

HAWK 1.8/2.6



Here's something different. While the majority of the market goes for the glamorous AC 427 shape, Hawk can offer you the absolute original – a replica of the AC Ace. The wheel arches and front grille are the major differences. You can opt for MGB power (1.8) or six-cylinder engines (Ford Zephyr is most authentic, but you can also have Triumph or BMW).

Plus points: The only AC Ace replica, makes a refreshing change from 427s, well made and engineered, pre-hung panels.

Against: Lacks some of the glamour and performance of the 427.

Budget build cost: From £8000.

Contact: Hawk Cars, Frant, East Sussex. Tel: 01892 750282.

GD 427



Gardner Douglas adopts a different approach to most replicas. The company uses modern methods to make its 427 a great-handling car. Its backbone chassis and semi-monocoque body are unique amongst Cobra replicas, though obviously not as AC designed it. The standard GD kit uses unmodified Jag XJ front and rear axles with V8 power or there's the EURO kit using mostly brand new, specially fabricated components.

Plus points: Probably the best-handling Cobra replica, superb engineering, totally race-proven, surprisingly practical, company is a very progressive thinking operation.

Against: Has its own distinctive appearance which may not appeal to everybody.

Budget build cost: From £14,000.

Contact: Gardner Douglas, Bottesford, Nottingham. Tel: 01949 843299.

HAWK 289/LE MANS



From the maker of the Transformer Stratos replica comes this unique replica of the first Cobra, the narrow-arch 289. It uses an MGB as a donor, with the option of Ford/Rover V8 power, and can have suspension from the MGB, upgraded or with Jag IRS. Authentic race-style FIA, fastback hardtop Le Mans racer and 39 PH body styles are also available.

Plus points: High degree of accuracy in replication, simple donor choice, high standard of finish and engineering, the only serious 289 replica on the market.

Against: MGB basis is not so authentic.

Budget build cost: From £8000.

Contact: Hawk Cars, Frant, East Sussex. Tel: 01892 750282.

RV PYTHON



Originally made between the late 1980s and early '90s, the Python was celebrated as the best of its breed. Now it's back – with a difference and a more modern approach. The new twin rail and backbone chassis is light yet super-strong while a new option on donor parts is the BMW 5-series, which has a great reputation and a fine range of engines from 4-cylinders to straight six. Rover V8 or American V8 power can also be used. Even a BMW V8 if you can find one.

Plus points: Superb engineering, advanced chassis and body structures, authentic styling, BMW version makes great sense, big V8 power if you want it, cockpit more spacious than most.

Against: Not for total authenticity freaks.

Budget build cost: From £7000.

Contact: RV Dynamics, Reigate, Surrey. Tel: 01737 225888.

Which Kit?
Extracts