

Third Brake Light

About five years ago I installed a cool looking 3rd brake light from a 1999 Chevy Suburban (and other GM SUVs of similar vintage) on my Erika's derriere. I purchased it at a Chevy dealer parts department (GM part Number 15030176). It's looks so good on a Healey that several Healey owners have told me it looks like Gerry Coker designed it!

Attached is a copy of my article published in Austin Healey Magazine about five years ago and a couple of color photos that give you an idea of how it looks. It's LED and very bright. Great comfort day and night.

I ran a 14 gauge wire from the #5 terminal (brake light) on the Flasher Relay Box in the engine bay under the left fender area to the fire wall, ran it through a fire wall grommet with existing wires located just under where the choke cable goes through (BN4 car), then behind the driver's side side-kick panel, then under the carpeting past the door, up under the vinyl panel behind the door and back under the rear shroud edge to the 3rd brake light location. In short, I ran it through the driver's side interior area. The 3rd brake light ground wire I attached to the closest cockpit surround-molding attachment screw.

**Vrooom vrooom,
John Soderling
Erika the Red
jsoderling@astound.net**



Healey Technical

Erika's Cool 3rd Brake Light

(or maybe those SUV's
are good for something)

John Soderling Walnut Creek, California

If you're like me, you brace yourself for whiplash every time you have to brake hard in your Healey in heavy traffic — I half expect to be rear ended by that inattentive BJ9 driver behind me who's talking on his or her cell phone. Those of you who don't occasionally worry about being rear ended in your Healey need to drive behind another big Healey and check the size, location and brightness of their brake lights. Not too comforting!

I've felt the need to add a 3rd brake light on "Erika the Red" since shortly after purchasing her last fall. One of the first changes I made was to replace her tail/brake light bulbs with halogen bulbs. This was an improvement. However, in view of the fast and buffed crowd she runs with today compared to her formative years, and her sleek low profile, I felt she needed to be accessorize with a higher mounted 3rd brake light.

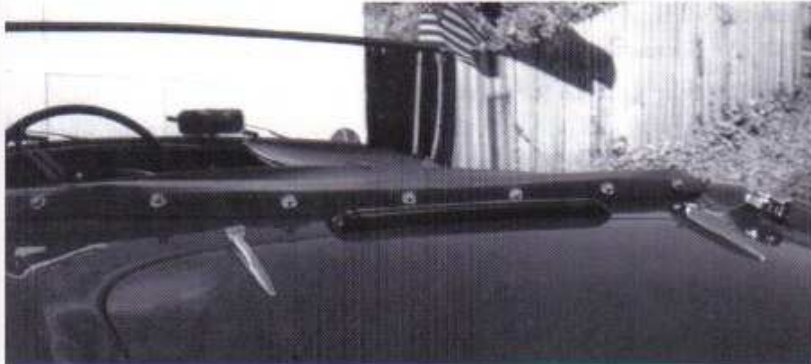
The problem was I really hadn't seen one that I thought would have that OEM look on a Healey and compliment Erika's sensuous derriere. The best one I'd seen was the Jaguar 3rd brake light

found on some Healeys. It looks O.K. However, my Erika prefers accessories that are a little more avant-garde, fashionable and understated. She loves to be seen in the Nordstrom's or Neiman Marcus' parking lot. She's been known to throw a coughing fit or do the shuttle shake when driven into a Target or Wal-Mart lot. In short, she has become accustomed to the life style in which we keep our Healeys — expensive!

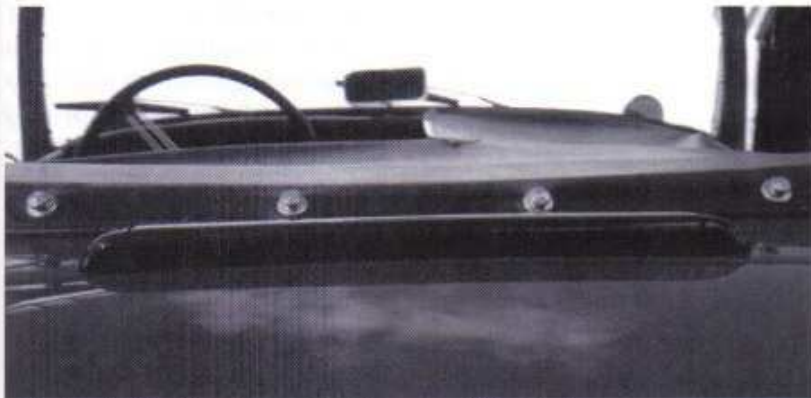
For several months I checked out the 3rd brake light on every vehicle in front of me as I motored around. I wanted to find something that would measure up to Erika's caviar tastes. One day I noticed the 3rd brake light on top of the new Chevy Suburban. Eureka! It was low profile, wide, sleek, LED and cool looking. And the top of the Suburban where the light was mounted had a slight curvature that looked similar to that of Erika's rear shroud (somehow that same curvature just doesn't look sensuous on a Suburban). The only question now was whether the brake light unit was recessed integrally into the Suburban's top, or was it flush mounted? All of the other attractive

This shows the placement of the Suburban 3rd brake light on the shroud between the edge of the boot lid and the tonneau cover. Position the light about 1/4" from the edge of the boot lid so it doesn't get hit when opened.





This shows the brake light centered on the rear shroud and its low profile.



Notice how nicely the light conforms to the slight curvature of Erika's derriere.

LED 3rd brake lights I'd seen on new cars were either built into the body sheet metal or rear spoiler.

So off I went to the Chevy dealer's parts department to see if the Suburban 3rd brake light would really work on a Healey. After getting over the sticker price shock (and thoughts of checking what Wal-Mart's automotive section might offer), I inspected the unit and concluded that it must have been designed by Gerry Coker expressly for my beloved Erika's derriere.

The unit is made of an attractive black colored plastic, is LED and has a low profile of only 1" high by 2" deep by 16" wide. It fits perfectly, centered on

the rear shroud between the edge of the boot lid and the tonneau cover edge, as shown in photos 1 and 2. Photos 3 and 4 shows how perfectly the unit conforms to the slight curvature of the Healey shroud.

Installation is very easy. I chose to install it permanently rather than using magnets or double sided tape as some owners do who want to be able to remove it for concours showing. I want to be sure that it is there and functioning when needed. And while Erika likes to be seen in the company of classy cars, with her caviar tastes I can't afford to attire her for concours exhibition.

Permanent mounting requires drilling two small holes in the shroud for the

two 1/8" mounting bolts and one 1/4" hole for the electrical connection. I ran 14 gauge wire from the new brake light to the #5 terminal (brake relay terminal) on the flasher relay box. Another option is to connect it directly to the brake light switch. The other wire I grounded to one of the screws that attaches the cockpit moulding to the rear shroud.

The GM part number for the Suburban 3rd brake light is 15030176. Now for the sticker shock. The list price is \$112. A little expensive, but it looks so... cool. And besides, "Erika the Red" is worth it. Now I feel a little more comfortable when those BJ9 SUV's are on my tail.

If you have any questions on the light, please email me at: jsoderling@aol.com.

Happy and safer Healeying! 🍷



Check out my eyes in the mirror and you will no longer see any anxiety about that big BJ9 SUV on my tail!

