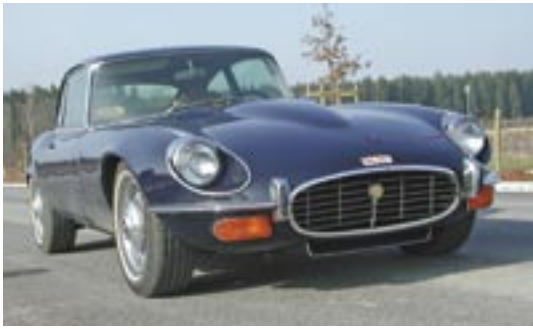
Cost considerations

– affordable, or a money pit?

Purchase

Cheap E-types are often poor value. True, a modest, roadworthy Series 3 is a lot of car for the money, but the wrong car can cost a fortune later. Yes, there are sound but lowish-priced V12s around compared to some Series 1s (especially where fuel's expensive) but if previous owners struggled to buy petrol, did they drive the car for decent distances, did they perform thorough maintenance?



Import value: Philippe Picavet's Canadian (now Belgian) car.

Affordable to run?

With V12 E-types you really must think about more than purchase price. Ask yourself honestly if you can afford to run it, which is the best way of preventing deterioration and protecting your investment. If you can't justify a high price for a 'hobby' purchase and have to consider a cheap car, good luck, but be careful and use this book to the maximum in your choice of car.

Buy dear, run cheap

If you're looking for an excellent show car you'll need to spend ● 30,000 plus – sometimes far above. A good 'driver' to use with little more than servicing will cost around ● 20-25,000 for an OTS, and ● 15-20,000 for the 2+2. Both mean you'll spend significant money initially but can use the car immediately and hopefully spend little on repairs, though servicing still costs more than other E-types, or even some modern cars.

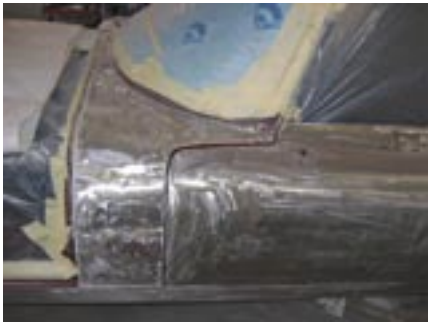
Buy a wreck, build for years

The alternative involves paying less for a poor or incomplete car, then buying parts as you build the vehicle or pay a professional to do so, which are complex or costly, respectively. The advantage is that you can slow down or pause, depending on finances, and you've a hobby in the meantime. However, it's likely to be years before your first drive.

The best views are rarely cheap.

Mid-price rolling restoration

Beware the third common route – that of buying a car to drive after some light



This was just some of the hidden horror.

the minimum to get the car through inspection before selling to recoup their outlay. You end up buying their problem.

LHD/RHD conversions

Many E-types have returned to Europe from America. Conversion normally reduces their value but enhances saleability in the UK. RHD serial numbers run 1S1001 onwards (OTS) or 1S50001 onwards (2+2), with 1S20001 and 1S70001 onwards signifying LHD OTS and 2+2 respectively. Check if headlamps, wiper parking and side lamp colours are correct for your market, as some safety inspections insist on this. Late American-spec cars used large ugly rubber overriders, but if these have been removed, so much the better. North American V12 E-types used air injection, charcoal vapour canisters, and other emissions-related equipment, and also had extra side repeater lights which spoiled the clean lines. Unlike Series 1 cars, centre gauges and switches have the same sequence on LHD and RHD cars.

2+2 cars converted to OTS specification are a risky proposition. Even if you fall in love and see them as a cheap route to a convertible V12, they may prove difficult to sell on when the time comes (see Chapter 4).

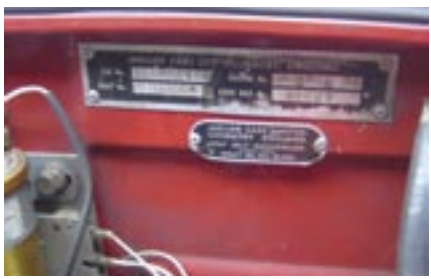
Condition (body/chassis/interior/mechanicals)

Query the car's condition in as specific terms as possible – preferably citing the checklist items described in Chapter 9.

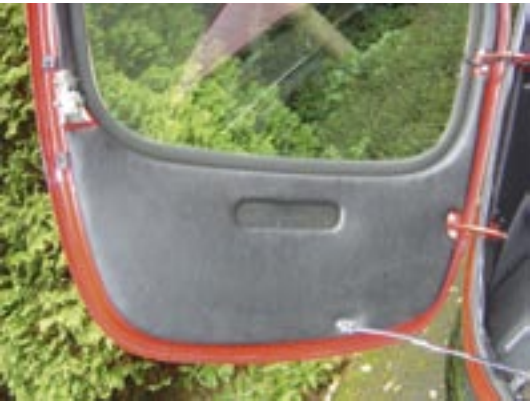
All original specification

An unmolested original car is invariably of higher value and easier to get spares for than a customised vehicle. One exception is if the air pump and other emissions equipment of USA cars have been removed, as many buyers prefer this when legal. US cars converted to V8 normally do not have cut frames since the V12 cradle and transmission tunnel are more spacious than the 6-cylinder cars but, needless to say, E-types butchered in this way are worth far less.

ID stickers lack security. Note extra US pattern lock.



ID plates can lie. This car has a different engine/ gearbox fitted.



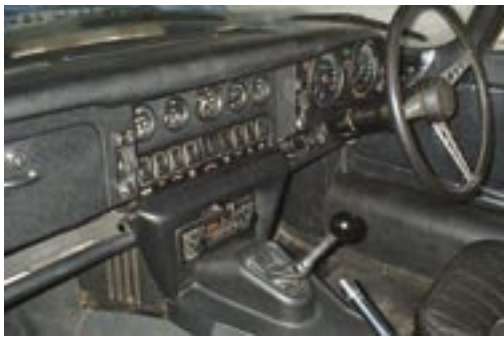
Correct hatch trim, but missing hinge covers.

Body and interior

Is the glass Triplex marked? Is the correct leather-rimmed steering wheel fitted, complete with large rubber center boss? Wooden steering wheels are only right on 6-cylinder cars. Is the gear lever gaiter the correct leatherette material, with the correct ferrule? Is the dash top the correct moulding, or home-made with creases at the sides? Are the under-dash panels, glove trays and map light fitted? Is the rev counter red-lined at 6500rpm and not from an earlier car? Is the radio a period item, and are the original size speakers fitted, or modern monsters? Is the interior trim held with invisible clips or incorrect visible screws? Are the rear light lens and headlight trim screws Pozidriv? Is the bumper rubber trim mounted evenly? Are the wheels the correct, chromed, pressed steel, with hub caps and correct E-type center badges, or silver painted with chrome caps and trims and 'Growler' badges? Are any wire wheels the 6 inch V12 smooth hub type with earless spinners? Is the exhaust correct, with the single back box and four-pipe 'whale tail' (early) or twin-pipe finisher (late)?

Is the boot or tailgate seal correct, allowing the panel to sit flush and the correct 2+2 grille present? Are boot boards and support pressings correct? Is the toolkit present, with knock-off tool and hammer or wheel brace? Is the jack a cantilever type with long handle? Is there a correct twin-sided SU fuel pump, or has someone tried to use the smaller single-sided 4.2 type or modern electronic pump?

Are the panel gaps good with flat level bumpers and vertical overriders? Is the bonnet intake free of corrosion and dents in the chrome trim around the mouth? Is the undertray scoop undamaged? Is the vent grille at the back of the bonnet correct for the V12, or has someone tried to make the S1 pattern fit? Some grilles were silver painted, not chrome. Wipers were silver, too, and the single twin jet was silver plastic. Are the rear lamp lenses and reflectors Lucas brand and the correct colour for your market? Are the shock absorbers original pattern, and the half-shaft universal joint covers fitted on each end? If all these items check out and the provenance is good, the car is at least close to concours and worth checking thoroughly.



Moulded plastic instead of leather trim.

9 Serious evaluation

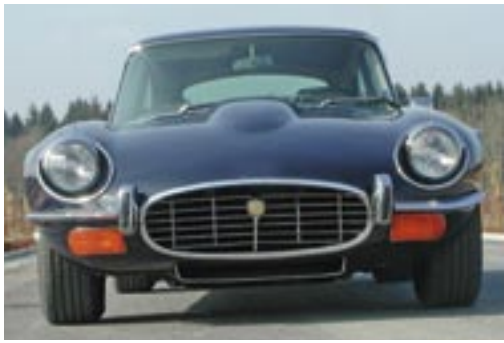
– 60 minutes for years of enjoyment

This more searching examination should not only confirm if the car is worth buying but will almost certainly show up some areas of weakness to use as bargaining points. Circle the Excellent, Good, Average or Poor box for each check and add up the points at the end. Be realistic in your assessment and remember to be especially vigilant where body or frame checks are concerned. Use your weak magnet to check for filler and some kind of pointer/probe to check for thin metal or perforation, but don't jack up the car on the sump or thin metal.

Exterior and running gear

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

How does the car stand? Flat and even is correct, with a very slight nose-down stance acceptable, especially with low fuel level. Any sideways sag or down-at-heel stance means tired springs or badly adjusted torsion bars, and, since the V12s have some adjustability, there is little excuse.

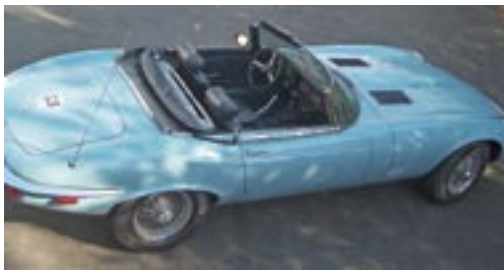


Car is level. Trim can be straightened.

Body ripples

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

A good E-type should have flowing, undistorted horizontal reflections in the bodywork so try to park next to railings or fencing to give a reference line. Look especially for creases near the fronts of the doors or the rear of the bulkhead sides, Also look for distortion along the bottom door edges or near the wheelarches. Car park dings will leave typical short vertical creases and are unsightly but not indicative of serious damage. The sills should be straight and true for the whole length, with good body colour, sometimes over stonechip paint.



Look for horizontal index reflections.

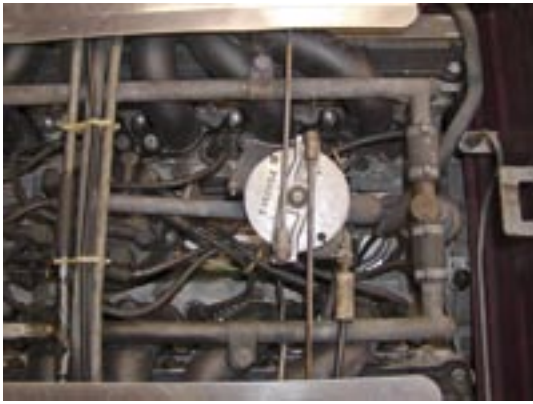
Underside and sills

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

This should be body colour over stonechip. The same finish applies to the boot floor, which should be solid, and the bonnet undertray,

Body mount is solid but arm is cracked round bush.

the alloy of a separate tappet block sandwiched between the cam cover and the head proper with its valves and ports. The arrangement is successful but slightly leak-prone. Whilst some oil misting is expected, serious oil leaks, especially from the half-moon seals or oil pipe banjos at the back are troublesome. Protruding pieces of gasket by the sparkplugs may simply mean later one-piece inlet manifold gaskets have been fitted and roughly cut back between adjacent ports. Look for any signs of damage to the alloy castings, nuts and studs. The exhaust manifolds are hidden under extensive heat shields, so loose or damaged fixtures or castings need a dental mirror and torch to see.

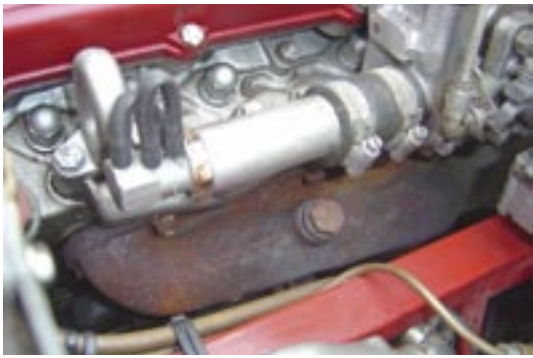


US-spec air injection and gulp valve.

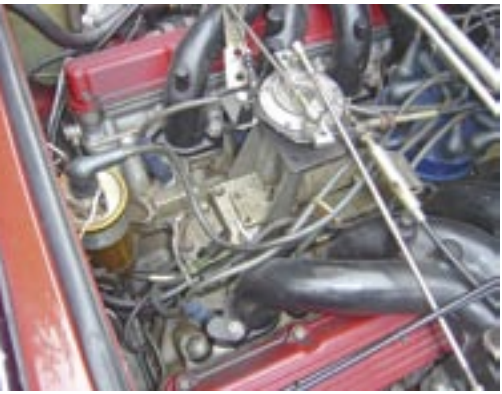
Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

Cylinder block

The V12 block is aluminium with separate cast iron 'wet' liners which are a push-fit in the open deck design. This requires fewer core plugs to cast and is, therefore, less prone to coolant seepage. There should be no butchered studs or nuts or signs of sawn-off lugs or welding. Ground-off engine numbers are a bad sign, but thankfully the V12 can easily last decades with just basic maintenance. There should be a full complement of sump studs and no cracking or heavy leaks front or back from the crank seals.



Missing heat shields under carbs.



Cruise control cable and sport coil.

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

Oil leaks and pressure

A classic oil leak, which only the Series 3 cars suffer from, comes via a rubber