

# I could have done it better

British sports cars could yet be Triumphs... Paul Orme looks forward as well as back with a Spitfire/GT6 reworking

**L**HAVE OWNED A NUMBER OF CLASSIC CARS and enjoyed them all for what they were. They've ranged from an MGA, Ford Prefect and Austin-Healey to a Daimler V8. All gave much pleasure because of the sort of driving they provided: I like to feel the road and the conditions around me.

Which car should I choose? It's a bit like going into a sweet shop after Lent. My design career evolved via engineering and clay modelling, rather than the 'normal' route of a college course and then placement in a car studio, so this may give me a different slant.

I've chosen Triumph sports cars, which I've always admired. Triumph had a long pedigree of chunky sports cars, then the feline Spitfire/GT6 range. These cars looked light and lithe; gone were the flat side panels of yesteryear. The cabin was also appealing, for a car in this class. I risk being shot down in flames but would equate the Spitfire with a young woman from the Mediterranean, whereas the TR6 was decidedly male and Anglo-Saxon.

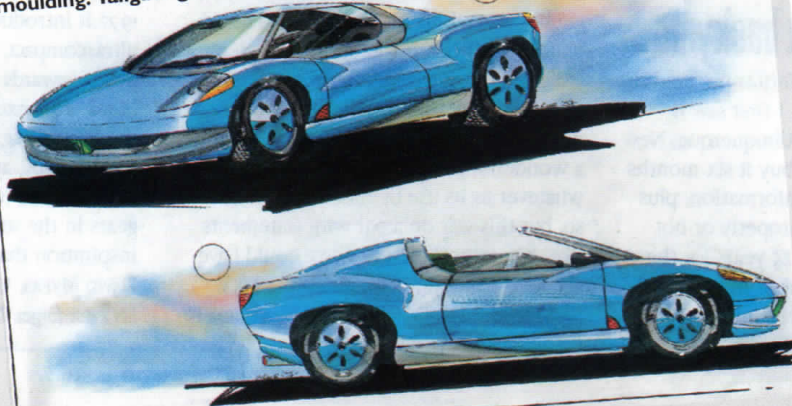
My 'redesign' – a combination of Spitfire and GT6 – is not meant as a clever attempt at hindsight but as expression of a wish: to combine the joys and heritage of the past with technology of the present. Road stance is low, the smooth, injected engine front-mounted and driving the rear wheels, and overdrive is standard. The chassis set-up must be such that you're able to feel the road via the steering and the lower cheeks; 'neutral' handling is not the name of the game here.

The two-seater cabin is minimalist but comfortable, with body paint showing. Instrumentation is minimal,

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Triumph  
Spitfire

Orme's design keeps one-piece opening front but adds fixed grille/bumper moulding. Tailgate gives rear access; overall shape is curvy but low and sleek



**PAUL ORME**  
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A designer from a mechanical engineering background, Paul is involved in concepts and styling for a broad range of automotive, marine and other clients. Past projects include work for Rover, Porsche and BMW



too, and of analogue type; the small-diameter steering wheel is thick in section and adjustable in height.

The bonnet and front wings remain one-piece and forward-opening. Modern safety standards would necessitate a horizontal split below the headlamps, to allow for a combined bumper/air intake polymer

moulding to be attached directly to the chassis. This could either be in body colour or in neutral 'anthracite', which can bestow a longer look.

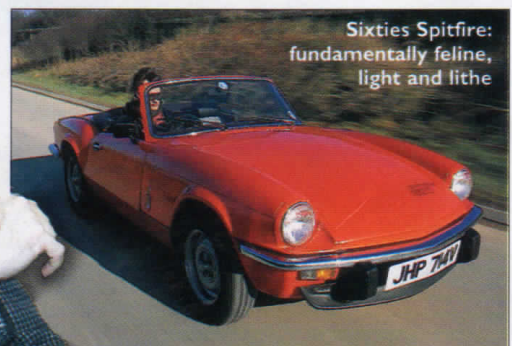
The waistline is low and curved, adding cabin space and providing for side-impact protection. Body panels are to be bonded to the chassis, facilitating repair and parts recycling.

Complementing the sleek profile, wheels are not of 'road roller' proportions; traction and handling will be achieved through

chassis/suspension geometry rather than the area of rubber on the road. ABS is standard.

The rear of the sill is stainless steel, to give a visual hint at backbone strength and emphasise the front sill and fender panel form, while the rear wing takes its shape unashamedly from that of its predecessor. From the A-pillar base a satin-silver panel flows horizontally rearward, then in a hoop over the C-pillar and roof to complete a 'rollbar'-type graphic, which also enhances the cabin space in both side and plan elevations.

Flush-fitting headlamps include high-intensity driving lamps within the pods. Fog lamps could be fitted in the front air intake area. Access to the rear luggage bay is via a tailgate, with room for golf bags/skis. A removable roof panel, allowing open-air driving as well as the hardtop option of the GT6, completes the picture. ●



Sixties Spitfire: fundamentally feline, light and lithe