flowing lines of the car – note the rear light cluster, another item that was different to the part on the earlier V8 model. (Photos: Bill Wood)

axle tramp. Attractive 15 inch alloy spoked wheels were fitted with wider and lower profile 205/65 tyres than had been seen on the earlier V8 model. Under the bonnet the fuel injected V8 engine had stainless steel exhausts passing through large reinforced holes in the inner wing panels leading to twin catalytic converters

under the floor panels. The inherent strength of the MGB shell is good and tests with those cut-outs were reassuring.

The styling changes improved the Classic MGB lines as the RV8 has more flowing curves and subtly reprofiled wings to accommodate the larger wheels and tyres. The bonnet power bulge for the engine ancillaries is well proportioned. The front end is particularly successful with cleverly fashioned bumpers which suit the lines of the car as they look like part of the car rather than simply planted on. The grille is neat with an absence of chrome. The raked back headlamp units are in reinforced plastic and provide a neat front end to the wings and in the process simplified the wing assembly workload too.

Internally the RV8 cockpit exudes luxury with hand crafted leather upholstery and an elm burr veneer dashboard, door trims and cappings. The doors were tidied up with the removal of the quarter lights seen on the MGB and below the doors, the moulded sill sections accentuated the rounded, more flowing style of the bodywork. The range of "solid" or "pearlescent" colours for the RV8 offered as a choice was a great deal more tasteful than those offered by BL for the original V8 in the 1970s when BL had a "taste bypass". Some 64% of RV8s were finished in Woodcote Green, most destined for the Japanese market.

The official debut of the RV8 was on press day at the Birmingham Motor Show in October 1992 although photos and an advance brochure had been released earlier in June that year to tease

the market. The RV8 on display was in Le Mans Green, one of the pearlescent paint finishes, and it received a warm welcome from the many visitors who thronged around the Rover stand. It was a successful statement for the revival of the marque – an open top MG with classic sports car looks is back!

The press reaction to the RV8 was one of puzzlement and although Rover had made a point of emphasizing the car was not intended to compete with more modern sports cars, the reviews tried to compare the RV8 with the modern V8 powered TVR Chimera. The conclusion was if you were not nostalgic for a limited edition sports car with an MG name, then the TVR was the better buy. Eric Dymock first tested the RV8 for the Sunday Times in May 1993 as a "relaunched national treasure". He concluded it "was in every way an MG" and clearly "Rover had carefully identified a target buyer, taken aim with the RV8 and scored a bullseye", but for anyone wanting a modern day sports car it would score a wide miss! In June 1993 Autocar and Motor were impressed with the quality and enthused over the engine but not the performance, concluding "to us the RV8 is an anachronism, albeit a strangely likeable one!"

Reflecting on the RV8 project during a talk to V8 enthusiasts in 2003, David Bishop and John Yea related what had inspired the development team to do what was really an extraordinarily low budget project - creating a modern classic sports car to keep the name of MG alive



www.buyinganmg.com www.mgcc.co.uk

So you want to buy an MGB or V8 or MG RV8? 15