

# An Injection Of Life

*Jim Patten is on a high in a fuel injected V12 'E' type*







**here is a certain air about Terry Disdale. First impressions hint at an easy going, casual and very relaxed character and these are probably true. But he knows exactly what he wants and will not stop at routine boundaries to achieve it. His Regency house is a short drive from his Richmond office and commuting through the famous Royal park dotted with the equally famous deer makes for a pleasing diversion from London's usual manic crush. Not that Terry spends a lot of time in London: as a successful yacht designer, much of his working week is spent around the world.**

Some of the world's most glamorous super-yachts have come from Terence Disdale Design and if you ever get a chance to look at them, you will understand that the creative mind responsible for these fantastic styles would always apply his own interpretations to other things as well. His car is the perfect example and Terry has devoted considerable thought to it. He would have liked an XK8 but like some others, was put off by the beefy rear haunches and the jarring teeth in the oval intake. An Aston Martin DB7, for Terry, put right the perceived wrongs of the Jaguar although his wife runs a Porsche 928 and both feel this to be the perfect car for the run to Devon. But his great love, his ideal of function and design, is a 1972 Series 3 fixedhead coupé 'E' type.

### Creating the flow

Now you would never expect Terry to run a standard car although that is exactly what he did for some seven

years. It was his everyday car. Later though, he had Ron Beaty enlarge the engine from 5.3 to 5.7 litres and change the breathing from the normal four asthmatic Strombergs to six downdraught Weber carburettors. Then he met up with Southern Classics. The brief was to update the bodywork with subtle alterations to accommodate the larger tyres fitted to Compomotive alloy wheels. Improved brakes with four-pot calipers were a must, so was a five-speed Getrag gearbox in place of the standard all-synchro four – and while we're there, let's have a look at the interior as well.

Steve Berry made a superb job of the bodywork, inserting a full 1 1/4 inch in the rear wing to ease the arch out without it being obvious. To continue the flow, the lower quarter panel was dressed out to suit so that the whole line blended as one. The spare wheel well needed enlarging to accept the bigger spare but again, Steve managed to make the adaptation appear normal.

In a search for the clean line, overriders were removed and the front bonnet oval cleared of chrome to be replaced by a discreet black grille of horizontal rows. The original bumpers would have stopped with an abrupt open end so a degree of sculpting was needed to make a gentle return, tucking into the oval at the front but running clear and free at the back. An electric tilt and slide metal sun-roof gave a full view of the blue skies.

Inside, the individual approach continued. XJS seats, their shells narrowed by 1 1/2 inch then retrimmed, went in. Much was leather trimmed, including the door casings, although headlining and dashtop remained standard. Lighting switches were transferred to the steering stalk for convenience. Then, the entire dash assembly was re-created in burr elm with switches repositioned to compensate for those now missing. An air-conditioning unit was plumbed in on the passenger side and has validated itself by being highly efficient.



**Elegance personified. Rear shot shows that all badging has been removed. Note big bore exhaust system and Compomotive alloy wheels.**



*Down by the river, Terry Disdale relaxes with his fuel injected Series 3 'E' type.*





**Enlarged to 5.7 litre, plus HE fuel injection and AJ6 Engineering mods, make this V12 a stunner. Horsepower is always a contentious subject but the increased capacity, better fuelling and better breathing probably takes the power up from the standard 'E' type's 272bhp to well over 300bhp. Of course the Series 3 'E' type was intended to have fuel injection; carbs arrived only after the injection manufacturers Brico withdrew their system quite late in the car's development.**

## Improving the flow

Terry was not happy with the Weber carburettors – they were like great big buckets throwing fuel down the 12 cylinders. By now, John Crow was at the head of Southern Classics and he had just fitted a fuel injection system to his own 'E' type. "Perfect" said Terry, "I'll have one too." It was decided to incorporate one or two other enhancements at the same time, so now Roger Bywater at AJ6 Engineering was brought in. While Southern Classics sorted out an XJ-S HE injection system and took care of the installation, AJ6 pondered the electronics and breathing. A big bore throttle was fitted along with high torque manifolds. Then the ECU was re-chipped to AJ6's own specification, essential as the HE system was fitted to a flat-top rather than May combustion chamber head engine.

Together, Southern Classics and AJ6 Engineering tuned and fettled the whole along with the other improvements. Next, the car was taken to the rolling road at Red Line Tuning for fine tuning, followed by lengthy road testing. Only then was the 'E' type handed back to Terry. He was astonished at the transformation. The increased power was taken as read but the improved fuel consumption was an unexpected bonus. "I don't know what the actual figure is" said Terry, "but I fill up once every two weeks instead of weekly as I did before."

## Going with the flow

Junction 17 of the M25 was closed and that pushed the traffic back to J21. I was just able to swing off on to the M1 London bound. I had quite underestimated the volume of traffic around Staples corner and fumed as my 4.2 'E' type crept along with other frustrated drivers. I was about an hour late and stressed out. But I soon felt at ease as I chatted with Terry at his home about his cars (and the latest project, an XK 120 with demon chassis and tuned 3.8 engine, currently with Southern Classics). But I had a car to drive and still had to battle home.

There were so many differences about this 'E' type that it felt as though I was being introduced to a distant cousin rather than a brother. It was an 'E' type, certainly, but the seats, dash layout, even the gear-lever were ever so slightly unexpected. Starting from cold was immediate and the engine settled into an imperturbable hum. I now had Terry to show me the best roads to take rather than my small London A-Z and soon we were heading for Henry VIII's deer park. We have grown used to the seamless power of the legendary V12 but the game had now shifted to a new level. Better than Jaguar's own 6.0-litre (and probably more powerful) the revs just kept on building, whatever the selected gear. Having five of them just spread the joy. The best of all worlds. Having cake and

eating it. This combination of seamless power could be called on in any situation, be that pulling through the lower gears or playing the autobahn game in fifth. That the fuel consumption was so vastly improved makes this supercar of the super 'E' types a truly useable cruiser. We could not take performance figures but suffice it to say that a standard XK8 would not be noticed...

With improved seating, and an air-conditioning system ready to deal with the heat build up created by the large glass area, the whole package makes so much sense. Not a creak or a rattle from any part of the car either. No splines or spokes to worry about – that characteristic click would never be heard on this car.

As I pointed the car back to Terry's house, I felt far more relaxed than I had a right to with what on paper was something of a monster. The clutch was light, gearchange easy and the uprated four-pot calipers reassuring. I enjoyed Terry's company and could have stayed longer. We had much to talk about but I needed to be on the road. I bid him an easy farewell with a promise to look him up when his XK 120 was finished. My road home would be south, the M25 via M3 which proved to be mercifully clear. I pondered at the contrast in Terry's days. He had just returned from the South of France where they had been photographing a yacht in Antibes. Today, it was Richmond Park and the 'E' type. Variety can be so sweet.

**Fuel injection (and much more) for the V12 'E' type starts at £4,000 from Southern Classics, Hanworth Lane Trading Estate, Hanworth, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 9LA. Tel: 01932 567671.**

**Big bore throttle and modified chip came from: AJ6 Engineering.**

**–Tel/fax: 01625 573556.**

**Rolling Road: Red Line Tuning, Slough. Tel: 01753 655522**



**Wood veneer was never an option for the 'E' type but Terry prefers the burr elm shown here. The air conditioning unit does not hamper leg room in the passenger footwell. Gear lever controls five speeds.**



**XJ-S seats have been slimmed down by 1½in to fit snugly inside the cabin. Trimmed to suit the car, they provide much comfort.**