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14 QUEENS GATE PLACE MEWS, LONDON, SW7 5BQ
PHONE +44 (0)20 7584 3503 E-MAIL CARS@FISKENS.COM

1960 JAGUAR E2A

1960 Jaguar E2A Le Mans Prototype, ex Gurney, Hansgen, Brabham and McLaren

- One of the most important Jaguar prototypes, a one-off that bridged the gap between the D and E-Types
- Cunningham's 1960 Le Mans entry with Dan Gurney and Walt Hansgen, third fastest overall lap time
- Period US race history with Sir Jack Brabham and Bruce McLaren
- Modern Historic competition at Le Mans Classic and Goodwood
- Conserved in Time-capsule original condition, race preparation by CKL Developments

A one-off Jaguar competition prototype, and the Cunningham entry for the 1960 Le Mans 24, E2A is the famous "missing link" between the D-Type and E-Type. Of such historic importance in Jaguar development, E2A remaining in time-capsule original order, raced by some of the era's greatest drivers, E2A is so special it almost beggars belief she can be acquired as a private possession.

The Jaguar works had withdrawn from racing at the end of 1956, choosing to concentrate engineering resources on production cars but supporting privateers like Ecurie Ecosse and Lister. With a rumbling internal debate on a possible return to racing, eventually this one-off competition prototype was constructed from January to February 1960. Perhaps originally intended for test only, agreement was struck to prepare E2A for American racer and constructor Briggs Cunningham to race at that year's Le Mans. An act of extraordinary trust, this reflected Cunningham's extensive racing experience, his clout with Lofty England, and likely Jaguar's appetite for publicity for the forthcoming E-Type.

Exquisitely fabricated in riveted alloy, with an aesthetic more aircraft than automobile, E2A featured a monocoque construction evolved from the D-Type, but with the front tubular subframe terminating at the firewall like the E-Type. E2A also featured a revolutionary prototype independent rear suspension by engineer Bob Knight, with the driveshaft used as the upper wishbone – the latter designed after a successful £5 bet with Sir William Lyons it could be done in under a month. An alloy-block 3-litre XK engine with Lucas fuel injection was mated (initially) to a prototype 5-speed Jaguar gearbox with alloy casing. With clamshell bonnet foreshadowing the E-Type, air ducts above the rear wheels directed cooling to inboard rear discs and a diff cooler.

E2A travelled to the Le Mans test days in April 1960 still unpainted, and was tested by Norman Dewis and the Cunningham drivers Walt Hansgen and Ed Crawford. Unfortunately aborted after engine failure, Lofty England suspected Crawford missed a gear, and arranged a driver swap to the legendary Dan Gurney for Le Mans. Testing continued back in England, including at the MIRA wind tunnel which consumed so much electricity it was spun up after dark and after an evening in the pub. A tail fin was fitted for directional stability, and E2A was painted in the blue and white Cunningham livery.

Anticipation for Jaguar's return to Le Mans was feverish. Headlines shifted from "Jaguars deny racing comeback" to "Millionaire's Jaguar is Le Mans Hope" – Jaguar emphasizing the private nature of Cunningham's entry. Roll oversteer issues at the rear were ironed out, with Gurney becoming unpopular with Dewis in the process. Keen for a fight, newspapers predicted an opening duel between E2A, Ferrari and Maserati, and Cunningham was quoted saying, "Our Jaguar can go the distance and it's going to keep up the pressure all the way."

Alas, it was not to be. Hansgen took the start, and by the second lap was lying 3rd to Masten Gregory (Maserati) and Olivier Gendebien (works Ferrari). On just the third lap a pitstop with a split injection pipe foretold trouble. As the rain fell, E2A raced into the night working up perhaps as high as sixth – but then a series of pits put her back, finally being withdrawn after seven and a half hours, with a burnt piston and failed head gasket. The 3L engine proved the Achilles heel, ending Cunningham's seventh attempt on the world's greatest race.

Back at the works, E2A was prepared to spend the remainder of the racing season in the U.S.A. with the Cunningham team in SCCA events. A full 3.8 litre wide-angle iron block dry- sump engine was fitted, with triple Weber induction rather than the troublesome fuel injection. The taller 3.8 necessitated fitment of the power bulge to E2A's bonnet, adopting a famous symbol of the production E-Type and allowing the cam covers adequate clearance beneath. The tall Le Mans regulation windscreen was replaced with a more streamlined fitment at this point.

Shipped to America, E2A finished the 1960 season piloted by some of the world's greatest drivers. On her late-August U.S. debut at Bridgehampton, Hansgen (the 1959 C Modified SCCA champion) cruised to an easy win. Greater challenge followed at the Road America 500 held on September 11th at Elkhart Lake – E2A again with Hansgen was 3rd to a Maserati Birdcage and a Ferrari TR/59, despite fitment of an extra fuel tank and a one-stop strategy.

On to the West Coast for the L.A. Times Grand Prix at Riverside in mid-October, where Jack Brabham jumped in as the recently crowned Formula One world champion. A publicity coup for Jaguar was hoped for, and the appearance heavily trailed in the newspapers. Yet in a difficult outing on an unsuitable circuit for a Le Mans thoroughbred, Brabham only made the final via a consolation round, coming home 10th trailing a pack of lighter cars – commenting truly that Riverside just wasn't the place for the Jaguar prototype.

Then Brabham's Cooper teammate, Bruce McLaren raced E2A on October 23, in the star- studded inaugural Laguna Seca Pacific Grand Prix and in a last period brush with greatness. On a very tight circuit, McLaren finished 12th in one heat, 17th in the other – for 14th overall against a very strong field including Stirling Moss in a Lotus Monte Carlo, Jack Brabham in a Cooper Monaco, and a multiplicity of Birdcage Maseratis and Ferraris.

Returned to the factory, in July 1961 E2A was tested at Silverstone by Michael MacDowel and David Hobbs. In March 1962 she became a test bed for the Dunlop Maxaret anti-lock braking system, with E2A's dash still marked SHOT FIRING – PULL for a device to chalk-mark the road to measure braking performance. For a time she was stored at Sir William Lyons' home Wappenbury Hall, and in Jaguar folklore was dusted off in 1966-67 when testing the XJ-13, running as a decoy to distract from the latest V12 mid-engine prototype. By this time she was British racing green.

Unlike the many prototypes sadly scrapped, E2A was saved for posterity by Guy Griffiths the Brooklands veteran and motorsport photographer, entering his Chipping Campden Car Collection. Griffiths' daughter Penny was married to Roger Woodley, the Jaguar workshop manager for customer competition cars, who she recalled coming home one day saying: "I can't believe it. They are going to cut up E2A. It's in the Competition Shop, it's been there under a dust sheet, they are going to cut it up and get rid of it." We said, "We can't let them do that...it would be sacrilege." Eventually Lofty England was persuaded, so long as she wasn't competed being then only a few years old.

Before joining the Griffiths in August 1968, E2A was given a factory respray in Cunningham white and blue livery which she still wears today. Initially sold engineless, a wide-angle D-Type 3.8 was supplied in mid-1970 (E5028-10). An alloy 3-litre engine complete with Lucas fuel-injection per Le Mans spec followed (EE1301-10) – this had 'belonged' to Chief Engineer Bill Heynes, but was released on his retirement. Both these engines will be delivered with E2A today, *as well as the buck for the Le Mans tailfin.*

Registered VKV 752 matching the factory plate in period, E2A was displayed at Griffiths' home Bedfont House for decades with the occasional demonstration and totally preserved. E2A penny chauffeured Swiss Formula One driver Jo Siffert in the cavalcade before the 1970 British Grand Prix at Brands Hatch, made the trip to Le Mans in 1996, and occasionally took E2A to Goodwood for the Revival and Festival of Speed.

After nearly 40 years, E2A was acquired by her present owner via a major auction house in August 2008. Journeying to Monterey to help with the acquisition, noted expert Chris Keith- Lucas found E2A "in the most glorious time warp condition." An accomplished historic racer, her new owner settled on a programme of works which would preserve her aura of originality, leaving totally untouched all the external finishes – but also courageously and conscientiously preparing E2A for racing, in a manner respectful of her historic status.

This included manufacture of a new race-spec 3.8 wide-angle dry sump iron block engine, with the factory 3.8 and alloy 3-litre preserved alongside. Minute additions like seat belts were made with absolute minimum disruption, even the kill switch merely clamped beneath the steering wheel. A new bag-tank was fabricated using a complete dummy tail enclosure for fit, doing away with a temporary tank installed during the Griffiths period. Since these works, E2A has remained in the care of CKL Developments throughout her present ownership.

In recent years E2A has raced at select historic events, allowing the world to enjoy her as intended. In 2010 she fittingly returned to France for Le Mans Classic, on the fiftieth anniversary of her first appearance. Returning to Le Mans in 2011, she also appeared at Pebble Beach, collecting third prize in the post-war sports open class. E2A has also raced many times at Goodwood, with drivers including David Brabham (son of Jack), the late Tony Dron, our own Gregor Fisken, and of course her fortunate owner. An especial highlight saw Norman Dewis return to the wheel at the 2011 Festival of Speed at the age of 91, having extensively tested her in period and indeed listed as reserve driver for Le Mans.

Yet E2A remains fabulously preserved, almost as set up by Norman Dewis at the factory. Like Douglas Bader's Hawker Hurricane, with the aura of an old warbird, her cockpit is like stepping back in time. Full of instruments and switchgear, she bears the DNA imprint of Hansgen and Gurney, Brabham and McLaren, and Briggs Cunningham himself. One wonders what might have been, if Jaguar had constructed E2A for 1958 as originally intended – and whether she or her like might have continued the D-Type's world-beating success, if the 3L engine had been developed to Le Mans levels of reliability.

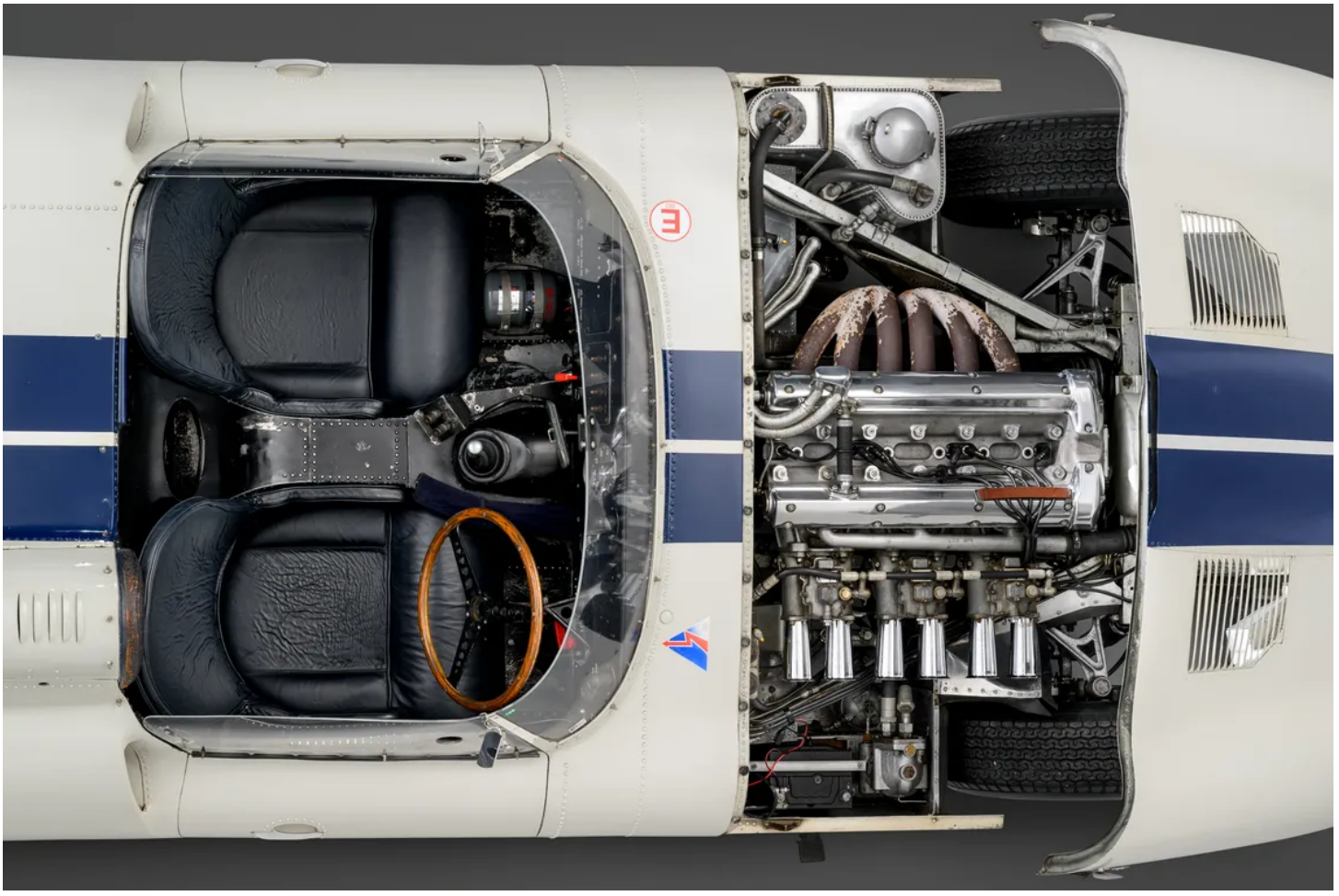
Now available for just her third private ownership ex-works, E2A is the unique ancestral link completing Jaguar's famous engineering development arc from C-Type, D-Type to E-Type. A race-prepared entry for any of the world's greatest events, E2A is a fabulous artefact symbolizing Jaguar's magnificent years of Le Mans success. Beyond all of this, as the sole remaining competition progenitor of the astounding E-Type, she is an engineering landmark of the very utmost historical significance.

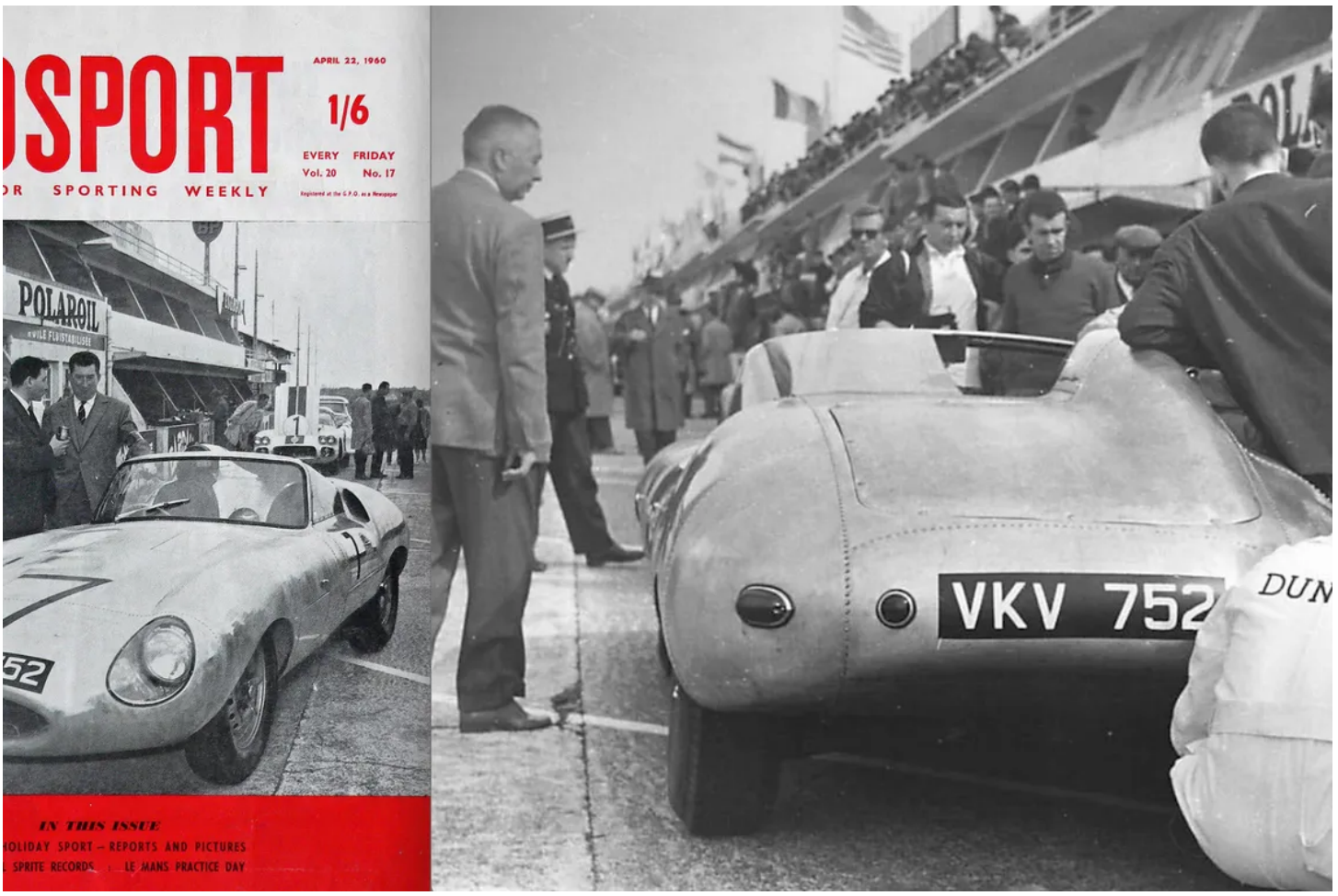
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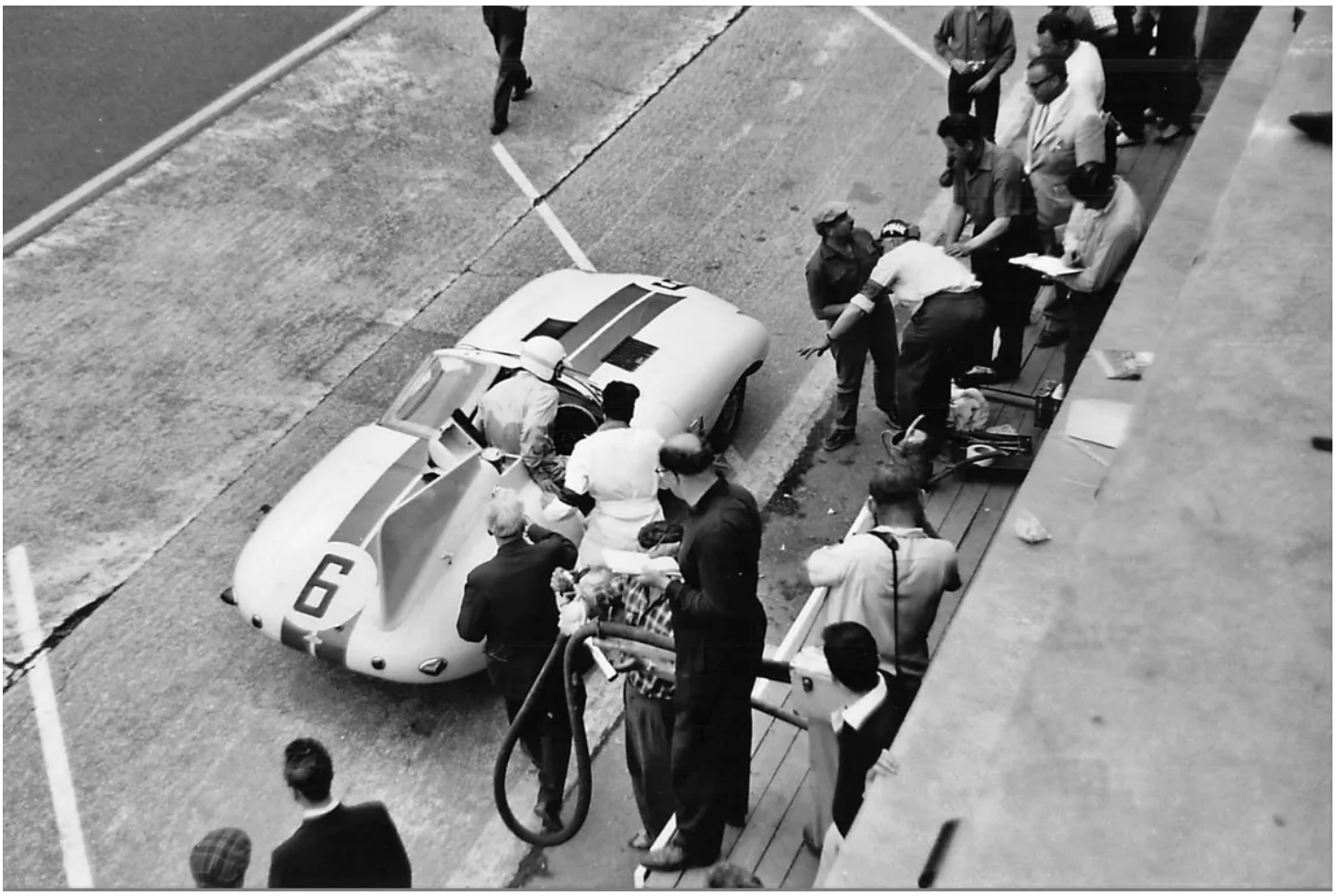

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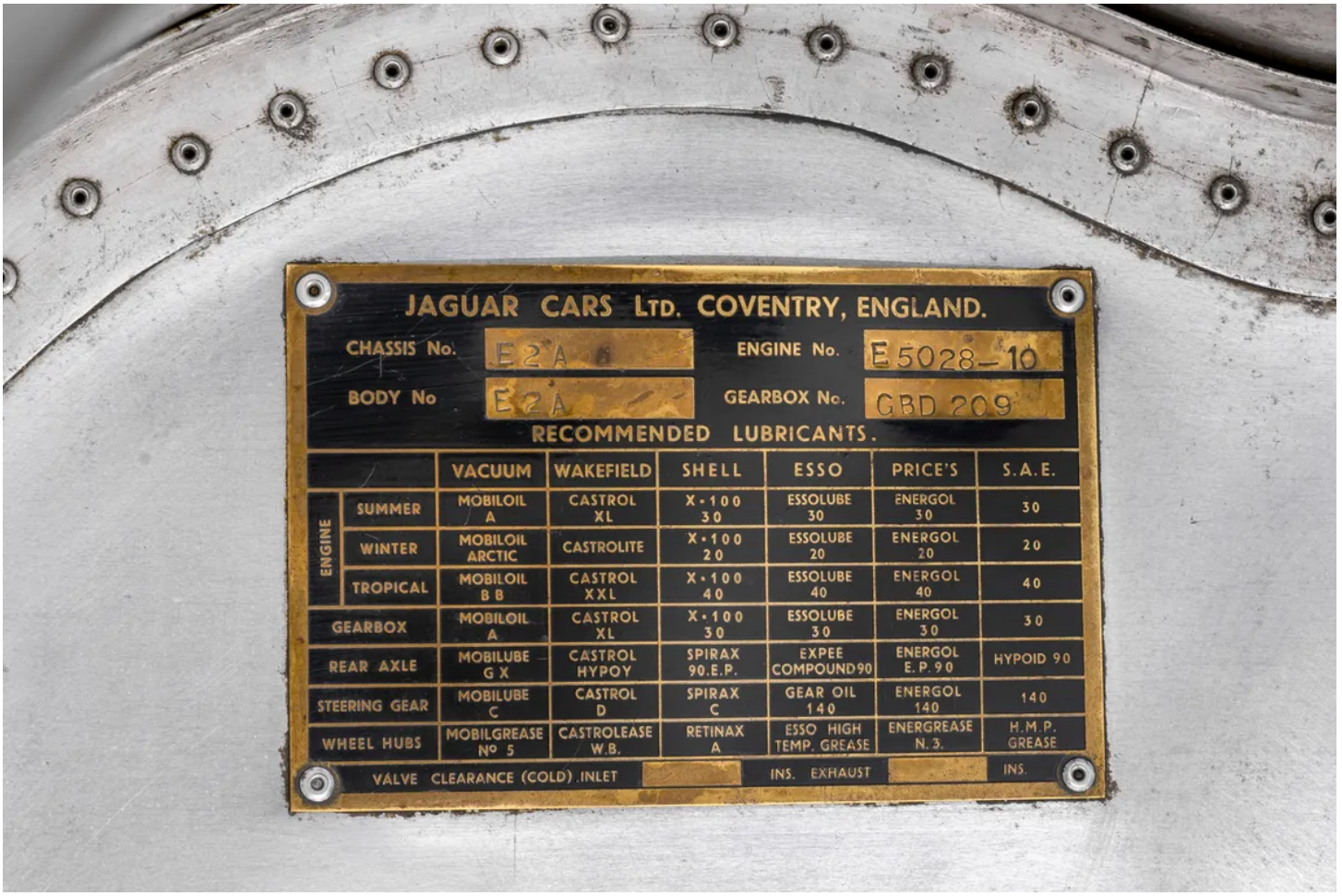

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CHASSIS No. E2A 6 ENGINE No. E5028-10

BODY No E2A GEARBOX No. GBD 209

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