

Lew McAllan's Sebring Barchetta

Back in 2012, I actually had another Bugeye project underway, but was sidetracked when I happened upon your Sebring Sprite site. I loved the look of the cars and decided that I needed one, but didn't want to modify my Bugeye. My Sebring started life as a late '68 Mk IV Sprite which I purchased in late 2012, for just \$1,000. The car was just 10 mins from where I was living at the time, in drivable condition (with recent engine rebuild). Couldn't resist a bargain. I immediately decided this was to be my Sebring fastback and went ahead and ordered two Sebring fronts and the fastback from Andrew at Archer's. Took a while to get them but they arrived in April 2013, which gave me plenty of time to strip off the square panels and sell off all Mk IV parts that were not to be used on the project. I decided to do the full change over to earlier Bugeye B panel and scuttle, with Bugeye doors and wheel arches fitted.



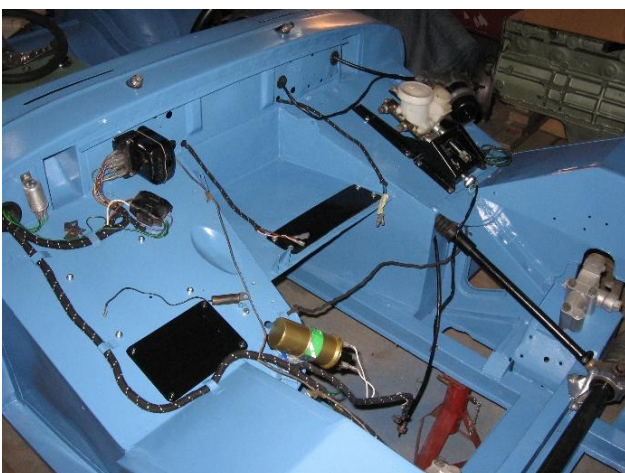
Fortunately, after sand blasting, the remainder of the body was in excellent "original" condition with no extra holes and virtually no rust in the floors and sills. I decided to change the steering column to Bugeye style, so the fascia panel on the left side also had to be changed to a UK spec Mk IV panel to accept the later dual line brake Master and Clutch Master from the later cars and the mounting points for the steering column.

It was around this time that I met Neil Anderson #49 through Andrew at Archer's Garage. Conveniently, Neil was located in Illinois and was looking to ship a Sebring front to the US. Neil shipped the front for his Sebring project in the same shipment from Archer's and was able to pick up the entire crated shipment in Chicago, which was a huge help to me. We have since become good friends and have shared progress on various Healey projects, both big and small.





The build proceeded with rear end installation, engine bay peripherals including new wiring harness, dashboard then engine and gearbox, followed by front suspension and exhaust. At this stage the car was running and driveable.





After many trial fittings of the Fastback body – which was not an easy fit - I decided it was too difficult to get a larger person in and out of the car, so I made a complete change in direction. I had seen on your site Andy Hide's very unique Green Frogeye with removable coupe hardtop and thought it looked rather cool with just the Brooklands aero screen.



I had also seen pictures of this beautiful Sebring "Barchetta" Frogeye and decided that I wanted to do something like these cars.

When I imported the two fronts, I had sold one to Jim Fletcher of Period Performance in Illinois. When I decide to change direction and advertised the Fastback, he snapped it up, and so now has the complete setup and is building a Sebring Fastback onto a Mk2 Sprite body as #80 in your Replica List.

So my Barchetta is now #107, the last car on the Replica List !

I obtained a Bugeye fiberglass rear end locally in the US from Dave Craddock at Preform Resources in Michigan. It actually fit pretty well once I had made the Mk 2 cutout to clear the roll bar. Finally satisfied with the fit, I used Sikaflex to bond the body to the chassis. So, now my Sebring had a Bugeye rear with a Mk 2 rear deck, and was a roadster once again.

Onto the final body work, as some scuttle and B pillar mods were needed for optimum door alignment and I decided to de-seam the fiberglass Bugeye rear to match the Sebring front. I used some of the cut-out rear deck and additional fiberglass to build up the rear cockpit surround to match the Mk 2 rear aluminum trim pieces.

I was fortunate to have my brother Mark here from Australia and he was a great help to finish the body work. We decided to paint the car in a portable carport / paint booth. He is a better painter than me, so I deferred to him !



Mark is also a Bugeye fan having raced a Cooper S Mini years ago and built 3 or 4 Bugeyes over the years and works fast, so the final assembly was completed in just 3 days ! We were trying to complete the car for the Sprite 60th Celebrations at Lake Elkhart in Wisconsin, but missed by one day due to a clutch issue, that required an engine pull to resolve – rather frustrating.

Have probably only driven 30 or 40 miles in it so far, but it is great to drive and certainly breezy !



My wife said we looked like Laurel and Hardy ! Not sure what she was hinting at



The final pics are the finished car, sporting the larger Mk IV boot badge for the Sebring front to indicate its heritage and later style black on black Mk IV seats, with stock looking Mk2 style dash with Mk3 gauges. So, it actually has a bit of every Sprite Mk incorporated into the finished Sebring. Also went with no wipers, so if I follow Andy Hide's removable Coupe top approach, I will possibly do the same with a single wiper setup.





I also used Spitfire style latches for the front bonnet which work nicely with the Sebring front cutouts with minor modification to the latch bracket. The car has a 1275 with street cam and a 45 mm DCOE Weber with Pacesetter exhaust manifold and Monza exhaust. So gets along nicely, all be it a little fresh in the face with cool Fall weather in October. Unfortunately, with Extended Antique rego plates, we can only drive from April through October, so "Bluey" is currently hibernating for Winter !



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