

Tech Article; August, 2012

We have been busy at the shop since we opened and several of the cars we have done have been ones that sat a number of years. If you have one of these in your garage or yard (if it has sat in your yard for years it is best to get rid of it) do not think you can just put some gas in it and a new battery and make it drive. Please do not do that. Follow these simple steps and it may help. It is not uncommon for the pistons to be stuck in the engine and the hydraulics to be bad.

Anticipate this and you will be extremely pleased if they are ok. The first thing you should do is replace the battery and clean the terminals. DO NOT try to turn the engine over at this time. First pull the plugs and squirt or pour a mixture of ATF and mineral spirits in each cylinder. Add enough to fill the piston top as a lot of cars had dished pistons. Some MGs are referred to as coffee cup pistons. Let this sit a day to soak into any rust or crud that is around the rings. ATF has some cleaning ability and the mineral spirits thins it and helps it wick into the crud. While you are waiting, disable the fuel pump. If you have a mechanical pump, you can remove the fuel line at the carb and put it into a clear bottle. Also, to kill some time, remove the air filters. I check the ignition system also but do not replace anything. Wait.

Turn the key to the run position and see if your electric pump works and see what it pushes out. If it is rusty or mostly water, anticipate a new tank. Do not try to clean the tank and use a sealer. Most of them are dissolved by ethanol it seems and that clogs up the filters and jets. Also you should plan on getting a new fuel sender as well.

There is no need to change the oil right now; we will wait until the engine runs. The oil will usually appear clean after the engine sits for years as all the debris that it has accumulated will have settled out. This will not be picked up by the oil pump. After the engine has soaked, try to turn the engine by hand first and not with the starter. If it moves, then use the starter to turn it over a few times. Next, spin the engine enough to get oil pressure on the gauge. Once you have oil pressure, install new plugs. Have a can of Gum Out carb and choke cleaner, not the store brand, and squirt some into the carbs.

If the ignition was ok when you parked it, it should be ok now. Even Petronix will not go bad from sitting. Make sure everything is connected, except the fuel system. Try to start it while squirting the Gumout. If it starts, listen very carefully to the engine when it first starts and while it is building up oil pressure. You do not want to hear any deep rattling in the bottom end. If you do, then you need an engine rebuild. Rod, main, and cam bearings do go bad from sitting. They get acid etched over time. If you hear this knocking, then you have to make the decision if the car is worth fixing. Engine rebuilds are very expensive.

If you have a car that is worth \$5,000 as a running car, putting a \$4,000 engine rebuild in it will not make it a \$9,000 car. It is now a \$5,000 with a new engine. It is now decision time on the car. From my point of view, have the engine built. But, you have to make that decision. For this article, let's assume the engine was quite.

Now that the engine runs and you have oil pressure, get some good gas and fill the float bowls if you have SUs. You can get some fuel line, connect it to an external pump and fill the float bowls in either the SUs or Strombergs. Do you know why we have Strombergs? MG owned the rights to SUs and Triumph got tired of buying them from MG so they had their engineers design a new carb, and they worked with the Stromberg carb company to produce it and then sold the rights to them. Back then MG and Triumph were competitors and Tr. did not want to deal with MG.

Filling the float bowls will only work if the carbs look ok. If they are frozen, we, or you, need to do more work. But, now you know if the engine is good and it is worth proceeding with the project. We will get the engine running with gas flowing into the carbs before we go much further. You can test the clutch and trans. and the charging system. We also put in a BG44K product that helps the oil clean the inside of the engine. It is designed to dissolve the crud that accumulates in an engine. Now, after the engine runs for about 10 to 15 minutes, you can change the oil and install fresh.

So far, you have a running engine. If you were lucky, your carbs were ok for this short time, the oil stayed in the engine, and you remembered to put water in it before running it 15 minutes. I guess that could have been mentioned earlier, but I knew to do it so you should have also. If we take a car that has been sitting for a while, a year or longer, and get it up and running with everything needed to run on the streets, you can anticipate over \$3,000!

It takes that much time and parts to do the fuel system, tuning the engine, brakes and clutch including rebuilding/replacing all cylinders and replacing hoses. This is a fairly major undertaking and should not be taken lightly. There are lots of things that can and will go wrong, there will be things that do not work but need to. It can and most likely will cost you more than you anticipate. Tires can only sit so long before you have to replace them. However, when the car is back on the road, you will be happy you fixed it. You will remember the good times from before and how much enjoyment you got from the car.

And as always, you can always call me with any questions. You can reach us at 770-689-7573 or our new number, 678-355-0877. We are happy to help you. See yall somewhere soon. Barry