

# FAST GLORY

PHOTOGRAPHY: GEORGE BUMFORD

ICONIC, SENSUAL – ARE THESE WORDS TO DESCRIBE A CAR? BBC ANTIQUES ROADSHOW SPECIALIST MARC ALLUM THINKS SO AS HE MUSES OVER 'THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CAR EVER MADE' –... THE JAGUAR E-TYPE

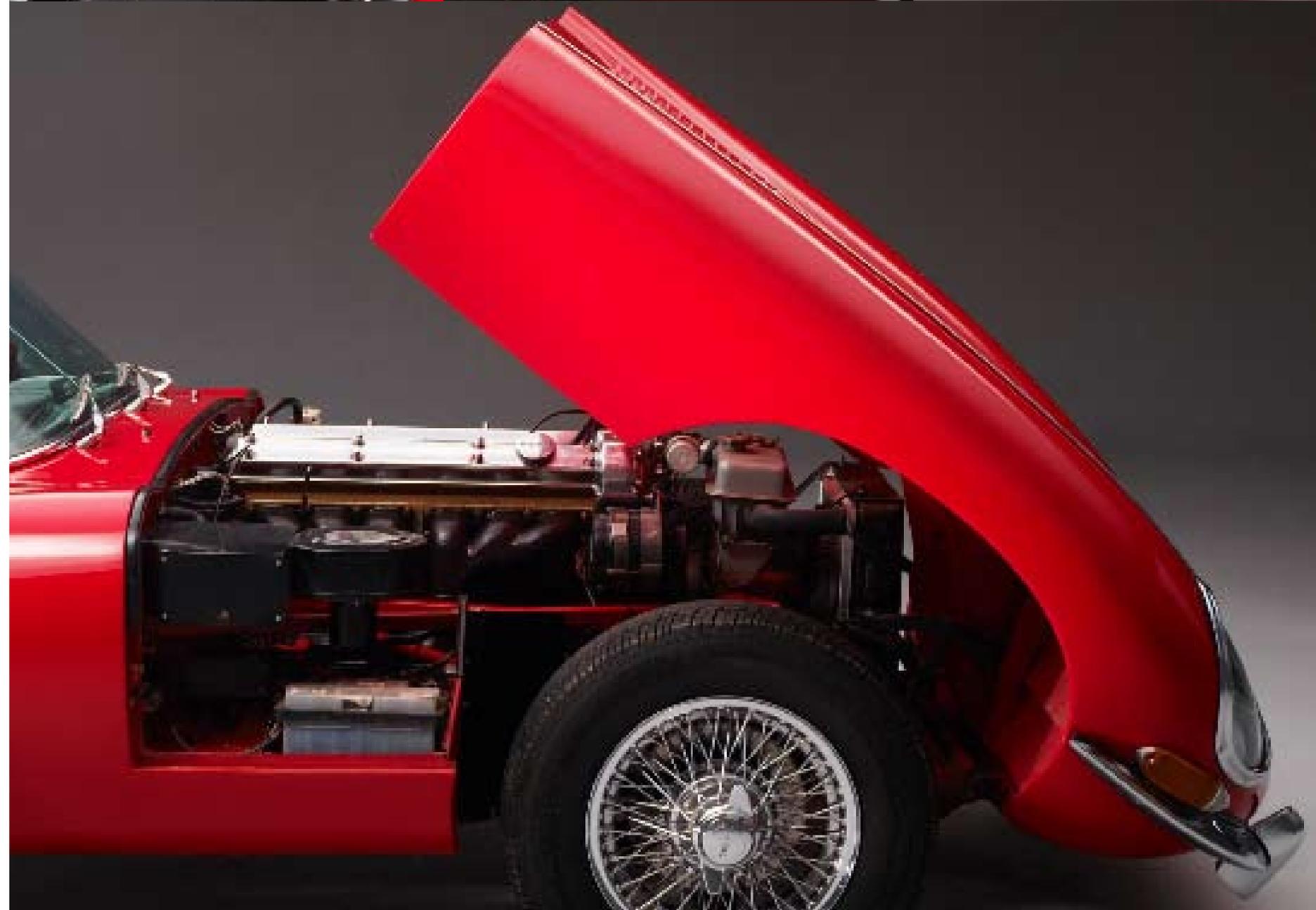
They say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder but few can deny the natural curves and glamorous lines of this 1961 classic, the Jaguar E-Type Series I. Born of thoroughbred racing stock, the E-Type was the descendant of an esteemed line, fostered by a well-heeled parentage of fast, well designed and track-proven cars. The graceful body-work of Malcolm Sayers had already adorned the illustrious predecessors of the E-Type; both the C-Type and D-Type had ruled the famous Le Mans 24-hour race for almost a decade, winning in 1951, 53, 55, 56 and 57. This was Jaguar's hey-day.

With aircraft-inspired, aerodynamic, monocoque design and state-of-the-art disc brakes, this was a true British company intent on proving that innovative style and technical development could mesh in a symphony of oil and alloy; car production had finally broken free of its pre-war shackles and post-war shortages.

The E-Type delivered what every sports car owner wanted; something rebellious, unconstrained and dare I say it...sexy. It was an escape, a cultural shift forwards, some would say phallic; for me it's androgynous, highly charged with a sense of eroticism and freedom, epitomised by the burgeoning sexual revolution of the 1960s. If you wanted to be trendy then you bought a Mini, if you wanted glamour you bought an E-Type; red of course.

There seems little point in discussing the technical aspects of such a beautiful machine. Indeed when something looks this good, what does it matter? Well actually it does; all these cars were fast and the 1961 Series I E-Type was no exception. Here was a genuine 150 mph sports car that cost just under £2,100, its 3.8 litre engine moving it from 0-60 mph in an exhilarating 7.1 seconds. This combination of competitive pricing and high performance gave the E-Type a long production life; over 70,000 units were produced in 14 years.

It's little wonder that the E-Type holds such an important position in our perception of design and style. It's a car that makes you smile, it's a celebration, a sexy street Spitfire.....in the words of Enzo Ferrari it's quite possibly 'the most beautiful car ever made'.....that's a serious accolade.





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