

Series II restoration under way, with 5000-mile original Series III in background on right



Series 3 – Improving the Breed

Stew Jones Restoration

by Day Krolik

The Series 3 E-type seems to receive less attention than it deserves. The last of the E-types, built between 1971 and 1974, they were fewer in number than the Series I and II and suffered in performance and appearance, especially in the United States, from the exhaust emissions and 'safety' requirements that were introduced in the late 1960s and expanded throughout the 1970s. Stew Jones Restoration and its eponymous president, Stew Jones, have waged a highly successful battle to improve the reputation of the Series 3 in the USA and beyond, and make it the superb car it perhaps could have and should have been.

An automotive shop teacher who began to professionally service Jaguars in 1977 in the town of Winsted in northwestern Connecticut, Stew initially worked on all models, especially XJ6s which were prevalent in the early years of his business. Although he will still take in all pre-1987 'classic' Jaguars, Stew's shop has evolved into a Series 3 specialist focussing on repairing, restoring, modifying and dramatically improving the Series 3 E-type.

The first thing that strikes a visitor to Stew Jones Restoration is its attractive main building set in an idyllic lakefront location, which Stew selected due to his enthusiasm for waterskiing. The second is the extraordinary knowledge and passionate enthusiasm of Stew, who has been blind since the early 1980s as the result of an accident. Stew relates how the E-type evolved from a sports into a GT car which,



Stew shows off the ultimate road Series 3

although larger and more comfortable, with air-conditioning and power steering, had lost much of its original beauty and performance. By reinstalling sway bars, which had been deleted from the Series 3, installing a modern steering rack and better torsion bars, Stew says, "I love to convert them back to sports cars again". The good

news was that, in an effort to maintain performance with lower exhaust emissions, the Series 3s were originally equipped with a 5.3-liter V12 (except for a handful of very early cars which retained the classic XK six).

Stew realized that the V12 had extraordinary development potential and,

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advised and encouraged by UK specialists such as Rob Beere, embarked on a continuing crusade to improve the breed. Modifications can be made in steering, front and rear suspension, transmission, brakes, carburetion in the form of multiple Webers or fuel injection adapted from the XJ-S, ignition, cooling and, of course, increased displacement up to 7.3-liters and possibly beyond. Chassis improvements may then be necessary to take full advantage of the engine and suspension work. Although he chuckles at the idea of a blind man redesigning automobile bodies, Stew also has a clear talent for improving the aesthetics of the Series 3, starting with removing or modifying the unsightly bumpers mandated by 1970s regulations and continuing with more subtle modifications which restore much of the aesthetic appeal of the original E-type design. Stew says he's not redesigning the car, but "purifying the original design" by reverting to the spirit of the cleaner D-type concept.

Three cars exemplify the versatility of Stew Jones Restoration. One is the 1974 OTS which was restored to a 100-point concours champion and achieved an unprecedented repeat win at two JCNA Challenge Championship Biennials. The second is a heavily-modified Series 3-based competition car which, in its latest 2500lb form, produced 650bhp and 578lb ft of torque from 7.3-liters with an 11.6:1 compression ratio. Nicknamed 'the Beast', it's constantly in development and is currently undergoing modifications such as conversion to dry sump, headers and external exhaust, and possibly outboard rear brakes, since the inboard position doesn't allow enough space for the huge discs Stew has in mind. There's even a plan for expanding the motor displacement still further. The third is a 522bhp 7.3-liter road car featured in the 2012 New York International Auto Show. It incorporates some of the features of The Beast, but is docile enough to be driven on the street. In addition to the numerous functional upgrades, the front and rear bumpers have been eliminated and both ends of the car have been modified to make it extraordinarily beautiful as well as fast.

Stew Jones Restoration performs this broad range of work on Series 3s, and some other Jaguars, in the lakefront garage and a second 6000sqft facility within walking distance, supplemented by a 2000sqft parts warehouse in another town several miles from Winsted. Assisted by a staff and his wife Karen, Stew also sells uprated parts worldwide, among them radiators, modified steering racks and Medtronic five-speed conversions. He acquires several parts cars annually in order to provide used stock parts for his own use or sale. All of the working



Shop with 'The Beast' in the foreground



Conversion to XJ-S fuel injection under way



2012 New York Auto Show poster



Idyllic lakeside setting

spaces are extraordinarily spacious and clean. Within the large building there is a separate fabrication area, bodywork area and paint spray booth.

According to Stew, one of his biggest challenges is giving owners “an idea of what they’re getting into, so there are no unrealistic expectations... You can’t expect to get your money back from the restoration of these cars,” Stew says. At this point in his career he insists on doing whatever he is asked to do “up to my standards”. He doesn’t have to restore the entire car, but whatever component or area of the car he takes on has got to be done completely and

to a superlative standard.

Stew Jones Restoration exemplifies the advantages of specialization. He has numerous custom jigs and tools, including two body rotisseries, specifically designed for E-types and some only for the Series 3. A virtually untouched 1974 Series 3 with 6000 miles on the odometer, having spent much of its life in a museum, is a permanent resident in his garage, used for originality reference purposes. Stew says that many restorers don’t realize the challenges the Series 3 presents: “Often a car is partly done when insurmountable problems are encountered – then the car is sent to me.

With our experience, we can get a job done in far less time.” Cars come to Stew from all over the United States and many of his clients return several times for additional levels of modification.

Stew’s work conclusively demonstrates that a Series 3 E-type, with a few well-chosen and expertly executed modifications, makes a beautiful and reliable sports car, fully capable of keeping pace with current automotive exotica. With prices still little more than half of comparable Series 1 examples, perhaps more enthusiasts will be interested in considering this alternative to an earlier E-type, or even a new F-type.



No shortage of Series 3s in spotless workshops