



RV8 Mods Survey

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The Survey

- Of the 25 responses, 20 (84%) rated themselves as having a very good or moderate technical knowledge,
- 10 members did all their annual servicing, 7 did “most”
- 71% (17) had owned an RV8 for more than 3 years
- 7 for less than 3 years and one was a former owner.
- I think this means a reasonable sample of the (probably) more technically minded owners who have been prepared to invest some time and money in improving their cars.

RV8 Mods Survey

Modification - top ten by number	No	Rating	
Fitting new tyres	22	4.305	86%
Replacing coolant plug	21	3.065	61%
Fitting bespoke Spax shockers	19	4.153	83%
Adjusting tyre pressures	17	3.829	77%
Fitting a windstopper	14	3.142	63%
Replacing gearknob	12	2.715	54%
Fitting a performance exhaust	12	2.868	57%
Fitting poly suspension bushes	9	3.972	79%
Fitting replacement clear lenses	9	2.222	44%
Rechipping engine	9	2.959	59%

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RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 1: Fitting new tyres



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Number 1: Fitting new tyres

- If it's out there we seem to have tried it! Members quoted using Michelin (Primacy), Continental Sport Contact 2, Pirelli P6000, Firestone Firehawk, Vredstein Sportrac3, Toyo Proxes, Goodyear Efficient Grip and Dunlop Direzza Sport Z1 (In Australia).
- The most popular were the Michelin Primacy, partly as the OE tyres were Michelin Pilots but reports on their performance were good. Derek Matthews had tried Pirelli P6000 and switched to Michelin Energy tyres which are available as 205x65 (Pirellis are 215x60). He found them lighter on steering and generally better.
- Prices for all tyres vary but were from around £65 to £90 per tyre (270 Australian Dollars thanks Peter).
- Many said their new tyres improved the ride as well as the obvious grip and safety benefits, so a "no brainer" really, "you pays your money...."
- <http://www.v8register.net/subpages/gatewaytyresindex1.htm>

RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 2: Fitting Spax shocks



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- The second best rated mod was the fitting of SPAX shocks. 19 of the 25 respondents had fitted these. They are available from Clive Wheatley at £522 for a full set of four. The shocks were developed by SPAX specifically for the RV8 and offer complete flexibility with easy to change settings from 1 to 22. The settings can be changed without removing wheels by turning on full lock on the front or reaching around the tyre on the back. Very useful for track days.
- Excellent feedback from nearly all members using these shocks, great improvements on the OE and even on the (yellow) Koni shocks previously available. "In my opinion the single best mod", "Great improvement". However John Cumming reported three members whose rear shocks developed a knocking sound when travelling over large bumps.
- The interesting feedback is on settings. SPAX recommends 6 front and 12 back and some members use this. Others have played around with softer settings, 4 and 6, 6 and 6, 3 and 8, however most recently people are trying the softer settings of 3 front and 3 rear, which is quite a lot softer than most. Reports are that it works well. Worth trying. Ian Haynes has his car lowered (by 25 mm) and found 7 and 12 was the lowest he could get without bottoming and Peter Varley found 3 at the front bottomed on his car, so it is worth taking care with the experimenting.
- <http://www.v8register.net/gateway/rv8suspension.htm>

RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 3: Fitting poly suspension bushes

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Number 3: Fitting poly suspension bushes

- 9 members had fitted replacement poly bushes on their front suspension. They are also available for the rear suspension and anti-roll bars. Some members have fitted “the full monty” others just the suspension or just the anti- roll bars. Cost for suspension only is around £100.
- One member felt that the anti-roll bar poly bushes but didn’t see any real improvement, however nearly everyone rated these highly as improving their driving experience and “Well worth the money”, particularly on the front suspension.
- <http://www.v8register.net/rv8partsnotes/rv8partsnotesindex10frontsuspension.htm>

RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 4: Adjusting tyre Pressures

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Number 4: Adjusting tyre Pressures

- 17 members reporting adjusting their tyre pressures, however as with tyre choice tyre pressures are another source of great variance. We range from 24 front and rear through to 28 front and rear, with every variation between them. 22 and 24, 26 and 28, 24 and 28, 26 and 27, 28 and 32, 1.7 bar and 1.8 bar! Members whose cars do not have power steering tended towards the higher numbers, and I understand Brown and Gammons recommend 28 and 28 on the basis that it helps lighten the steering. (I used to do the same on an MGC). I think it can depend on the actual tyre size also and perhaps the most helpful comment is to ask when you get them replaced. Having said that my local tyre fitter had no idea! I have used Pirelli P6000 on 24 and 26 for years with no problems, but I do have EPAS and 16 inch wheels! There is a V8 Register advice note on tyre pressures.
- <http://www.v8register.net/subpages/news291210tyrepresures.htm>

RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 5: Fitting a windstopper

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Number 5: Fitting a windstopper

- 14 members had fitted a windstopper. There are various makes available, Clive Wheatley has a perspex bespoke version (£234) which three members had fitted and were happy with. ClassicAdditions.com also produce a mesh version for the RV8 at £186 and similarly members reported good experience with this but tricky to fit. Some members have fitted MGB or MGF versions (and in one case an MX5 sacrilege!), however these need to be altered to fit. Also some taller drivers alter them to move the top of the screen out of the rear view mirror and to give more protection. (Newton Commercial, Leiston in Suffolk can supply suitable brackets).
- On balance most users would recommend them, "essential for driving at high speeds", and several commented that they had fitted for the benefit of their partner who found their driving experience improved. However not all were so keen, one member would not recommend them feeling it made no difference, and another that having bought one it was too fiddly to fit and store so he didn't use it.
- <http://www.v8register.net/subpages/gatewaywindstoppersindex1.htm>

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Number 6: Replacing coolant plug



RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 7: Rechipping engine



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Number 7: Rechipping engine

- As most will know the Rover V8 we have fitted in our cars is the 3.9 unit fitted to land rovers, with the LR engine management unit. As a result it is possible to improve the engine management by fitting a different chip more suited to sports car use. 9 members had fitted a replacement chip. The main chip used is supplied and fitted by RPI Engineering in Norwich, although there are others (Supachip for example). There are also two types of RPI chip available, the "Optimax" and the "Tornado" which offer slightly different levels of enhancement. Most members have opted for the Optimax and report significant benefits. Improved drivability, smoothness, better fuel consumption (up by about 5/6 mpg). Costs are around £345 for the Optimax and £425 for the Tornado (see RPI eBay shop). In most cases RPI fit upgraded Magnecor leads and sometimes a vacuum advance unit, making the total cost with fitting and the supply of all parts nearer to £700 (£625 in 2005).
- One or two members have fitted the chip themselves, or used a more local mechanic. The RV8 Workshop Note gives sufficient detail to do it yourself I think, however if your car's ignition is not running spot on you may be left with issues to resolve.
- <http://www.v8register.net/subpages/gatewayrechipping1.htm>

RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 8: Fitting a performance exhaust



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Number 8: Fitting a performance exhaust

12 members had fitted a different performance exhaust but there is some variance here on members' feelings. Three members found the single box system (as picture) too noisy and had reverted to the OE twin box. Derek Matthews had a new double box system made by Torque Technique Ltd, Wilton near Salisbury an exhaust specialist at £350 (Stainless steel), John Cumming had the middle box removed by Power and Performance, Honingham Norfolk. Peter Varley in Australia had a 2.3 inch bespoke system made with high flow cats. Most others have bought from either Clive Wheatley or Brown and Gammons and declare themselves happy with them. Cost is around £300/£350 for single or double respectively plus fittings. One final note, if you fit the Hoyle IRS you need to remove the centre box.

RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 9: Replacing the gearknob



RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 9: Replacing the gearknob with an Elm burr "Starkey" gearknob (RV8NOTE256)

- 12 members had fitted one of Terry Starkey's replacement gearknobs. It costs £45 plus £2.50 UK postage. There are two designs, one slimmer and one rounded. At the time of the survey Terry told me he had sold 152! Members universally praised this mod, "Very pleased with it", "Looks fantastic on the car", "Really enhances the look of the car, especially compared to a worn leather one", "A quality product which looks good, feels good just a little luxury". Photo is of my own car 1722.
- <http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE256.htm>

RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 10: Fitting replacement clear lenses

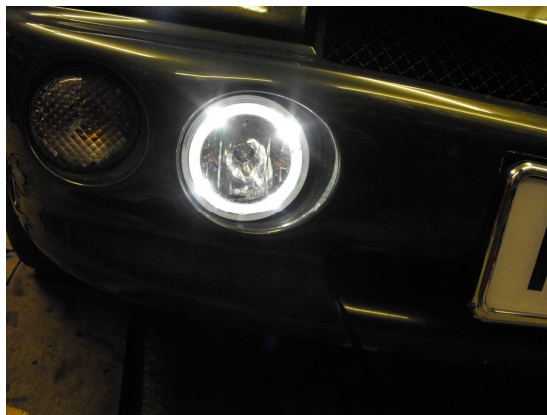
RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 10: Fitting replacement clear lenses

- 9 members had fitted these feeling they make the car look “more modern”. They are available from Clive Wheatley at £16.95 however I am told you can use Land Rover Defender reversing light lenses which are cheaper at around £7 each. (Mansfield 4x4 Bury St Edmonds) You also need to replace the bulbs with amber coloured bulbs.
- <http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE253.htm>

RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Number 10: Fitting replacement clear lenses



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Two other mods of note

- Seven members fitted power steering
- Two members had fitted the Hoyle independent rear suspension

RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Fitting a PAS or EPAS system (RV8NOTE235)



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Fitting a PAS or EPAS system (RV8NOTE235)

Seven members had fitted these. There are three options. Firstly fitting an electro-hydraulic system, requiring a new steering rack, oil reservoir and pipework. The MG Owners Club fit this system at around £2,400, and it takes a couple of days. Alternatively you can opt for an electric motor system as fitted to the MGF. Some members have fitted an MGF system, however there is now a commercial kit available from EZ Electric systems. Cost is about the same as the MGOC system.

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Fitting the Hoyle Independent rear suspension

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Fitting the Hoyle Independent rear suspension

- Only two members had actually fitted this system. However it seems to create more heat and emotion than any others! Firstly the positives. Those who have had it fitted are really impressed with the results. The car clearly handles better, sits under acceleration, is more comfortable, more enjoyable etc. Also there is no denying the sheer beauty of the engineering. The cost of the whole shebang (including replacement diff and drive shafts) currently is £3,850, plus VAT. Fitting is a two day job so if you are not doing it yourself budget for about £5,500. You can sell your rear axle, shocks etc to a V8 rebuilder probably for about £1,000 or £1,500 so you are looking at a net cost of around £4,000 cash. It is a big investment on a car valued at around £13/15k and you wouldn't see it back on a sale, if that worries you.
- Having said on that we don't drive these machines based on head, we drive them based on heart, for the thrill and enjoyment, the noise, the rush. So I have no problem with people doing this mod, it is the biggest mod you are likely to consider but I would say that if you tour abroad or just if you can afford it, go for it!
- <http://www.v8register.net/gateway/rv8suspension.htm>

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The full list;

Removing/changing CD player	7
Removing RV8 wing badge	8
Replacing lamps in air con intake	2
Changing coolant temp gauge	6
Replacing clock with oil pressure gauge	1
Lowering drivers seat	2
Removing bonnet seal	1
Replacing electronic ignition amp	4
Fitting boot luggage rack	3
Replacing corroded windscreen surround	4
Refurbishing elm burr	5
Installing Thatcham security system	1
Modifying handbrake	1
Zinc plating front cross member	3

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The full list (cont);

Replacing OE wheels	1
Restoring original wheels	4
Replacing front grille with Stainless steel	2
Fitting replacement engine mounts	4
Fitting electric windows	1
Fitting central locking	1
Fitting electric wing mirrors	2
Fitting gas bonnet struts	1
Fitting a cooling fan over ride	4
Changing to silicone brake fluid	1

RV8 Mods Survey

My thanks to everyone who took the time to complete the survey, also to Clive Wheatley, John Hoyle and Classic Additions for photos, and Victor Smith for doing all the hard work on the technical side of the survey.

The 25 members who completed the survey;

Peter Jevons, Peter Varley, Richard Withington, George Wilder, Ian Haynes, Terry Starkey, John Cumming, John Anthistle, John Taylor, Angus Munro, Hugh Boddington, Roy Miller, Jim Dolbel, Gavin Bailey, Ken Clayton, Tim Curtis, Derek Matthews, Nicholas Oliver, Frank Labruier, Roger Aldridge, Mike Lane, George Miller, Mario Kloostra, Richard Wood and Ian Quarrington.

RV8 Mods Survey Top Ten

Any questions?

