

Why I purchased a TR4

Why rose-tinted glasses led to the purchase of a Triumph TR4

I was over the moon when I passed my driving test in 1982 and overwhelmed when my Mam and older brother scrapped together £50 to surprise me with my first car, a 16-year-old, red, 1968 Mk1 Ford Escort, that became my pride and joy.

As a naïve 18-year-old, I was ill-prepared to maintain a 1968 piece of Ford engineering and in less than two years I'd not only learned how to undertake its routine servicing but battled rust and had even needed to swap out the engine myself.



Despite this car and its Mark II successor being complete rust buckets that needed multiple push starts by friends at college that were continually being stolen, I always looked back at those times with rose-tinted glasses.

As a new graduate trying to build my career in Exhibition Design down South, my priorities had to change, and what I'd learnt faded into a distant memory. Many years later, I still wear those rose-tinted glasses and had a longing to pick up where I left off with what have become classics.

Finally, I was able to take my aspirations of owning a classic seriously and there were only two options that I was willing to entertain.

The Jenson-built Volvo P1800 initially captured my heart with its organic form and a jewel-like dashboard that any Swiss watch company would admire, but it's a cruiser rather than a sports car, and I wanted to own something that would be lively to drive and bring a smile to my face every time I drove it.

Few cars move me like a Triumph TR4 and once I got behind the wheel of one, I found myself grinning from ear to ear. Its simple engineering, bullet-proof engine, lively drive, and stunning views from any angle had me hooked.

After almost 40 years of owning modern cars and faded technical knowledge, I opted to play it safe and turn to a dealer for my first and current TR4. 551 XPJ was originally in Spa White when bought in Wimbledon back in 1962, before it was restored in the late 90's and painted in its current Royal Blue.

Although this is my first Triumph and my first TR4, I'm hooked and adore it. I'm looking forward to spending many a day bringing it back to its former glory although it will still need to take a back seat until I retire in a couple of years and leave my hectic work life behind. In the meantime, I'm hoping to grow my knowledge and confidence to become much more self-reliant in maintaining it.

