INTERVIEW WITH TIM LANOCHA – ENGINE BUILDER

Editor: This year, like every year, the Triumph Roadster Factory has a specific car that they feature at the summer party in August. The MG is the car of choice this year. Last summer, August 1999, I attended the event and the feature car was the TR6. Each year, these summer parties include various events: Auto crossing, drag racing, concours, etc.; but it is the drag race, in my opinion, that separates the men from the boys. August 1999's event year was truly a surprise to me. Most of the cars ran 14 - 16 seconds in the quarter mile. That was TR6's and some of your average stock TR8's but the real battle was between a 302 ci TVR driven by Dan Hall and a 5.0 liter TR8 driven by Woody Cooper. Both cars ran 12.9's before an unfortunate crash about midway down the track. Apparently, the TRV lost traction and wrecked into the jersey wall. Thankfully, neither driver was injured but the track was shut down making 12.9 the quickest time of the day, or so I thought. The track officials cleaned up the debris and the event continued. During all of the excitement leading up to the crash there was a low key participant busy at work. I am speaking about Tim Lanocha and his Gold TR8. Lanocha's first preliminary run was 13.6 which was one of the top ET's for the TR8 group. According to bystanders, Lanocha disappeared for one hour and continued working on his car which ran an ET of 13.0 on his second pass. His final pass, resulting in a driver side wheel stand at take off, came in at an ET of 12.8. Lanocha's final pass was the fastest ET of the day, but only by a fraction of a second. These are fantastic times for 5 liter V8's but Lanocha's engine is a 3.5 liter!

Last October I was attending the Carlisle, PA fall swap meet where I had the opportunity to meet with Lanocha and discuss his record-breaking times. He pointed out that his car has been in the making since 1992. Both he and his brother, Bill, have attended the TRF summer party since 1990. Bill also owns a TR8 of which he purchased off the show-room floor in 1981. Tim decided to do a project car in 1992 and started looking for a TR8. The car had 90,000 original miles at purchase. Needless to say, there was plenty of work to be done. Lanocha's approach was to build a fast, strong drive train while retaining the original integrity of the car. Both he and his brother were experienced street drag racers in the 1960's and 70's which gave them insight on what they wanted to achieve. I asked Tim if he would outline the specs of his car for me, which follows:

- 3.5 liter original block
- 5.7" small block Chevy rods
- BRC 11:5:1 custom pistons: 0.060 over
- Oversize main studs
- Custom cam (top secret) but over .500 lift.
- Heads ported and polished (flow bench tested).
- Huffaker intake (flow bench tested).
- 650 Barry Grant Carburetor (Dyno tuned).
- MSD distributor with 6 AL, 2-step, multi-retard.
- Custom bell housing with T56, 6 speed trans.
- Custom 4-link 8 3/4" Mopar Differential with 4:88 ring and pinion gears.

Lanocha's Point-of-View:

What I have done is really nothing new in relation to small block Chevys, Fords, etc. but, the Rover people are still promoting Weber carbs and dual point distributors. I believe in a balanced ensemble, not just internal race balancing but balancing the overall package. For example, some guys incorporate more cubes, cam and carb. This works to an extent, but the weak link of the Rover motor is the cylinder heads. What I have done was maximize air flow combined with a precise cam and carb combination which naturally results in higher horsepower gains. The other hurdle is the required tuning. If your motor is too rich or lean this will obviously effect performance. The primitive approach is to read the spark plugs. This works on older ignitions but does not with the newer higher output systems. Two years ago I was racing and actually made things worse by re-jetting the carburetor having no idea where I was. It wasn't until last summer that I installed an EGT system (Exhaust Gas Temperature Monitor) which allowed me to fine tune my engine for maximum output. That was the real secret to my fast ET's. What the average racer doesn't understand is how air temperature and altitude drastically effect the engine's performance. For example, a car could be perfectly in tune for a race at a low altitude but if the next race is at a track with a high altitude the engine will be out of tune. Another important factor is the transmission. The Rover box works okay, but when a higher horsepower is added, the box fails. I personally suffered through (4) boxes. In 1998, I had a rebuilt Rover box lock up 1 mile from the track which cost me the race. After that I decided enough was enough and installed a beefy T56, 6-speed and a 2800 lb. pressure plate with Kevlar disks. This set-up worked so well. My fastest ET was launched at 5500 rpm at the line and everything held together. The bottom line is balancing and tuning is the answer to record breaking ET's and bigger doesn't always mean better.

Editor: *So, what new challenges are you focusing on in 2000? Is it going to be a new radical 3.5 or what?*

Lanocha: Reflecting on the past 10 years, both my brother and I have a love for English sports cars as well as fast muscle cars. So, this year, we decided to turn our passion into a business opportunity. Our new company is Lanocha Racing Systems, LLC. We offer both new and rebuilt Rover engines with mild to wild twists. Although our primary focus is the Rover engine, we sell parts and accessories for all makes and models of vehicles. The main focus of the Rover engines are new cross bolt main blocks. We believe that this engine is superior to the older generation engines with much greater potential for improvement. We are currently developing various horsepower options for 4.0's and 4.6 liters. All combinations are being Dyno tested for ultimate

INTERVIEW (Cont'd)

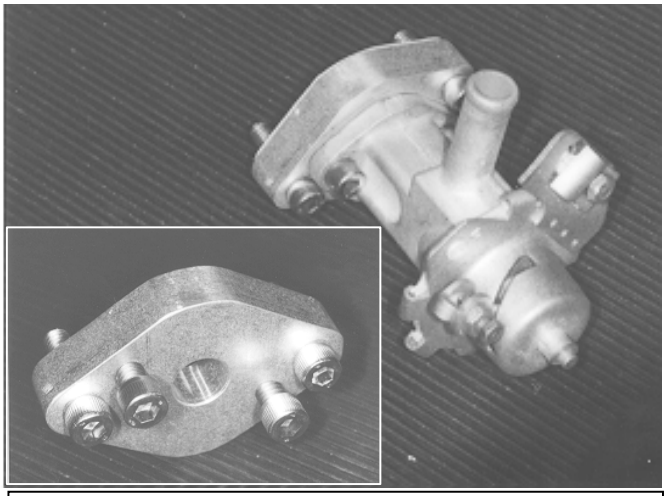
performance. In my opinion, you are going to see a new species in Rover high performance developed by my company. The difference between Lanocha Racing Systems, LLC and other suppliers is that our engines are proven on the track. While our competitors are driven to make profits, we are driven purely by the quest for horsepower and increased speed.

Editor: *To learn more about Tim's company, Contact Lanocha Racing Systems, 3643 Jarrettsville Pike, Jarrettsville, MD 21084 (410) 557-0052 or at www.lanocharacing@abac.com*

NEW PRODUCTS

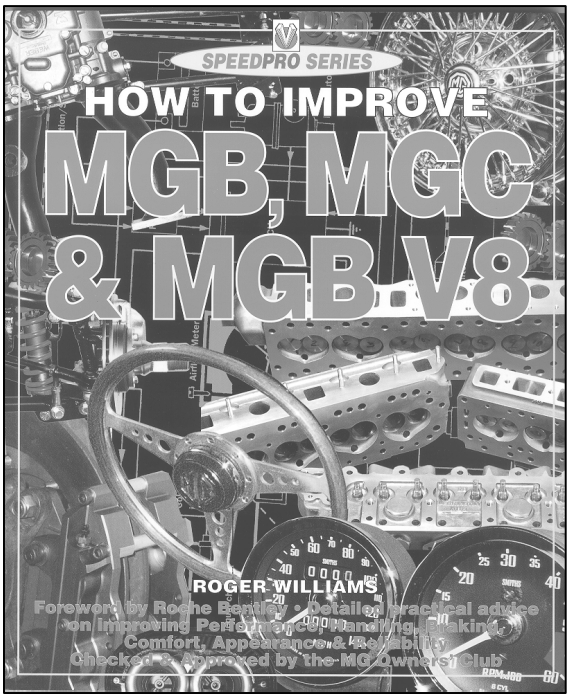
- D & D Fabrications continue to add to their extensive line of MG V-8 conversion components. The latest item is an adapter kit to mate the stock MGB heater valve to either a stock Buick/Olds 215 4-bbl intake manifold or to most aftermarket intakes for the Rover/215 engines. The kit consists of an aluminum adapter plate, two gaskets and four stainless steel socket head bolts. See D & D Fabrication's advert on the front cover for address and phone.

Note: D & D has several additional MG V-8 conversion components in the design stages. Look for more announcements in the next Newsletter and at the D & D Fabrications booth at MG2000, The Abingdon Summer Party and MG V-8 2000.



Top - MGB heater valve showing installation of D & D Fabrications new adapter kit. Kit shown in lower left.

- ***ComingSoon!*** - Roger Williams, author of "How to Give Your MGB V-8 Power" has just completed work on a companion volume. The new book is titled "How to Improve MGB, MGC and MGB V8" and contains a huge amount of information on uprating brakes, suspension, exhaust and the engines, both 4 and 8 cylinders. The book has a decided slant toward the V-8 equipped MGB's.



Contents include:More powerful four and six cylindeer engines, More powerful V8 engines, General engine improvements, 5-speed gearboxes, Front suspension, Rear suspension, Braking system, Wheel and tyre options, V8 induction and exhaust, Heating and cooling, Bodyshell, interior and hood, Electrical system, and long lists of both American and worldwide component suppliers.

The new book is comprised of 128 pages with 160 black and white photos and illustrations. It will be available in late May.

(I have received an advance copy and immediately read it cover to cover…..twice. There is an immense amount of information here for any MG'er intent on making improvements in thierV-'s8 acceleration, corneingr, stoping or looks. - Ed.)

"How to Improve MGB, MGC and MGBV" will be in the Newsletter stockroom in late May, 2000. Order your copy early using the enclosed subscription/book order form.

Late Breaking News!!!!

MG V-8 enthusiast and Florida resident Don Rausch has extended an offer to host the 2001 NAMGBR MG V-8 Register Annual Meet in March. The proposal includes some track time at the Sebring roadrace track! There are several vintage racing events in the immediate area as well as a possible Disney World package for those interested. The Historic Sportscar Racing Association has expressed interest in assisting with arrangements and events. This could be an extremely good opportunity for the best MG V-8 meet yet as well as a way for us Northern boys to get away from the cold and to see and meet the southern V-8'ers.

Firm decisions and a scheduling of the meet will depend on feedback from you! If you would be interested in attending or have suggestions, please contact Don at P.O. Box 6635, Bradenton, FL 34281 (941) 753-8587 or The MG V-8 Newsletter ASAP.