

Mike Gilchrist
1981 Triumph TR7
Randpark Ridge, North Western area of Johannesburg.

I bought the car during the summer of 2001 from John Dobbins after searching for any type of sports car, as long as it was a drop head, for the sole intention of using it as a daily driver. He had the car stashed away under a carport out of view amongst a collection of classics. The car was essentially not for sale but we came to an agreement and what really clinched the deal was his insistence that I should "join the club". The car gave good service; comfortable and easy to use in 'press-on driving' around Johannesburg and I estimate that I easily did 80 000km before the engine suffered trouble in the overhead cam area of the engine. In hindsight, perhaps I should have paid early attention to that ticking sound that would go away after travelling two kilometres.

The only modifications I can think of was the fitment of an electric cooling fan for traffic jams and a replacement air dam beneath the front bumper which quite frankly looks better and not subject to damage.

Rather than fix the old engine which might have clocked up big mileage in the twenty odd years before my time, I decided to have a Lexus 4.0 V8 engine and auto gearbox installed. Upgrades include uprated front suspension and dampers, 15 inch Superlite rims to take larger brakes (and improve gearing for economy), exhaust system and a larger brake booster. A new and uprated radiator/oil cooler, high-pressure fuel pump/filter and the battery relocated to the back completed the modifications. Upon completion, I prayed for lower petrol prices.

First car after a string of motor bikes was an Austin Cooper 997cc, then a MK1 Triumph 2000, Alfa Romeo, Anglia, Alfa Guilia 1600 Super, MGA, MG Magnette, an orange Renault!!!, a few Peugeots, and an MGB GT (my son's). Besides numerous Yamaha and Suzuki off-road bikes, and a Honda 750K, of interest would be the ownership of two Bridgestone road bikes: a 175cc and then a 350GTR. The 350 could move, holding off 750's. I regret selling some of the above as some of them have gained value. They were all sold for a good reason at the time. I do regret, however, selling a cute little Honda Monkey bike. Its diminutive size would never become an issue with subsequent house moves.



