

Members Story - Hugh Guthrie

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Why a classic Jag now, and particularly my lovely blue 1998 XK-8 convertible?

I've always been a classic car nut, and October this year saw me turn 70, and I wanted a really good present to celebrate this landmark birthday.

In the past I had been a Riley man, owning both 1.5 and 2.5 litre models. I have always loved car clubs too, and was a long-time member of the Riley Club in both Melbourne and Adelaide. The last Riley, a concourse winning 1951 2.5, went to help us start a business.

I longed to replace it with something else that was a bit more modern and functional.

I have fond memories of Jags. My Godfather had a 3.8 Mark II as a company car and two best friends' parents owned a Mark VII and IX respectively, the latter chauffeur driven!

So, what to get to celebrate my 70th? I started with a list that included various Jag models, an MG RV8, a Morgan of some kind, several types of older Porsche or a 1980s Mercedes 350 or 450SL. It had to be a sports car and preferably a drop top as I have always hankered for one.

I found a nice Merc 450SL, but my wife thought it was too much of an old man's car, so that quickly dropped off the list. I kept coming back to Jags. XK-Es, and XK 120s, 40s or 50s were well out of the price range, so I settled on trying to find a Ford-era XK-8 and the search began.

My decision was helped by a great wrap from Jeremy Clarkson in 1996 when the model was first released and other good vibes from Google searches.

The hunt continued via Carsales.com and ended in Melbourne where

I purchased a low km car from Lou Guthry Motors. The good thing was that it had several of the model's known problems ironed out before I bought it. Lou and Nick Guthry were great to deal with too.

I have now had it for a few months and it's all I wanted: a really good-looking and luxurious Gentleman's Grand Tourer with lots of boot space (for winery trips to the Barossa, Southern Vales and further afield).

It's very well equipped for its era, and it should be given its cost when it was new. Mine even still has its inbuilt phone. It drives and cruises beautifully with all the power I need at my age. An XK-R would have been too OTT.

Hugh Guthrie

