

TRADE TALK



DEALER PROFILE

FORECOURT FINDS

Like many top classic car dealers, Beaulieu doesn't provide a formal warranty as it says modern guarantees aren't suited to such old cars. However as you'd expect any significant faults would be rectified post sale and naturally the cars are fully checked over beforehand. Here's what caught our eye during our visit



BEAULIEU GARAGE

If there's one stumbling block that many businesses have, it's getting enough potential customers to take a close look. That's not something which affects Beaulieu Garage though; with the National Motor Museum right next door, there are classic car fans passing through the village in huge numbers all year round – and many of them are keen to take a closer look at what Rory Stokes and Philip Scott have to offer. These are the two men who run Beaulieu Garage, Rory having set up his own garage in nearby Lymington back in 1990. By 1994 Philip had taken over the current site and in 1997 the pair pooled their resources to set up Beaulieu Garage, to sell classic cars.

Says Philip: "There's been a garage on the site since the early 1920s; we're still in touch with the original owner's son. The place is steeped in history, and while it used to be a bustling garage and workshop, complete with petrol station, we've converted all the various areas into showroom space now. With the old workshops now tidied up and the petrol pumps removed – we stopped selling fuel in 2000 – there's now space for 30 cars to be displayed".

Take a look at the company's website or drop into the showroom and you'll see there's a real hotch potch of cars on offer. Although Beaulieu Garage generally focuses on key British sports cars such as those from MG, Jaguar, Austin Healey and Lotus, there are usually one or two surprises to be had. Philip explains: "We'll often take cars in part exchange, but we try to be at least a little bit choosy. We've sold all sorts of things, but we're not known for selling anything very modern so we tend to avoid the newer cars. For example, at the moment we've got an ultra-rare Mercedes SL60 on the forecourt, and it's one of just 49 brought into the UK; but it's newer than people expect from us so it hasn't found a buyer as easily as our older classics. We also try to concentrate on open-topped sports cars; any saloons we sell will have to have a sporting pedigree such as Jaguar or Bentley".

When we called in to have a look around, there were no fewer than four MGAs to be seen



– but only two of them were for sale. That's because both Philip and Rory have As of their own; and they're definitely not up for grabs. However, there were plenty of other MGs available, from a fabulous 1938 VA Tourer to a 1965 B Roadster. Also typical of Beaulieu's stock list were the three Lotus Elans, sitting alongside each other in the front showroom, while a superb Mercedes 'Pagoda' SL sat nearby.

However, perhaps the most impressive car in the whole showroom was the remarkable 1962 E-type 3.8 fixedhead coupé. Resplendent in metallic dark green the car is completely original with just 46,000 miles on the clock. While the car itself is impressive, it's the history file which makes it truly special. This includes all the hand-written notes from its first owner, instructing Jaguar main dealer Henley's on how the car should be looked after at service time!

As is usual among classic car dealers, anyone who buys from Beaulieu doesn't get any formal warranty; instead there's a gentleman's agreement that ensures things will be put right should anything seriously untoward happen. Says Philip: "So many warranties have such a long list of exclusions that we tend to find they're not really suited to classics; they're really for those buying a modern used car. That's why we shake on the deal instead; I think it gives our customers much greater peace of mind".

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FOR SALE
£14,500

1959 Jaguar Mk1 3.4 automatic. This car has had just three owners, the first one until 1993 when the car had covered a mere 30,000 miles. Finished in Cotswold blue with grey leather interior and fitted with the three-speed Borg-Warner gearbox and period wing mirrors and wheel trims



FOR SALE
£9995

1975 Triumph TR6. One of the last TR6s built, with just two owners from new. Finished in Pimento red with black interior, the car comes with a comprehensive history file which includes the original sales invoice and service passport. Note the period steel rim wheels fitted as standard



FOR SALE
£19,995

1959 MGA 1600 Roadster. Restored superbly and finished in the mid-1990s, this car needs nothing as it has covered just 6000 miles since being finished. It's Chariot red with beige leather trim, handsome chrome wire wheels and chrome luggage rack. Their own MGAs aren't for sale however!

SPECIALIST



Classic car owners might be tempted to take advantage of not having to wear safety belts until they are told that statistics show that 63 per cent of drivers and passengers killed in road accidents were not wearing belts. If you for one feel naked without belts and cannot even cope with the old static variety then simply call on Stuart Quick at Quickfit SBS who has been able to supply and, if necessary, fit period style belts of the highest quality for years. He offers a wide range of fittings and different styles of webbing in a wide range of colours.

Seat belts were pioneered in the USA in the 1930s but it wasn't until 1958 that a manufacturer, Volvo, offered belts and then only as an option. Ford and Chrysler in the US started to offer belts but they were all only lap types and it was again Volvo which patented the classic three-point restraints in 1958 that it would make standard on its home-market cars in 1959 and perhaps give it the reputation for safety it still has today. In 1965 it became obligatory to fit front seat belts on all cars made in Europe and in 1967 filament was required on all new cars sold in the UK wherever built.

At that time Stuart Quick's father was working in the motor industry and realised that despite 60 or 70 companies manufacturing belts nobody was fitting them – Quickfit SBS was born.

After an early career in publishing Stuart joined his father's business and has developed it to the multi-faceted company it is today with three distinct arms: classic seat belts, seat belts and restraints for commercial applications and automatic fire extinguisher systems.

The classic car business is very healthy with new installations and the restoration and improvements of original belts. Many classics were only fitted with static belts and Quickfit can easily and economically upgrade these to inertia spec. Recently Stuart was asked to fit belts to an Aston Martin DB4 convertible and discovered under the trim, anchorages that he had been involved in fitting during his school holidays back in the seventies were still there.

Quickfit does a lot of work with Aston Martin, Bristol, Jaguar, MG, Porsche, many American cars and its customers come from all over Europe. The company also supplies original equipment belts to several specialist carmakers.

The commercial arm evolved after belts became compulsory on public service vehicles and supplies belts for coaches, mini buses and vehicles for the disabled. It also supplies



harnesses to film companies for the retaining of camera and stunt men.

The third division is FIREFLEX, a fully automatic self seeking fire suppression system which uses a unique trace tube format that is melted by fire heat allowing a very sophisticated gas to escape and douse the fire. While most of Quickfit's extinguisher business comes from commercial application it does carry out installations on classic cars particularly Lotus Esprits and Volkswagen Campers and Beetles. The last thing on the mind of a classic car owner as he polishes his pride and joy is fire but there are more car fires than most people realise and most of those are older cars. For around £300 and in just two hours Quickfit can install a fully automatic system in the average two-seater.

Quickfit's web site, www.quickfitsbs.com is in course of construction but Stuart and his staff are always pleased to talk to potential customers about their requirements for both belts and extinguishers on 0208 206 0101.



Risky Business



This month I'm going back to basics. That's right, I'm talking about the modest Ford. I've been fascinated by the values of Fords over the last two years, as some models of the 'Dagenham Dugster' have amazingly become the Dagenham Dividend. I mean, who'd have thought a humble Escort would ever fetch 20k? But that's the going rate for a concours Twin Cam. And a BDA with racing provenance can now reach the dizzy heights – for a Ford – of 50k... and what about the recent Bonham auction which saw the highest ever price for an Eccc (see auction pages-ec)?

Even the relatively common RS2000 in Mk1 form can fetch £15k in mint condition, whilst the 'drop snoot' Mk2 can hit £10k. Later Mk3 models with front wheel drive are not so sought-after, but lately I've noticed a stirring of interest in the rare RS1600i and prices are on the up. One of these in original and – important this – unmodified condition, will be commanding the thick end of £5k.

Finally, the MkIV model is similarly unloved, with the exception of the mighty Cosworth. This dominates the range and is still fetching £15k, so long as it's relatively unmodified and original.

But it's not just the Escort – the Capri is having a bit of a heyday, too. Good 2.8is are snapped up for £6000 and even more for the rarer Injection Special; while the 280 and Brooklands models, which were the very last of the line, can command silly money if low mileage. It wasn't that long ago these went for not more than a grand.

Then there's the Granada. Mk1s are pretty thin on the ground now, but when a winter comes on the market, there's healthy interest. Mk2s are more plentiful, but not as collectible, meaning prices are not so strong. Even so, a mint one with all the Ghia bells and whistles will still command £3000. Later post-1986 models, however, are to be had for shirt buttons, with the exception of the sought-after Scorpio version with the Cosworth-modified 24 valve V6 (still only £3k).

The good old Cortina is going strong, with prices of Lotus MK1s regularly hitting £25k. Mk2s peak at around £15k, but the 1600E isn't far behind – one went at auction the other month for a heady £10k. My tip to watch is the original Mk1 GT – it's rare, but still affordable; only problem is finding one. Later bread and butter models are still on the floor price-wise though and are pretty well ignored.

The Sierra is now largely forgotten – even the bi-winged V6 XR4i which was made to replace the Capri 2.8i. Curiously, a Fiesta in any guise fails to stir up much interest. Perhaps the problem here is that it has neither significant competition pedigree, nor iconic TV appearances to fall back on? But at the other end of the scale, there is big, big money changing hands for the rally-only RS200; you won't see change from £100k here. And let's not forget the daddy of them all, the GT40, some versions of which are now reaching seven figures. Uncle Henry would be proud – and probably somewhat bemused by it all!

Jeff Bailey