

MG V8

By David Knowles

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David Knowles is one of the leading MG historians of his generation and with his latest book MG V8 he digs deep to deliver a rich and detailed account of the series of powerful MGs with V8 engines seen over the last four decades. Through further research he has uncovered extraordinary detail of how the various V8 powered models were conceived, developed and produced. But what makes the book so attractive is his ability to combine the variety of insights gained from his contacts with many people directly involved at the time with his detailed knowledge of the paper records that have survived. So often understanding the administrative factors and financial constraints within large corporate groups like BL or MG Rover, and indeed the corporate politics at play too, is a major part of assessing what was happening at the time which influenced the outcome. The author is well able to balance the uncertainties over individual accounts and records by reviewing issues from several angles, so the richness of the book is essentially the thoroughness and detail – it's as far from a cold research paper as you could imagine, but the insights the book reveals on MG V8 history are both interesting and authoritative.

His earlier book – MG V8 21 Years On - published in 1994 included the launch of the RV8. His new book reviews the MGBGTV8 model in considerable detail including the earliest recorded MGB Buick V8 conversion in Australia in 1967 (featured in a Safety Fast! article in December 2012) and the Costello MGBV8 conversions that preceded the launch of the factory model. David then has a major section (over a third of the book) with a detailed and authoritative account of the successful RV8 pre-development project which kept the MG name alive in the bleak 1990s. He adds to the fascinating story revealed in first-hand accounts given by David Bishop and John Yea in their presentation made to fellow V8 enthusiasts in 2003.

The final sections of the new book cover what is probably the most remarkable and exotic diversion in MG history – the creation of two Ford V8 powered models launched in 2002. The MG260ZT saloon and ZTT estate models together with the MGSV were an extraordinary indulgence by the consortium formed to rescue MG Rover following the Rover Group collapse in 2000. That consortium subsequently failed in 2005. David's detailed and well-illustrated account of those extraordinary MGV8 models, a legacy of the Phoenix

Powerhouse, is essential reading which brings the MG V8 story up to date.

The detailed six page index is a particularly welcome feature making reference to key topics and personalities convenient. Recently published, the book is a good read from cover to cover and well-illustrated with over 400 colour photographs. It is also a book which has detailed information and tables on notable cars, their chassis numbers, specifications and colour charts which will be a continuing source of reference material.

The book is available now from the publisher Crowood Press – see their website.

www.crowood.com/details.asp?isbn=9781847974518&t=MG-V8

