

Distributor Fault

by Tom Endy 2024

A few years ago I restored 12 distributors and have them for sale. Among other things I replaced all the lower plates with new from a quality supplier. Each had the all-important flexible wire that connects to the top plate. After completion I ran each distributor on my engine stand to make sure they worked. To date I have sold six of them. None came back....**except one!**

The one that came back I had sold to a local restoration shop. I immediately replaced it. I doubted anything was wrong with it, and when I checked it with an ohm meter it passed muster. I figured the owner of the shop had an electrical fault on the car he was working on. With all the confidence in the world I installed it on my Victoria. **It didn't work!**

Over a period of several weeks I took the distributor completely apart four times and could not find anything wrong with it. I soldered the all important wire on the lower plate at each end and it still didn't work. It started a couple times but would not stay running.

Very frustrating! I know a Model A distributor inside and out, what am I missing? A final inspection revealed the culprit. The tab on the lower plate the wire is attached to is supposed to be standing straight up. This one was leaning slightly out-board and was touching the casting....**almost**. An ohm meter did not indicate it was touching. A little bit of engine vibration trying to start the car, and it touched and shorted out. Bending it straight up cured the fault. It is currently working just fine on my Victoria.

