

1979 MINI ECOSSE - CUSTOMISED REBUILD

This Austin Mini Special was first registered in 1979, and underwent a total rebuild and refurbishment over a period of five years from 2000 to 2005, at a total cost of £12000!

The vehicle was rebuilt to a customised specification, with the bodyshell being taken back to bare metal, repaired, strengthened, primed and then professionally painted in an oven in Rover Trophy Blue metallic. All DVLA documentation has been correctly completed with an original registration date of 2nd October 1979 still applicable.



New sub frames were strengthened, and painted prior to fitment. All parts were obtained new from Minisport and Minispares, in the Midlands. When the new sub frames were fitted, new cones, adjustable suspension, gas shock absorbers, cross-drilled and vented brake discs with alloy callipers, and braided hoses all round, were also installed.

The wheels are brand new chrome 13 x 7 Ultralites with 195 low profile Bridgestone tyres. Four brand new Wipac driving lamps, with protective covers are also fitted.

The 1293cc engine and gearbox are from an MG Metro, and were both fully reconditioned by Minispares at a cost of £1500. The unit is lightened and balanced with a Stage 3 head and strengthened gearbox, linked to a race / rally camshaft. The car has an MG distributor with electronic ignition, and the carburettor, which was commonly used on Metros, is a brand new HIF44. All other engine parts are also new, and there are many chromed parts within the engine bay, which fully set the car off. A power isolator switch is also fitted in the boot, to protect battery life, when the car may be lying idle for long periods.

The interior is a one-off, specially built by a professional upholsterer, who concentrates on the automobile industry. The black leather bolster Recaro sports seats are fitted with blue Alcantara, (very expensive Italian suede) inserts, and trimmed with blue piping. The interior roof cloth also matches the Alcantara trim. A stunning Autotechnika chrome-grip leather steering wheel is also fitted.

The professionally trimmed dashboard incorporates a flip-down head set with screen, which provides Clarion radio/stereo, with Pioneer speakers, full network television channels, a DVD player, CD changer, MP3 compatibility and satellite navigation, operated by remote control, and housed neatly beneath the rear seat. Four auxiliary power outlets are fitted beneath the nearside dashboard. The car is also fitted with a remote Category One Thatcham immobiliser and alarm.

This is a truly unique Mini, which has received the full Scottish theme treatment, right down to the professionally painted St Andrews flag on the roof, hence the model name of “Ecosse”! There are many other “Scottish” themes, including a St Andrews flag bonnet badge and customised valve caps, and an embroidered St Andrews flag / Lion Rampant flag and Scottish thistle motif on the rear parcel shelf. The vehicle was put back on the road in 2005, and within 6 weeks, had successfully completed a 1200 mile round trip to take part in the London to Brighton Mini Run. The car is only licensed for road use from April to October each year, never sees rain, is garaged, under a protective cover, and has driven just over 3000 miles since the restoration was completed four years ago. It has already won 3 separate trophies at classic Mini shows, and has been featured in Miniworld magazine. It is currently insured for a guaranteed value of £10000, and on a restricted mileage of 3000 miles per annum, costs around £100 for fully comprehensive cover through specialist insurers Adrian Flux. Fuel economy is around 40mpg depending on driving style.

Gary Bailey