

Snake River MGB

Like a Tiger but Modern

The gist: Build a thoroughly modern MGB that can run with the V8-powered specials of years past.

“The Snake River transformation reminds me of what a modern-day Tiger would look like if it was based on an MGB,” explains John Batterton, the car’s builder. But where Shelby swapped in a small-block Ford to create the Tiger, Batterton went modern with a 2.0-liter turbo-four from

General Motors—basically what you’d find in the latest Camaro.

In stock trim, the Camaro engine makes 260 horsepower. Batterton’s shop can easily add more than 100 to that figure.

Before installing the engine, however, the shop takes the MGB donor car down to a bare shell for a bit of modernization. The gas filler door, for example, is removed. Underneath, a mid-body torque brace reinforces the chassis. Also standard: an A-arm front suspension with coil-over shocks all around. Vented discs are also fitted at all four corners.

Inside, the car channels the MGB’s earliest years, as Snake River fits a first-generation dashboard and the matching buckets. Aftermarket seats, along with

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air conditioning and even seat heaters and power windows, can be added.

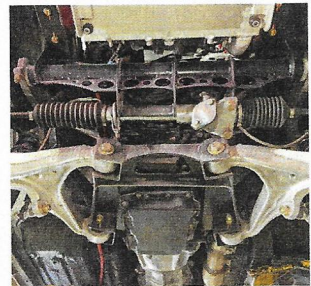
As Batterton explains, the bespoke nature of the car allows all manner of customization. Six-speed automatic instead of the standard five-speed manual box? Four-piston front brakes? Up to 9-inch-wide wheels plus subtle fender flares? It can all be done.

In person, we found the Snake River MGB to look polished and complete with superb attention to detail. It has no excuses, no issues.

The price for this updated take on an old friend? A turnkey roadster starts at \$120,000, with the GT adding \$5000 to that figure.

“The Snake River Classics MGB is vastly superior in acceleration, handling and top speed compared to the Tiger,” says Batterton, himself an owner of the famed Sunbeam. “The Sunbeam body structure pales in comparison to the strength of the unibody structure of the MGB.”

He does offer one concession, though: “The Tiger has the panache of Carroll Shelby. We will never have that, but we at least have a snake in our company name.”



Call it an MGB reimagined. The Snake River Classics bodywork, including the optional fender flares, is subtle. Open the hood, though, for the big news: a modern, computer-controlled GM turbo-four. Modernization underneath includes an A-arm front suspension.