

Moss Motors buys Al Moss's MG TC

Compiled by Steve Finch

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When we [Hemming's] were out in Monterey for Pebble Beach weekend, we looked over this 1948 MG TC at the RM Auctions preview. It didn't click until reading the catalogue description that this was the car that had been owned since 1948 by Al Moss, the founder of Moss Motors, and was the very car that had inspired him to go into business.

Now we learn that Moss Motors, which Al Moss sold in 1977, was the winning bidder for the TC, paying \$66,000, including a 10 percent premium. The company announced the purchase on its website: "Considering the car's history, and founding connection to the company, we could hardly let it get away. With a successful outcome, Al's TC is now part of the Moss Motors British car stable. The car is located in Goleta, [California,] and will be used as originally intended, and preserved as a symbol of Al's contributions to the British car hobby. We'll have plenty to say about the car in the coming months." Al Moss bought the car on September 13, 1948, from its original owner, who had won the car in a "Why I Like Philco TVs" contest sponsored by Gough Industries, which was a distributor of both Philco radios and MGs at the time. The winner, a young mother with two children, drove the car just once before putting it up for sale.



Moss was in the forefront of the post-war sports car movement in Southern California, taking his new MG to the race track, and competing in gymkhanas and "funkhanas." A TC is the sort of car that requires frequent adjustment, lubrication and general fettling, and Moss, who had grown disenchanted with the local MG dealership, decided to open his own shop in Los Angeles in 1949. Many an enthusiast found

their way to Moss Motors by spotting his TC parked on Olympic Boulevard. He published his first parts catalogue 50 years ago this year.

Al Moss's TC, painted in the Bronze and Cream colors used by the factory racers, has been a fixture at the Monterey historic races. The car had long run with a supercharged engine from a later TF model, but recently regained its original engine, now equipped with a Shorrock supercharger.

Photos by Patrick Ernzen, courtesy of RM Auctions.



RM Auctions 2012 Monterey

1948 MG TC Roadster, Lot 106, Chassis # TC 5473, Engine # XPAG.6182, Sold \$66,000. Shorrock-supercharged XPAG 1,250 cc OHV inline four-cylinder engine, SU carburetor, four-speed manual gearbox, rigid front and rear axles with semi-elliptic leaf springs, and four-wheel hydraulic drum brakes. Wheelbase: 94"

- Owned since 1948 by E. Alan Moss, founder of Moss Motors
- Original engine with period Shorrock supercharger; rust-free California and Arizona car
- Fascinating history; featured in several books and catalogues
- Toured extensively with numerous entries in the Monterey Historics

While all classic MG sports cars are treasured by their lucky owners, this 1948 MG TC is a particularly



special example with a truly exceptional history from new. Offered from single ownership since 1948, under E. Alan Moss, of Moss Motors fame, this is likely the most famous TC ever offered for sale at public auction. In fact, it represents the origins of not only Mr. Moss' successful business enterprise but also the birth of the British sports car scene in North America after the close of the Second World War.

The TC was purchased by Mr. Moss on September 13, 1948 from the first owner, who won it as the Grand Prize in a "Why I Like Philco TVs" contest sponsored by Gough Industries, a Philco radio distributor and MG's West Coast distributor at the time. Since the contest winner was a mother with two young children and the MG only offered seating for two, she elected to sell rather than keep her shiny new TC. She only drove the car once during her brief ownership, and Mr. Moss acquired the car almost immediately thereafter, narrowly beating out two dealers during an intense but successful bidding session.

Following participation with the TC in an early MG rally, Al started an MG club and then opened his own specialist MG repair shop, which eventually grew into Moss Motors. He raced the TC competitively early on, including several times against eventual Le Mans and Grand Prix World Champion Phil Hill during 1949. Soon after, he focused more on the "fun" aspect of the sports car experience, including "funkhana," a much-more relaxed version of the gymkhana and autocross events that became so popular during the era. Over the following decades, Al toured cross-country and racked up many show trophies with the TC. The pair returned to the track for competition in the second edition of the Monterey Historic Races, with some 18 race entries between 1974 and 2010. In May 2011, Al drove the TC on a long-distance tour through Arizona, New Mexico,

and Colorado.

Now showing an approximate 113,000 miles from new, the TC is finished in Bronze and Cream, the old MG Works team racing-colors, and is complemented by a set of chrome wire wheels and tasteful chrome accents. Interestingly, these changes date to when the car was only about a year old. A supercharged TF engine was fitted for 22 years, but the original engine has been reinstalled and it offers heightened performance with rare period performance parts, including a Shorrock supercharger kit. In addition, the TC provides great handling, courtesy of the capable suspension tuning of Mr. Moss. A California, and later an Arizona-based car from new, this fascinating TC has been featured in numerous books, including Al Moss' highly entertaining autobiography *The Other Moss: My Life With Cars and Horses*, as well as within the pages of both *Road & Track* and *Motor Trend*. Good copies of the original logbook and several photographs, plus the car's original Bill of Sale and owner's manual, accompany the car at the sale as well.

A wonderful example of the MG TC, the car that ignited America's postwar sports car boom, it carries fabulous provenance and over six decades of single ownership, rendering it, bar none, one of the most desirable TCs in existence.

"Courtesy Hemmings Daily, a publication of Hemmings Motor News."
<http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/2012/09/17/moss-motors-buys-al-moss-mg-tc/>

Al Moss Passes Away

Al Moss, the founder of [Moss Motors](#) and one of the early champions of the post-war British sports car movement in the United States, has died. He was 80. The cause of his death has not been released.

Al Moss bought his first MG, a TC, from its first owner in 1948; we photographed him in 2009 driving it through the paddock area of [Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca](#) during the Monterey Historics, where he was a regular competitor. (The car was recently [sold at auction](#).) The TC led Moss to become acquainted with a number of other British car enthusiasts in Southern California, inspiring him to open his repair shop, and shortly after, a parts business. He published his first catalogue in 1961. Moss sold the company in 1977 to his long time friend Howard Goldman, and entered into semi-retirement in Arizona, but he remained active in the world of vintage racing, and was a regular at the Monterey Historics.

"Courtesy Hemmings Daily, a publication of Hemmings Motor News."
<http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/2012/09/27/al-moss-1932-2012/?refer=news>