

# Rolls restorer a closet specialist in E-types

Oh dear, I'm in love again.

I drove out to Kendrick Coachworks in west end Toronto to talk to managing director Maurice Bramhall about E-Type Jaguars. Kendrick, which is an authorized Rolls-Royce coachwork repairer — and you don't find that class of establishment on every corner — has a sideline in finding E-Types for clients and restoring them to as-new condition.

The cost, including having the engine and drivetrain rebuilt by another firm of specialists, comes in at around \$50,000.

Which (and compare what you'd pay for a new Corvette, Porsche, BMW or even a turbo Mazda RX-7) is not bad at all for what is perhaps the sexiest sports car of all time.

Make that second-sexiest.

Out in the Kendrick yard, with snow all but covering the British racing green paint, is No. 1.

An Aston Martin DB4. Late '50s, early '60s. Right-hand drive. Wire wheels. Understated and — without any intention to sound sexist — every inch a lady.

Price tag? \$15,000.

That's right. Fifteen, not 50 grand. What you might call a real steal.

## Reliable Astons

But, of course, there's always a but.

And as Bramhall explains, getting into any kind of restored classic is "not for the faint-hearted."

"People are quite afraid of Astons. An engine job is like a Rolls-Royce engine job. You're talking 15 to 20 grand. Right there, that's what you paid for the car."

"I like Aston Martins. I find them tremendously reliable and they're very simple to work on. But when you start getting into expenditure like that, it can sink you."

"The profile of Aston Martin in Canada is so low, people don't recognize them, which is why there isn't much of a market. The only real point of reference is to the DB5 Sean Connery drove in the *Goldfinger* James Bond movie."

"An enthusiast is more likely to go out and buy something which will be recognized. Even the least-discerning automotive type will look at an E-Type and almost without thinking say, 'E-Type.'"

Okay, point taken. The course of true love never did run smooth and it wouldn't be too difficult to fall deeply in love with an E-Type.

Right now, Kendrick has avail-



MICHAEL STUPARYK/TORONTO STAR

**Cheshire Jag smile?** This 1974 E-type roadster is just one of many Jaguars that surround the workshop of Kendrick Coachworks and managing director Maurice Bramhall in west-end Toronto. His company specializes in restoring Rolls-Royces but he'll gladly do old Jags.



## BILL TAYLOR Wheeling around

able for restoration a 1966, '67, '68 and '71 roadster; a '67 and '69 coupe; two '71 2+2 coupes; and a '69 2+2 with an automatic transmission (if you can handle the sacrilegious aspects of an E-Type with a slushbox).

"It always strikes me as strange," says Bramhall. "I'd have thought most people would be interested in the earlier models with the six-cylinder engine, pre-'72-'73. But a lot of them want the later V-12s."

"To me, wire wheels are Jaguar or Healey or the old Aston Martins. With the V-12, the wire wheels couldn't take it so they had to go to a slotted wheel."

"My romantic relationship with E-Types goes back to the wire wheels, the covered headlights, the early ones, the really fast ones, 160 m.p.h. (255 km/h)."

"The other thing is how many people want hardtops. I was expecting everyone to want a roadster. But I've had people tell me point-blank the roadster is the wrong design."

Well, the customer is always right. And what can a Kendrick customer expect for his or her \$50,000?

"Almost a new car," says Bramhall. "In some ways, probably better than new. It'll be stripped to the metal and restored, using all metal, no filler. The engine will be rebuilt and balanced with all wearing parts replaced as necessary. The interior will be totally original but new. All new seals, a new convertible roof if it's a roadster."

## Photograph everything

You'd also have a pictorial record of the work done — "we normally photograph every project as it goes along."

Unless you order a nonstandard interior material or paint shade, Kendrick could have your E-Type ready to drive away in as little as four months (place your order now, you could be dazzling your neighborhood by the first day of summer).

What else does Kendrick Coachworks have on hand? Plenty:

A 1934 Rolls-Royce town car in cream and black ("Mechanically quite good," says Bramhall. "Quite reliable"); a 1950 Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn undergoing full restoration; an '87 Rolls-Royce Camargue which, when it was two weeks old, suffered \$70,000

damage in an altercation with a taxi ("a front bumper alone costs \$8,500"). The car is in now because of a rattle in one of the doors; a 1934 Chrysler Airflow ("I've been told by the owner there are only six like this in existence, made in Canada. Ugly, eh? Even the owner says it's ugly but it has a certain attraction"); a new R-R Corniche convertible in for minor bodywork; a stripped-down '51 Bentley ("the inner rear fenders rot out like crazy on these"); a Mark II Jaguar sedan; a '72 R-R with a cunningly concealed \$20,000 sound system ("a compact disc player, four speakers in each door, four in the parcel shelf, and a secret compartment beneath the trunk filled with amplifiers"); and a '59 Porsche, which Bramhall says is "rare, very rare. It's not what everybody thinks."

"They all think it's an 'A' Speedster. In fact, it's a convertible 'D.' There was the Speedster convertible, then a cabriolet, and then this. We understand there were less than 2,000 made. The 'D' was the initial of the firm that turned them into convertibles."

And outside in the snow there is that Aston Martin DB4.

How do you turn your back on a seductress? How do you say, "I love you, goodbye?"

Beats me. But life with the Celica is suddenly very, very dull.