

Presidential Mike

By Mike Martin

Well. Here's the latest. My 48 spoke wires, if adjustable, would cost \$60 to true and another \$25 to paint. That's from Hendrix Wire Wheels. A simple test is to put a wrench on the spoke nipple and try to turn it. If it turns the spoke, throw the wheel in the dumpster. That's pretty straight forward.

On Friday the 14th, Jack Stein and I went on a road trip to Lawton, Iowa. What's there you ask? Why it's the home of "Healey Werks". I answer. It is actually West of Lawton and less than 10 miles East of Sioux City – on the North side of Highway 20.

We met the owner, Craig Hillinger, in the showroom where there was space for at least three cars. Sitting in the room was the most beautiful BRG BJ8 IU have ever seen, It sat next to a Ferrari and wasn't ashamed to be in the same company. That happened to be a Gold Concours 99.7 car!

We then went on a tour of the facility. You'd have to see it to believe it. Each stage of the operation was separate. Final assembly held around 6 cars and was as clean as a hounds tooth. Not just Healeys mind you, But a Ferrari, a Hemi powered Daimler, an E type Jag and two more Healeys.

The next room was the engine room. Another clean room. And a bunch of engines covered with plastic sitting on stands. There was more than one V12 in the batch.

Another room was a very large space that could hold around 12 cars. This was the tear down and fabrication area. At least 6 Healeys were in various stages of repair. Craig said they can build a car from scratch, if needed. Various presses and rollers were there – things I'd not seen before.

The paint room contained the prep area and the paint booth. I asked if they did routine repairs and maintenance, to which he replied "of course, come with me". We walked back to another area near the showroom. Low and behold, there was a shop that's about 6 cars wide and 3 deep. It contained an in-house Dyno that is computer controlled. They can place a car on the Dyno and run it through its paces without even going out on the road. Amazing!

We spent about an hour with Craig and got the royal treatment. He said they are taking jobs now for delivery in the summer of 2007. By the way, shop rates are \$71 per hour. The only drawback was the 4 ½ hour drive down there. Out front sat a new Ford flat bed transporter, so I'm thinking he might pick up for you. We did stop at the home of Blue Bunnies Ice Cream for a treat on the way back – not bad for a couple of old geeks on an adventure! I won't soon forget that BJ8.

Lets go back to the future. Coming up this month: Ellingson's on the 12th, Healey /Morgan picnic on the 13th, Gymkhana on the 19th, and the Antique Tour on the 27th. Lots of activities for all, and a great change to strut your Healeys. Wait a minute, I almost forgot PIE on the 2nd! We'll be off to Oregon on the 29th of July and back on the 23rd of Aug. See you on the Antique Tour.