

MY OWN FINDS

that it is powered by an exquisite six-cylinder Bristol engine that had actually been developed by BMW before World War II.

Brian and I tried to see the car as best we could, but the barn was very dark, the confines were tight, and there were inches of dust on the car. "I'm sorry it's such a mess," Hugh said. "I hope there are no rats living in it." Indeed, the car had seen better days; it had sunken down to the chassis into the dirt floor.

As we said goodbye to Hugh and Brenda, they invited us back with flashlights anytime if we wanted to get a better look. Of course, even though I didn't need it, I had to ask Hugh if he'd sell me the Greyhound. "Well, Brenda has been nagging me for years to push it into a ditch, but the car is not in my way, and it doesn't cost me anything to keep it, so I think I'll just hold on to it."

Nobody could have ever convinced me—of all people—that there was an A.C. in my neighbor's barn. Never. But there was, so I'm more eager now than ever to look inside every old barn and garage I see. I still live the dream of finding a real Cobra in a barn.

A SPRITE-LY VETERAN OF SEBRING, LE MANS

I was in Portland, Oregon, on business in the summer of 2004, and decided to give my old pal Stan Huntley a call. Stan was one of the most insane car collectors I had ever met, and I mean that as a good thing. I first met Stan in the early 1990s because of a story that *Road & Track* had written years earlier about him and his road racing Morris Minor pickup truck. That's right: folks in the Pacific Northwest regularly witnessed a lowly Morris truck embarrassing more traditional sports cars, such as MGs, Triumphs, and Porsches. Anyway, Stan and I became friends as I was constructing my own Morris sedan racer.

When I called him last summer, he seemed much more somber than excited. He said to he had to talk to me in person, and he sounded serious. When I arrived, Stan told me of his cancer and that he was dying. "I'm not laughing anymore about those bumper stickers that say: He Who Dies With The Most Toys Wins," he told

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me, referencing his sizable, and very eclectic, car collection. He had hot rods, sports cars, and race cars, including that giant-killer Morris pickup and the very first MGB ever built, but he also had one car that I had always been interested in owning.

"Now's your chance to own that Sprite," he announced as I sat in his living room. Of course, I knew which one he referred to: a 1965 Austin-Healey Sprite prototype coupe, Serial No. HAN8-R-143, that the factory Healey racing team had entered at Sebring and Le Mans. "I'd like to sell it to you now, so that Pat (Stan's wife) won't have to deal with it later," he said.

The Sprite resembled an eighty-percent scale Cobra Daytona Coupe, also made of aluminum, but was powered by an A-Series



I had always been interested in my friend Stan Huntley's 1965 Austin-Healey Le Mans prototype. When he knew his cancer was terminal, he asked if I would like to be the car's next caretaker. *Tom Cotter*

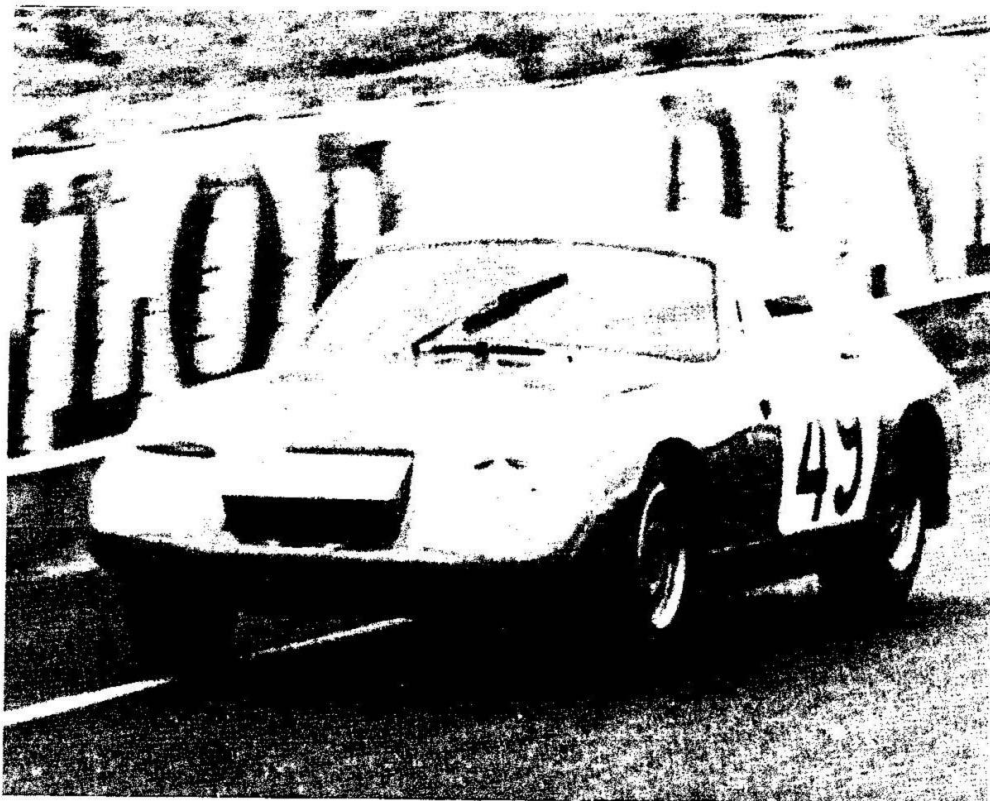
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1275-cc Sprite engine. The car was painted fluorescent orange when it raced at Sebring that year, but when it was brought to Le Mans a few months later, the French organizers threatened to disqualify it because the color was so bright. They thought it would be a distraction to other drivers. (Of course, that's exactly why Geoffrey Healey painted the car orange—so the Ford GT40s, which could pass the Sprite in excess of 100 miles per hour faster, would notice the diminutive cars.) So it was quickly painted British Racing Green for the French twenty-four-hour race. Then, after a couple of years as a club racer, the car was purchased by Stan. He put it into his garage, and even though it was his intention to restore and race it, the car sat idle for nearly thirty years. The odometer of this



The coupe is pure Austin-Healey Sprite underneath, but has all-aluminum bodywork on top. The car ran as a factory racer at Sebring and Le Mans in 1965 and 1966. *Tom Cotter*

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Serial No. HAN-8-R-143 was part of a two-car team at Le Mans in 1966, and ran as high as 16th until retiring with oil leaks. *Tom Cotter*

forty-year-old car read 4,341 miles; most of those miles were accumulated during its Le Mans twenty-four-hour, Sebring twelve-hour, and Daytona twenty-four-hour appearances.

I feel fortunate to have been chosen to be the next caretaker of this rare international racer. The car is being authentically restored by my friends Billy Coates and David Brown in its brilliant orange color scheme and will be vintage raced in Monterey, Sebring, and Daytona vintage events. Hopefully, it will also make it to the Goodwood and Le Mans historic events one day. I had been interested in owning that car for nearly twenty years, and I feel privileged that Stan chose me to bring it out of retirement.

Stan passed away in early 2005, but there are a slew of his friends and relatives who will have tears in their eyes when they see that car return to the track . . . and I'll be one of them.