

Enduring Love

Celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, the Jaguar E-type has been given a contemporary upgrade, proving it's possible to make 'the most beautiful car ever made' even more alluring



60 years ago, iconic Italian racing driver Enzo Ferrari declared that the Jaguar E-type was "the most beautiful car ever made," after sliding into the driver's seat. Now an icon of automotive design, the E-type has spawned a legion of acolytes, some of which have taken their obsession to head-turning heights.

Chedeem Battick's passion for (arguably) Britain's greatest classic car has birthed an exciting project, pairing his boutique car company, Helm, with leather specialist Bill Amberg. A marriage of craftsmanship, heritage and 21st-century technology, Helm will produce just 20 bespoke E-types – meticulously upgraded cars that Battick has spent the past decade sourcing from across Europe and the UK – with plush interiors and accessories courtesy of Amberg.

PHOTO: OLIVER EDWARDS



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Interiors see vinyl replaced with hand-stitched leather; E-types are fitted with new engines; the car's iconic monocoque shell; buyers receive a set of Amberg's stylish Rocket bags.

With a design that dates back to 1961, mechanical upgrades were first on the agenda. A steel-enforced monocoque shell (made using at least 30 per cent of the original) encases handmade aluminium doors, a big bore stainless steel exhaust system and a five-speed gearbox. The handmade bonnet now hides a 300bhp fast road 3.8-litre engine, and 21st-century drivers will find comfort in heated screens, adjustable suspension and power steering. Other contemporary tweaks to the classic E-type include LED lighting, a Bluetooth stereo system and air-conditioning.

For the interiors, Helm handed the reins to Amberg, who replaced the traditional vinyl with butter-soft suede and plush, semi-aniline leather. Each aluminium panel is carefully wrapped, with hand stitching adorning the steering wheel, leather toggle switches and grab handles. Amberg has also created a set of bespoke luggage for each Helm E-type, elevating the already impeccable aesthetic. Easily slotted into the petite trunk, buyers will receive two sets of Amberg's hand-crafted Rocket bag in both weekend and briefcase editions, along with leather keyrings for the pure copper ignition key.

"I wanted to create an E-type the way I feel it should be, remaining sensitive to history, but without a vinyl interior and the hassle of carburettor trouble," says Battick of the passion project. "We combine British craftsmanship with the finest standards of automotive engineering, instilling a feeling of love, care and attention." And with 3,800 man-hours going into each one, it couldn't be more evident. helm-motorcars.co.uk

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