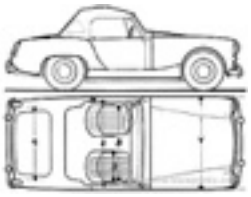
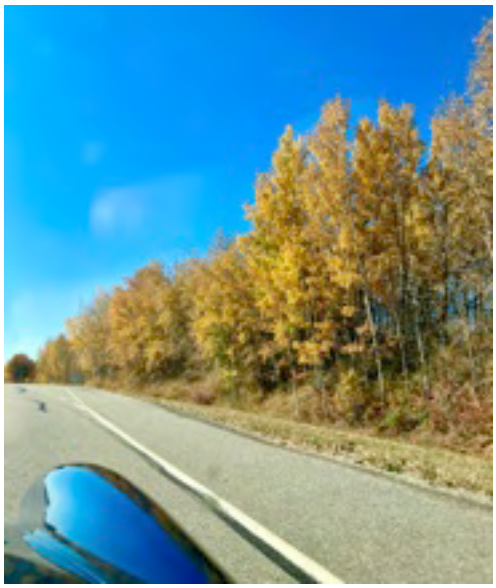
Just Hopping Along In My Little Olde MG

By Roy Coulthard



Well, 2020 is finally behind us, and I could not be more pleased. It turned out that the persistent abdominal pain I had since Nov. 2019 was a chronic case of appendicitis, finally diagnosed by a CT Scan in Nov. 2020. I had the offending organ snipped and removed in early December just as the latest lockdown was starting and surgeries were being cancelled. Unfortunately, I ended up with an angry infection in one of the incisions which is still healing up as of writing. All that is to say that I was distracted from writing about my Fall Colours Run earlier in October 2020. Amanda and I couldn't make Zach Small's run, so we decided to take a trip to the mountains in Magnus, our 1967 MG Midget, on the following weekend. After teaching my class until 7pm on Friday, we packed up and headed out about noon Saturday. The sky was clear and blue, and we opted to run with the heater off and the top up. We headed out HiWay 16A and Parkland Drive past some lovely fall foliage near John Crawley's stomping grounds. With a factory optional 3.7:1 differential, Magnus will happily motor along at 110km/hr on the highway turning ~3800rpm. You can even hear the radio!



We made it to Hinton for fuel in one go, eventually running with windows down due to the 26°C temperatures and stopped for late lunch and a beer sampler on the sunny patio at Folding Mountain Brewing. With the temperature still warm, we pulled the top down for the trip into the park and took a detour up the Maligne Lake road and back while we still had daylight. We finally rolled into Jasper House Bungalows for the night just as it was getting properly dark.

Jasper House is a lovely property next to the Athabasca River with 1950s-vintage wooden duplex bungalows with bedrooms and kitchenettes. We had a good night's sleep save for the alien noises of the dozens of elk on the property. In the morning, we headed south to Lake Louise in the misty rain after a stop for sustenance at the Bear Paw Bakery in Jasper.

Lake Louise has turned into a silly place since last I visited, with cars and guests vastly exceeding capacity every weekend even into the shoulder season. Despite this, we rolled up to the upper parking lot, and one of the attendants, who liked Magnus, waved us into a parking stall right away. Just the advantage of driving

an MG! We met up with a friend who was up from Canmore with his internet-famous adventure-cat, Gary, and took a misty walk to the end of the lake. Gary did stop to visit Magnus but didn't seem overly impressed.

We stopped at Lake Louise village for some 94-octane petrol - the minimum recommended in Magnus' owner's manual - and headed back North for Jasper. Without a doubt, the nicest fall colours were along the Parkway North and South of the David Thompson Highway. We stopped for a couple of short walks on the way back and headed up Highway 93A from Athabasca Falls for a little bit of variety on the way home to Jasper House.

Monday morning dawned cloudy, but we opted to head for Mt. Edith Cavell anyway after stocking up at the Bear Paw. After years of neglect, the very sporting Cavell road was finally repaved in the past ~5 years, but they're semi-serious about the 40 km/hr speed limit. We took another misty walk and ate up perhaps the last two wild strawberries of the season found along the trail.

On the way home we stopped at Pembina River Provincial Park for an afternoon picnic lunch. The trip was otherwise uneventful save for the synchro on 2nd gear probably failing in Spruce Grove. Overall Magnus managed ~1600 km and 7.03 L/100km (40 mpg) on the trip, with two segments better than 43 mpg!

Not bad for a 53-year-old sports car!

Roy Coulthard