



E-types in various stages of build; S3 was having its power steering rectified. There's room to shift seven cars around the workshop

IN PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

New Forest Classic Cars

Location Wellworthy Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 8JY
Tel 01590 610929 **Web** www.newforestclassiccars.com
Staff 17 **Hourly rate** each job is priced individually
Specialism Jaguar E-type restoration (mainly Series 1)

You might have seen the odd XK in the light and airy workshops of New Forest Classic Cars on the edge of Lymington, but the focus is firmly on E-types – and S1s at that.

The game here is restoration and the work is a mixture of customer cars, which might have been bought after the stripdown and rebuild began, and the firm's own vehicles for sale – slotted in as the schedule allows. The earliest car currently in progress is a 1961 fixed-head and the latest is a '64 roadster that came to the UK 20 years ago. The 1965 drophead with factory hardtop was the demonstrator but is now for

sale. It's POA because this ground-up approach doesn't come cheap, so think in the £150,000 ballpark.

It all escalated when the business, then in small workshops in town, so impressed a customer it was restoring an E-type for that he bought the company and all its stock. Eighteen months later, about three years ago, NFCC moved into its current base, where there's plenty of room to move seven cars around.

"We're a bit anal about keeping it tidy!" confesses Matt Draysey, who, as technical advisor, looks after the day-to-day running of the show.

On the ground floor there's also the showroom, plus bodyshop and paint prep room, with spray booth and blast cell self-contained satellites. Upstairs is the engine shop, with "dirty" rooms for dismantling and a clean shop next door, plus the stores and in-house trimming, and a waiting area for customers that doubles as a boardroom. Here you can peruse the 'books'. Each project – ideally an untouched original vehicle, often sourced from the States – comes with a hard-bound photographic record of the work.

About eight cars go through the

process every year, each one taking six months or so to do. "It depends on the condition of the shell," says Draysey. "It takes longer if all we're keeping is the bulkhead." Cars retain proper concours-level details such as spot-welds showing under the rear pans, which are often filled over in a heavy-handed restoration.

Sensible modifications are a fact of life for an E-type that's going to be used on today's roads so, as well as an engine overhaul with Weber carbs and high-capacity radiators, the menu includes five-speed gearboxes and brake upgrades, as well as a choice of wheel widths and tyres. The default is to original spec, but with discreet improvements such as extra heat- and sound-proofing under the carpets, plus electronic

ignition and a high-torque starter.

"The difference is in the detail," is the motto, and one recent innovation has been to replicate toolkits using original-sized spanners and authentic Thor hammer.

There's also some high-tech 3D scanning in the air that will help to ensure conformity, so watch this space. **Paul Hardiman** CLASSIC



Angie Faulkener tidies cockpit of roadster



Mark Read checks crank with micrometer



Daniel Smith covers reboastered bucket