

HEALEYWERKS RESTORATIONS

We thought it would be interesting to follow select Maserati restorations. This is the first in a series documenting the restoration of a 1963 Sebring being professionally restored by Healey Werks in Lawton, Iowa. We have seen an upsurge in top-quality Maserati restorations, especially on the six-cylinder cars. You will be able to follow this restoration in *Viale Ciro Menotti*, on the maseratinet.com Web site and on healeywerks.com Web site. This will allow us to see the detail that goes into a restoration of this magnitude, observe some of the typical challenges as they are discovered, and see how they are overcome. Check back occasionally to follow the progress.



Borrani wire wheels were typical on the Sebring. You can tell this is a series I Sebring by the vents at the bottom of the fenders, the two-piece vertical taillights, and the front light group, including 3500 GTI style turn signals. Series I headlight trim is "pinched" in the middle and there are no fog lamps. The Sebring was designed by Giovanni Michelotti while at Vignale to take Maserati's successful entrée into GT cars with the 3500, use the mechanicals and update the styling to offer an upscale 3500.



Maserati Sebring #AM 10101853 (1963 model year) was sold new in California in 1964. The original owner is unknown. This is a series one car, of which roughly 350 cars were built. In the early part of 1968, the car was then sold to Thomas Fuhrman of Manhattan Beach, California. The car was owned and driven by him until it was taken off the road in the early 80s. The car was put into storage until early 1990 when the car was sold to Andy Leonard. Mr. Leonard stored the car until it was sold to Jacques Di Borgo in 2000. #AM 10101853 was kept in storage until it was sold to The Healey Werks in late 2003. It has not been used in over 20 years.



Note the disc brakes on both the front and rear wheels. Quite advanced for an early 60s car. Another item of interest is the English wheel you can see in the background. It is a staple panel beater tool for anybody needing to fabricate sheet metal parts.

Note the Sebring data plate indicating a series one car by a serial number starting with 10101####.

Series II cars have a number starting with 101/10####. The 1963 model Sebrings were numbered between 1539 and 1879 (except 1793, which was produced in 1965 – go figure). Only odd numbers were used.



This example was a US delivery car and is equipped with US spec. instruments and bumper overrides, for this market. It is also equipped with air conditioning, Allemano steering wheel, Borrani wire wheels and without power steering. You can also see this car has an intact shift knob, as well as all of it's other rare, and difficult to obtain pieces. This Sebring also has retained it's original fuel injection system, which is still in good working order. (more on this point later) Having a complete car is a significant benefit in any restoration.



Although a California car, it still has managed to acquire some rust, mostly in the front and rear inner wheel housings and front fender vents. This car is very much a time capsule car, as the interior, mechanicals, body and paint are original. This makes this particular example a very desirable and exciting project for restoration. The rockers, floors, and most of the rest of the car remain solid. The car will receive a full disassembly and rotisserie restoration to the very highest standards. The body will be stripped to bare steel, then any corrosion and structural repairs will be carried out.

Left: Note the Nardi steering wheel – the same as was used on the Allemano 5000GT.

The interior seat, carpet, and interior panels will be rebuilt and duplicated as original. Every mechanical system and component will be thoroughly inspected, restored and rebuilt. We have acquired many NOS parts to make the restoration much more accurate. However, many parts are no longer obtainable and will require fabrication and replication in-house. **(Publisher's comment:** *I can recommend a great source where you can find huge inventory of Maserati parts available for same-day shipping.*)



Note the original, intact, Lucas fuel injection system still on this car.



CONCLUSION:

When you are considering a car for restoration, here are a few points to consider.

The common rust/rot problems on Sebrings tend to be in the following areas:

- Rocker and rocker to floor joints.
- Front wheel arch to fender is a problem where it meets the footwell-fender vent area.
- Rear fenders behind the wheel opening.
- Rear fender well.
- Main floors and trunk floors.
- Door bottoms.

The Sebring series, however, did not suffer the same electrolysis problems that existed with the earlier 3500s and later Mistrals. This is due to a steel chassis and superstructure with a steel body, while the earlier 3500s and the later Mistrals had steel chassis and superstructure and were aluminum-skinned. The problem with these

cars exists in their construction. When the cars were built, very little, if any protection was used between different metals, thus causing severe corrosion problems.

In purchasing a car, it is extremely important to look for previous rust and collision repair that has been done. Very often a car with a gleaming paint job can hide tens of thousands of dollars in repair horrors. It would be better to seek out a car that has a solid chassis and body that may need quite a bit of mechanical or cosmetic work, than to undertake the correction poorly done work. Often, this type of poor work will have to be corrected to make the car safe for road use. Another area of concern is missing parts. Many cars have been robbed over the years of impossible to obtain parts, which can make for a very expensive and frustrating search. These are just a few points to keep in mind when you look for a car or restoration candidate.

Thanks to MCI Member, Craig Hillinger, owner of Healey Werks, for contributing this article.