

V16 Restore - Starting From the Beginning

Chapter 1 - Discovery is a Constant Process

To improve readability I will offer this ongoing restoration as a series of short articles. This is the first of a few.

In early 2021 I decided to buy a hobby car to replace my 1956 Austin Healey LeMans which was sold at auction in 2015. For many years I have always wanted a V16 Cadillac. In April 2021 I purchased a 1940 Series 90 Town Car. It was represented to me as one of two factory authorized Durham modified Town Cars and recently owned by the Clive Cussler collection in Colorado. Before purchase we knew the engine failed compression testing so serious engine repair would be needed and thus we adjusted the purchase price.

After spending the summer of 2021 driving the car and working to understand it, the car was sent to RestoreCars, Mark Clayton, for:

- engine rebuild,
- full wiring replacement,
- dashboard and instrument restoration and
- body work to repair minor damage from sprung rear door hinges.

A timeline and budget was discussed. Having restored the 1956 Austin Healey and a 1941 Harley Davidson, I started this project with the understanding that as work progresses, discovery becomes is a constant theme.

That points start the project.

The team first diagnosed the car to determine that one bank of cylinders was running too rich due to a flooding carburetor. That repaired along with the discovery of a short in the voltage regulator resulted in the car running very well, except for the pool of oil forming at the rear main seal and huge amounts of coolant being consumed.

Due to the rear main seal leaking oil, coolant being consumed and unacceptable compression test results, we pulled the engine with the intention of a full rebuild.

Notice the bolted plates at the left corner along with the plate fitted to long way and the cast iron removed:



We determined the original engine block was severely damaged and a replacement block was the best path forward. Fortunately a replacement was immediately found and received within a few weeks.

Picture of replacement “junk yard” engine block follows:



Next chapter will be Discovery of the New Engine Block.