



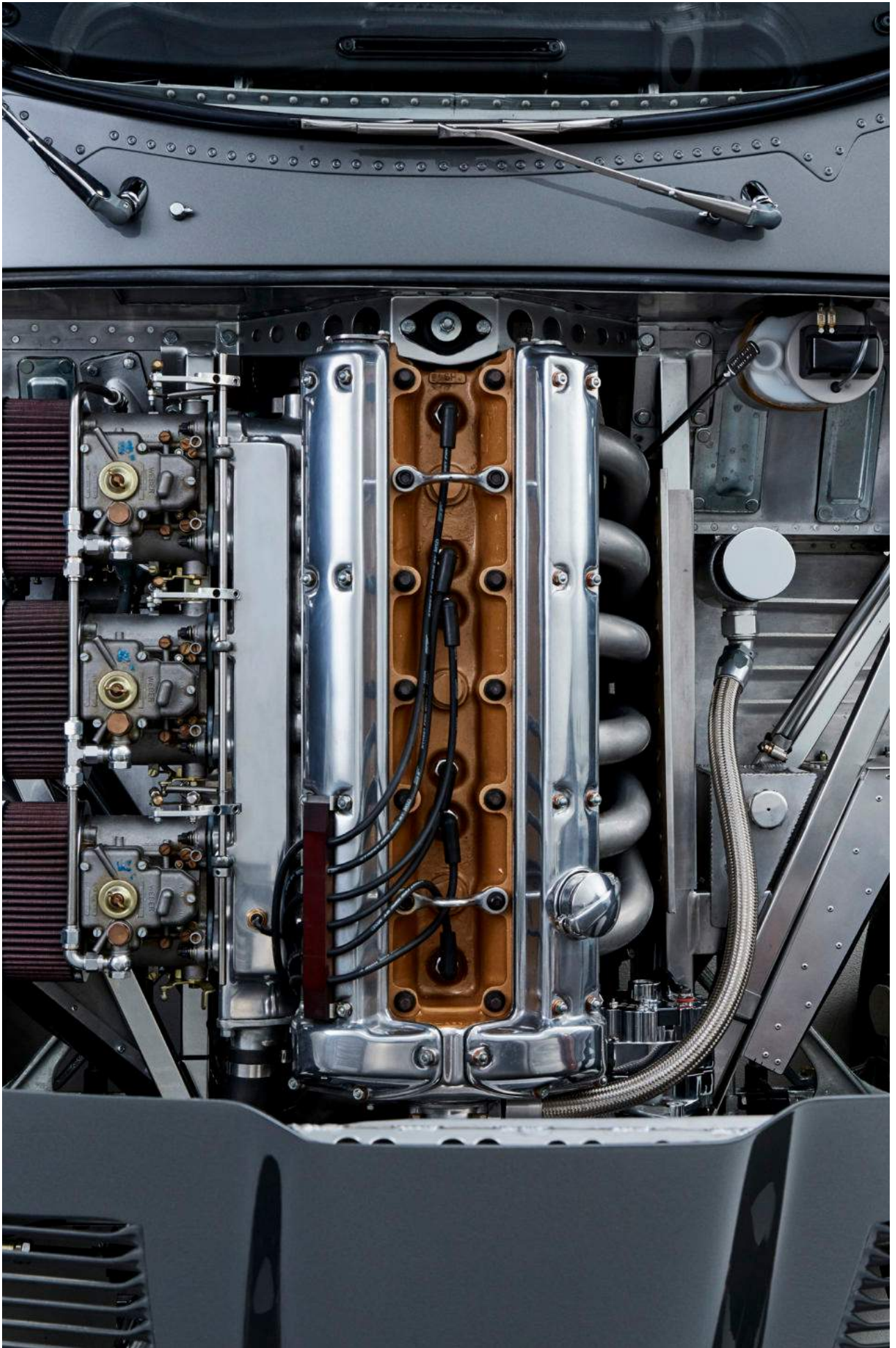
# CONCOURS SPORTSCAR RESTORATIONS

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**I**t's not often you come across a person with just the right combination of drive, passion and the business skills to succeed in often challenging times. Being great at what you do is a pre-requisite for long term business success, though never guarantees it. Rather, it is a complex combination of skills relying heavily on the ability to adapt over the longer term. Gavin King, and his 27-year business, Concours Sportscar Restoration ticks those boxes.

Gavin grew up on the Northern beaches of Sydney leaving school in 1988 and starting an apprenticeship at a local Independent Jaguar workshop. Here he learnt mechanical skills and a love for all things Jaguar. On a typical day, the workshop would be full of late 80's near new XJ's and XJS's as well as E-Type's and MKII's.

After a few years he then moved on to another local workshop, this time one specialising in the restoration of mostly Aston Martins, DB6's, AM V8's and even the occasional Lagonda. Here, Gavin received a further dose of English sportscar exposure, cementing his future in working with these classics.

In 1993 he made the decision to start a business in partnership with a spray painter mate, and Concours Sportscar Restoration was born. In addition to the mechanical services the two started restorations, focusing on the classics

he had become familiar with. This continued until 1994 when Gavin bought out his partner, moved to larger premises and continued Concours Sportscar Restoration on his own. In 2002 the big step to even larger premises occurred and the King family relocated to the current location in Tuggerah, about 1 1/2 hours North of Sydney.

To date the business has gone from strength to strength and Gavin's adaptability has seen him move from restorations onto recreations. His recreations cover the whole gambit from completely new chassis builds to recreations based on the older E-type platforms. A combination of aluminium panels formed with an English wheel and updated technologies give a modern take on a 'Low Drag' or 'Lightweight' version of the E-type. Fuel injection, computer control, power steering and air conditioning are just some of the updates that go into these stunning vehicles, making them more practical and useable for his customers.

Concours Sportscar restoration has completed both complete restorations back to original like condition as well as recreations using an original chassis or custom chassis as a base. Considering Gavin's company is involved in both restoration and recreations of the same car models it is a unique opportunity to compare the two side by side.







Note how the removal of the front and rear bumpers yields a cleaner streamline, while the bonnet vents hint at a major power boost.



### **Original XK120 (1948-1954)**

The Jaguar XK120 was a stunning open top 2-seater designed in the late 1940's by Jaguar chief engineer William Heynes. Production began in 1948 with 242 being traditionally built with wooden frame and aluminium formed panels. The later versions were changed to an all steel construction and production continued until 1954 with some 12,000 having been produced. During its production the XK120 was available first as an open 2 seater, then later a fixed coupe and drophead coupe versions. The '120' nomenclature comes from the claimed top speed of the car of 120 miles per hour making it the world's fastest production car at the time. All XK120's were fitted with Jaguars' 3.4 litre straight 6 engine, double overhead cam and fed via twin side-draft SU carburettors producing 160hp.

### **Concours XK120 Recreation (2020)**

As a base for the first recreation, an original XK120 chassis was sourced. This chassis was subjected to a complete restoration, including mounting to a body jig to check and fix alignment and then replacement of all floors and sills. At this point modifications were made to accept an updated suspension, and the chassis sprayed in 2 pack black, ready for the new body panels. The all new aluminium panels are all hand formed on an English wheel and trial fitted to ensure accurate fit. The main change to the external appearance for the recreation was the deletion of the front and rear chrome bumpers, giving this version a cleaner and more modern look. Next up for improvement was the engine. Based on the 3.8 MKII unit, the internals are upgraded with custom forged pistons and conrods and an increase of compression to 10.5:1. Up top the intake is XK120 style with twin 2 inch SU carburettors, increased from the original 1 3/4 inch. With the completed engine upgrades the 3.8 litre now produces 285hp, a healthy improvement over the original. Virtually everything on this car is either reconditioned or new, and where applicable upgraded.





Low-drag E-Type uses a custom monocoque with aluminium panels and a unique roof, handmade and rivetted to the body. The result is stunning!



### **Original Jaguar – Low Drag E-Type (1962)**

Soon after the release of the series one E-type, a concept car was produced to create an aerodynamic styled racer to more follow the spirit of the D-type. The steel chassis was retained; however the panels were created in aluminium instead of steel, with a 'Low Drag' aerodynamic rear via new panels, and the rear hatch was welded shut. The front windshield had an increased rake and all windows other than the front were made in Perspex for weight reduction. The majority of the interior was stripped out and discarded.

Only one Low drag coupe was ever produced with Jaguar deciding to sell it off rather than develop further. Originally sold to one of Jaguars racing drivers, it was subsequently owned by a number of collectors throughout its life and is believed to now reside in a private collection in Sussex, UK.

### **Concours – Low Drag E-Type**

For this recreation Gavin uses a custom monocoque instead of the standard designed chassis. The car has all new aluminium panels hand formed with an English wheel, including the Lightweight Spec aluminium bonnet. The unique roof is handmade and rivetted to attach. The engines are completely refurbished and the 3.8 litre, or 4.2 litre, is strengthened and updated as per the Concours XK120. The gearbox is all new with alloy casing. To date Concours Sportscar Restoration have delivered 3 to customers and currently a further 2 are currently under build. They are expected to be used for both road and track and as such are setup with adjustable style race suspension replacing the original.



With 150 additional horsepower and dramatically reduced weight, the suspension, brakes and steering have all been commensurately upgraded.



### **Original Jaguar – Lightweight E-Type (1963-1964)**

Where the Low Drag E-type was designed as a coupe version, the Lightweight E-type built between 1963 and 1964, were based on the convertible. Only 12 were manufactured and like the lightweight, also featured handmade aluminium panels instead of steel. The engines have an aluminium block rather than the iron block of the standard car, and overall weight of the car was reduced to around 1000kg making it more than 200kg lighter. The weight reduction process was hugely effective and combined with engine upgrades, making around 340hp, could accelerate to 100km/h in a little over 4 sec. The cars were intended for the track and were entered into various races, however, did not see the same success as the earlier C and D-type cars.

### **Concours – Lightweight E-type**

The Concours Lightweight E-type recreation is built for the enthusiast driver in mind. Built in batches of 3, they are fully assembled with the exception of paint, allowing clients to test drive the car before customising the colour to their preference. As per the Low Drag recreation, the chassis is a custom Monocoque with hand formed aluminium panels created with traditional processes. Panels are formed on the English wheel from patterns and placed on wooden or fibreglass bucks for trial fitting. Fitted with a new 5-speed gearbox and performance 3.8 litre engine, the car also has modern conveniences like air conditioning, catalytic exhaust system, adjustable suspension and electric power steering. Induction for the engine is provided by ‘old style look’, but modern operation, EFI 8 stack throttle bodies. Gavin has, of course, driven both restored originals and his own recreations, and I asked him to compare the driving experience between the two. ‘Our recreations are about 300kg lighter and have 150 more horsepower than a standard E-type. The power to weight is therefore drastically different and the car feels lighter, nimble and more secure on the road. Whereas the originals had things like skinny tyres and long suspension travel, once these items are upgraded the car just feels more modern and alive on the road’.