

Specification Summary:

Owner Philip Zamlynski

This 1960 Bugeye Sprite was converted to a Sebring Sprite because of a series of articles in the Healey Marque, June 1999—March 2000, by Jonathan Whitehouse-Bird.

Below are some of the car's conversion details. Also see Web Site: John Sprinzel's Austin-Healey Sebring Sprite, Select Replica List number 46, Phil Zamlynski Coupé, Silver metallic for restoration pics.

There are many to thank for their help getting all the bits together, technical help and especially to Archer's Garage, Brian and Andrew, Martin Ingall, John Sprinzel, and the many technical advice and guidance provided by shops in Illinois and Michigan and Moss Motors for their many helpful comments and parts.

Chassis: The stock body and chassis repairs were completed over a four month period. Pictures and some history of my cars chassis repairs are documented on the Sebring Sprite web site under replicas and indexed via my name.

Chassis repairs were done at West Michigan Painting in Allegan, Michigan. After panel replacements were completed, internal panels were treated with rust preservatives followed by a red oxide primer, black satin paint and undercoating. A 1 ½" style roll bar is added as a safety item and to stiffen the chassis. The 1960 Sebring Sprite fiberglass roof, front fenders-hood, and front windshield and rear glass are imported from Archer's Garage Limited in England. The front windshield and rear glass windows were fitted and installed by Glass Enterprises Auto Glass in Holland Michigan. The roof is bolted on and is removable if necessary.

Engine: A Sprite 1275 block has a clean up bore, 0.30 over and is about 1300cc with dish top pistons giving an 8.8 to one compression ratio, David Vizard method to modified twin 1½" S.U. carburetors are mounted via an original 1960 Sebring aluminum intake manifold from Archer's Garage. Carburetor air intake horns are custom machined and are inside an air box. The head is ported to Stage 3 specifications and the exhaust is long center branch system setup using Vizard's recommendations and made by owner. A Kent 266 Megadyne camshaft, lifters and springs are used; a modified stock distributor is fitted. All the engine work was done by Bill Trusdale at Apex Automotive Engineering, Inc. Bensenville, Illinois. A remote oil cooler, oil filter and air intake filter are also fitted. Engine crankcase venting collector and radiator overflow tank are also fitted.

Gearbox and Differential: A Datsun five speed is mated to the engine via a special 5-speed conversion kit by Rivergate Restoration Products in Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee. Speedometer gearing adapter is used so the original speedometer can be used. Trans to drive shaft yoke adapter is used. The differential is an original 4.22 ring and pinion.

Brakes: Front disk brakes were added and upgraded to larger Lotus/Spitfire 9 ½” with larger MGB calipers fitted. Austin Healey Mk4 Sprite upgraded drum brakes are at the rear. The brake pedal housing is upgraded to Mk4 with a 5/8” dual master circuit and stock hydraulic clutch master cylinder. All brake related bolts, springs and brake lines and parts are new.

Suspension: Steering is stock; suspension is upgraded all around with heavy duty springs provided by The Winner’s Circle in Ohio. All front end components bushings and bolts are new. Two degree offset camber bushings are used in the front suspension upper trunnions to improve handling. First generation Austin Healey Sprite Restyle 4 ½” wide steel wheels are fitted with Firestone 165 70RI/13 tires. A stock 5/8” front roll/sway bar is fitted. The steering wheel is padded and 14” diameter; it’s a quick release type, easy-on/off.

Interior: Seats are aluminum fitted with Burgundy color slips covers; 2” of padding is at the bottom and 1” at the back. The seat covers are custom made by Marge’s Custom Sawing in Hasting, Michigan. Seat belts are new and are 6 point mounted with the shoulder belts wrapped around the roll bar. Other interior is black: dash, floors and firewall. Some additional switches were added for ignition, gas and a map light. The gauges are original Sprite; an electric tachometer was added. Wiring is all new with added fuses. The electrical system is negative ground. A standard one-wire GM alternator is fitted. A radio is fitted in the original location.

Body Paint: Paint is silver gray metallic, as the original cars were painted per John Sprinzel; John is the original 1960 Sebring designer and builder. Painting was done by Scott Noppen, Lucky’s Garage LLC in Michigan.

Miscellaneous:

The front hood/fenders tilt forward to access the engine compartment. All other fittings are as originally fitted except as listed. The side mirrors are setup for better rear views and are custom. The gas filler cap is from a 1960s MGA and is a flip top opener. The side windows are made from Plexi-glass and made without frames. The passenger window is solid with a three round vent; the driver window has an opening section. Both doors are fitted with custom door handles so the door may be opened from inside or outside via a door-handle. Rubber seals are used around roof, doors and windows. A circa style rear bumper and front meshed front grill are fitted. Wooden shift knob. All new wiring and bulbs. The Michigan vintage license plate is from 1960 to reflect the year of the car.

Getting started

Fall 1993. I bought my yellow 1960 Sprite at a Fall Festival in Elburn Illinois in 1993 and yes it was an impulse buy and a project car. The car was painted bright yellow while the 948 engine and smooth case transmission and other parts, too many to list, were in many cardboard boxes. So the car went into storage while some major mechanical parts were acquired based on lots of homework: 1275 engine, 5 speed transmission, wheels ... and wiring.

Mid 1999 and 2000, the project thickens. While reading the Healey Marque Magazine about the Sebring Sprite by Jonathan Whitehouse-Bird, I realized that I was hooked and had to convert my Bugeye into a Sebring style car. So I called Brian of Archer's Garage in England and ordered the fiberglass roof and bonnet and the intake manifold. But things were put on hold for many reasons including moving to Michigan in 2003 and setting up a household while building a house and workshop. This was a three year project since we did a lot of the work ourselves.

December 2009 to April 2010, back to work. The conversion to a Sebring car began in with a trip to the sandblasting company, Consolidated Stripping & Derusting in Plainwell Michigan. To my surprise I discovered several bullet holes in the top rear body that were patched with large square pieces of sheet metal followed by copious amounts of body filler. What mysteries lie here? So I decided to remove all the paint and fillers from every body panel and chassis panel. The list of repairs seemed to get longer and longer. As a result I spent about four months part time at Don's Midwest Painting where chassis and body panels were made, welded in, rust preventive applied, red primer, black satin paint to the chassis and undercoating. The engine bay and inside is painted satin black.

Now it's December 2011; the snow is about three (3) feet deep. Next came a 1 ½" SCCA style roll bar followed by body panel detailed sanding and skin coats of filling were necessary. Next came assembly of the front and rear suspension followed by installation on the chassis. The body front end and roof were then installed and fitted. The front end took much longer than planned because I had to add about ¾" to one side in order to get a good fit. Also added were stiffeners to the hood in front of the cowl. Some care was needed for the roof too. But after all that effort, it all fit very, very, well. **Next** comes everything else.

Just today, Jan. 18, 2012, thanks to Martin Ingall's emails and a response from John Sprinzel in Hawaii, the car will be painted the official silver gray metallic, with perhaps a flash of maroon across the front; another item checked off. The story from John about the color was that while racing the Sprites in Europe, when officials saw the silver car coming they thought the car was a Porsche and cleared passage for the car.

Fast forward to 2015. Starting with a bare chassis; time is passing with the installation of all new wiring; had many issues because I was sold the wrong harness. Installing the engine, trans, ... front brakes and differential. Updated and all new brake lines; just everything else too. See Specification Summary for details.

The door windows were a trick. I guess I have the only Sebring with door handles to open the door from the outside or inside. The car was sent the glass shop. The rear screen fit perfectly. But, you guessed it, the front screen was ¼ inch too wide on each side and at the top too. The Glass Enterprises Auto Glass in Holland Michigan did a great job grounding down the front screen to fit; another two weeks at the shop.

Another unexpected delay was the failure of my daily driver; it's a Chariot Red 1960 MGA Coupe. It's now back on the road with a completely new Stage 1 or 2 engine. But that's another story.

The first driving of the Sebring was celebrated in April of 2017. Hurray!!! Almost done and done. What remains are the normal little items to sort out with a completely new 1960 Sebring Sprite. Fun driving is on the way! Celebrations too!!!!

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