

My Other Car Is....



....a 1965 Jaguar 3.8S. John F. Quilter in Eugene, Oregon, tells the story of another one of his fleet of stunning classic cars



One of my other cars is a 1965 Jaguar 3.8S saloon. It dates back some fifty-seven years in the family. After my father's good experiences with Morris Minors in the 1950s and 60s it came time to replace our

family station wagon, a 1960 Mercury Comet. By the time I was a senior in high school, I had become a consummate British car fellow, so I thought we needed another British car in the family. We road tested one of the very rare Vanden Plas MG Princess 1100s, of which only a very few were imported to the USA and they were badged as MGs. Being close to \$1000 more than the more common MG 1100 sport sedan and Americans not understanding miniature luxury, they did not sell well here. My minimalist father quite fancied this car after our road test, but my mother felt it was just a bit too small for a family car. So the hunt began for a larger British car. A very rare Humber Super Snipe estate was looked at, plus a Triumph 2000, but when a year-old Jaguar 3.8S appeared in the classified ads in the San Francisco newspaper we decided to check it out.



The owner was buried in car payments and his wife said, "Either that fancy car goes or I go." The owner was thus motivated to sell. My father, being used to Morris Minors, felt it was a bit lavish and high powered, but given that it had a manual gearbox with overdrive, disc wheels instead of the perceived troublesome wire wheels, and a special Blaupunkt AM/FM/Marine band radio, he condescended at the urging of my mother and me to the purchase of it at \$4500, a full 25% discount from new only a year and 13,000 miles earlier. So this became the quite special and elegant family car. Yes, its maintenance costs were more than the Morris, but it was (and still is) a very fine ride, exuding class.



My mother drove this car from 1966 to 1974, until her passing. At this point my father (who had come around and taken quite a liking to the car, naming it 'The Jewell') drove it, along with his Morris convertible, for the next

twenty-six years until the day before he passed at the age of ninety-three. I then became its owner and driver in 2000. Not that I wasn't the cleaner, polisher and servicer for its entire history with the family. After fifty-seven years of ownership, one becomes very familiar with every mechanical and operational aspect of the vehicle. It helped that after a three year stint as a Naval officer I was hired at the regional offices of what was then British Leyland as a warranty administrator in early 1975. We handled all the BL products that were US imports, including the earlier Austin Americas, the current Marinas, and of course Jaguars.



That employment gave me easy access to all the required parts from our regional warehouse, plus a shop lift for routine serving on weekends from time to time so the car never lacked for care. I have a BL Heritage Certificate for it, plus I have paperwork from all the years of service work on the vehicle, which included a few valve jobs, clutch jobs, power steering rebuild, steering rack retrofit, and (most recently at 168,000 miles) a very comprehensive engine overhaul, including the dynamo, starter, carburetters, water pump, clutch, brake booster etc. The price of all this at a very experienced shop was almost four times the purchase price! Well, it's written off to inflation. But it's also a family heirloom, and it deserved it. And I must stay it does drive like a new car today,



never ceasing to get admiring comments from bystanders. So it is driven sparingly and with care, and resides in a garage with an Austin America, two Morris Minors, an MGTD and a company purchased 1990 Jaguar XJ6.