

Along with “rock and roll,” our generation grew up with cars. Did you have an *American Graffiti* youth in the suburbs, or wish you had? Join our discussion of “sports cars” of our youth (and today). What is a “sports car?” What makes a “car guy?” Do you like both Detroit Iron “muscle cars” and zippy little foreign cars? What do you drive today?

As Ced Kam recounted in our class newsletters, he was born a “car guy.” He admits to becoming addicted to LBCs (“Little British Cars”) as a toddler in Honolulu, when he was given rides in a Hillman Minx convertible by the newspaper reporter who was dating and later married his closest cousin. (Ced’s very English first name may have something to do with his love of things British.) You may remember Ced’s light blue MG 1100 Sports Sedan (with its “proud, defiant, staunch British grille”), one of two MG 1100s and a Volvo P1800 parked behind the DKE house, along with an old black Mercedes sedan and a Cadillac hearse. Of course, the MG (with Lucus “Prince of Darkness” electrics and SU “carburettors” and fuel pump) broke down regularly on his way from Hanover to Wellesley to see Betsy (to whom he was married for 50 years).

Just before graduation, the MG 1100 was traded in for a reliable, yellow 1968 Chevrolet Camaro convertible, 327 small block V8 with 4 on the floor. (Ced still regrets trading it in for a Chevelle Laguna sedan while in the Army). Naturally, his LBC addiction resulted in the purchase of a 1970 MGB in 1982. Betsy’s only requirement was wire wheels.

Two years ago in June 2021, Ced drove the B from Boston to Atlantic City, NJ for the once every 5 years MG International Convention. Unfortunately, the 350-mile trip down included a rainstorm. Water flowed around and under the brand-new fabric “hood” (“top” to us Americans, which, by the way, did not leak). He and the cassette radio which he installed to replace the original 8-track player were soaked. The radio died. Best Buy replaced it with a new Bluetooth radio with free installation. The young technician appreciated being guided on how to disassemble the “fascia.”

In the meantime, MG and the entire British auto industry died in 1980. Ced enjoyed non-LBCs for daily commuting. He couldn’t afford the BMW 2002tii that made the company’s reputation among American sports car aficionados, but he loved his 1984 VW Rabbit GTI and 1988 Honda Prelude.

In August 2018, a year after Betsy announced that the MGB was just too noisy, too hot, and too uncomfortable to ride in, Ced found the perfect, classic road trip car for retirement on Craigs List. It’s a BMW E46 convertible (with grandchildren-size rear seats), a 2002 model year 330Ci in like new condition, red with tan interior, just as Betsy specified. (According to the BMW service guys, it’s the last “real BMW.”)

As luck would have it, Ced’s new wife Sue feels the same as Betsy about both the MG and the BMW. Her late husband Bob was a car guy, whose pride and joy was a 1967 Chevelle SS 396. Sue and Ced just attended the last (sadly) BMW CCA O’Fest national convention in Rhode Island. Of course, it poured! The BMW does not leak.