

No Wining and Dining for this MGB Owner

By Rich Guinta

The engine temperature on our 1979 MGB-LE was running rather hot on I-75 as we made our way to Windsor for the Essex County Wine Tour. I turned on the heater and was able to keep the thermometer out of the red zone, but probably should have turned around at that point. However, we proceeded to the meeting place in Windsor and the engine cooled down nicely while we waited for the start of the tour. Unfortunately, by the time we arrived at the parking lot of our first stop, the ice cream parlor in Amherstburg the engine was overheating. When I parked, the fans had stopped because the in-line fuse had gotten so hot that the fuse holder melted separating the wires from the fuse and breaking the circuit. There was also a pool of antifreeze under the car but none of the hoses were leaking. Needless to say, we determined it was not wise to continue to any of the wineries. Before the group left for the first winery, helpful members had given us electrical tape to reconnect the fan wires to the fuse, identified that the leak was at the heater box valve and provided us with a container of antifreeze and a funnel.



That's Rich, above, on the phone... "MG Help-line ?"

Elaine and I decided the best thing to do was to get a bite to eat at that wonderful Italian Restaurant right by the river and plan how best to return home. As we were eating lunch I asked the manager if he could call a tow truck and at about the time we had finished eating, the tow truck arrived. I had called my mechanic in Adrian, Michigan and he gave me the name of a towing company there that would come and get us, but they would not come into Canada. The owner told me he didn't have a passport and the last time he was in Canada he had a bad experience, so he "was never going there again." I began to wonder if I was dealing with a professional or an angry child! However, when I told the Canadian tow truck driver that I needed to get to the USA side of the bridge, he said that he did not have a passport and could only take us to the Canadian side at the Duty Free Shop. We decided that the best plan was to go to his office and arrange for yet another tow truck to meet us at the Canadian side, one that could take us to the US side of the bridge where the driver from Michigan would meet us. Three different tow trucks, but what else could we do?

After speaking with another towing company they assured me they could meet us on the Canadian side and drive us to the US side, but their drivers were all out and they

would have one of their drivers contact me as soon as one was available. Thus, we proceeded to what we thought was the bridge. The next thing we knew we were arriving at the Duty Free Shop at the Tunnel! I explained to the driver that I had specified the Bridge but he said he thought I wanted the Tunnel. He said the tow to the tunnel was \$30 less. When we got to the tunnel, I still had not heard from the towing company that was supposed to call "as soon as a driver was available." When I called them again they said that the Detroit Police Department was using all of their drivers in some kind of sting operation and it would be at least another 30 minutes before any of the drivers would be available.

It was then that we went into the Duty Free Shop and searched the Windsor telephone directory for another towing company that could take us back home from Canada. Meyers Towing arrived 30 minutes later and took us to Adrian, Michigan where our mechanic was waiting. We left the car at his shop and he gave us a ride home. We left Amherstburg at around 2:30 PM and arrived

home at about 9 PM. The first towing bill was \$130 and the second was \$530. The experience, priceless!

Final analysis: a non-functioning thermostat. The fan circuit melted because the fans never went off and they are not designed to run continuously. The crazy thing was that last year I replaced the radiator and bought a new thermostat and gasket but didn't replace the old one because I bought a 180° thermostat and wanted to install a 160° thermostat. There is now a new thermostat, as well as a new water pump, new heater valve and a new in-line fuse holder. After speaking with my State Farm Agent she convinced her adjuster to cover the entire towing bill, which they did. I have already received and cashed the check.

The only problem now is that Elaine does not have much confidence in the MG and says all future trips to Canada will be in our Honda Accord. The fan circuit problem was clearly a "Lucas issue" but it's pretty clear that the root cause was mechanical; thermostat and heater valve, not to mention owner *stupidity* for not replacing the thermostat when replacing the radiator. Oh well, as I like to say: "It's just part of the adventure."

By the way, the only wine we bought that day was from the Duty Free Shop! ■

(Continued from page 1)

From Pelee Island Winery it was on to "Crew" (Colchester Ridge Estate Winery) where Dale and Lise met us. We parked our cars in front of the vineyards for group pictures of cars, not people. Just cars, I wonder why that is? It was a long walk up to the retail store but it was worth it; a private tasting was awaiting us in their barrel room. Two tables for fifty were quite nicely prepared for us with pretty tablecloths, cheese and crackers and ice water - yes we we're here for the ice water. Actually it was refreshing, as the day was getting hotter. Our hosts were very pleasant and informative. For instance did you know that when we drink white wine our voices stay fairly quiet and our mood is mellow, but when we drink red wine our voices become louder and our mood becomes more joyful? Oh! Wait a minute, were they referring to us? The group bought more wine.

It was a short drive to our next winery, Colio Estate Winery, a very pretty stone front building with a long front porch, barrel flower planters and a pavilion out back. We arrived late but our hosts kindly waited for us. Again we tasted four wines and it was explained to us how grapes are blended to get their unique flavours. We bought more wine and by now we were all anxious to arrive at our next venue. After all the sun and driving and wine (purchases) it was time to eat. Along with the Poupards and the Elliots, Marty and I (or me, I can never remember the rule here) were the last to leave Colio. All the other cars were gone. Was it something we said? Was it the lack of proper directions from the get go? (I thought they were over that.) Would they rather find their own way through rough, winding country roads and fight through numerous construction zones, detours and turtle slow traffic? Would our American friends chance getting lost in a foreign country rather than follow us? It appeared so.

Our caravan that started out with twenty-five cars was now down to three. We headed to Windsor to Lilly Kazzilly's, our dinner destination. We arrive to find all the cars safe and sound in the parking lot. Marty was very proud the he did not lose anyone, I'm referring to the two cars that followed us.

Inside, everyone was having a good time enjoying cold drinks and conversations. For those who are not familiar, Lilly Kazzilly's is a casual dining restaurant located on the Detroit River riverfront. What a view! Our food was served in a timely manner and it was great! Mary Anne, our hostess added a few nice touches such as a welcome note at the top our personal menu and napkins in the club colours, did anyone notice? It was here that I once again noticed what a great group of people we have in the WDMG Club? Marty and I (or me) have made life-long friends and many memories.

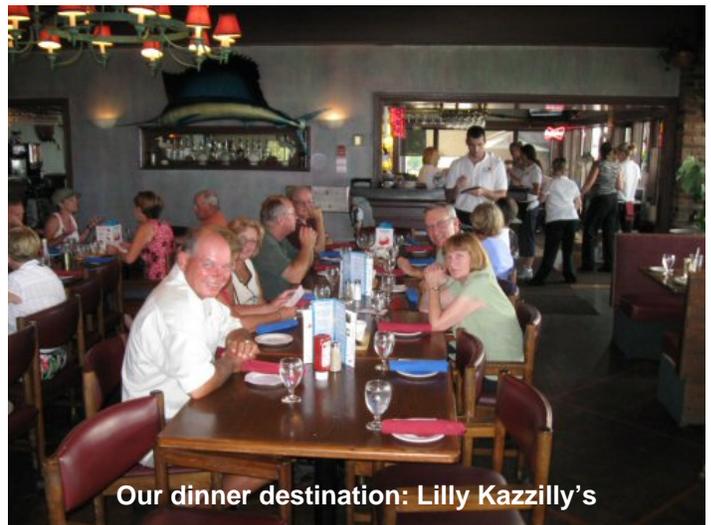
Thank you so much to all of those who attended the event and made it a wonderful experience. Good friends, good food and good wine, life is too short, it doesn't get much better than this. ■



Third stop, CREW - great photo-op



Wine tasting in the CREW barrel room



Our dinner destination: Lilly Kazzilly's