

ROAD & TRACK

K 10/56

October 1956

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competition:

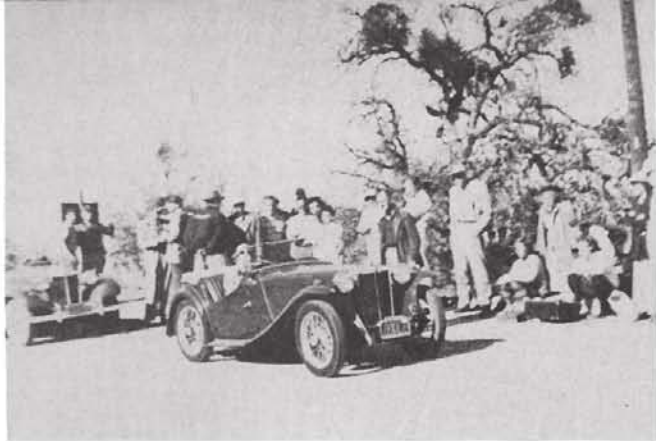
Complete Le Mans Report
French & British Grand Prix

salon:

MG-TC

road tests:

AC Ace
Volkswagen '56



1949 MG-TC

Ed. Note: The following nostalgic report was put together from notes made by the Editor over six years ago and the data was taken from an actual car which belonged to Mrs. Bond.

February, 1950—The advent of the MG-TC on the American market was not accompanied by any great fanfare, but already the completely new idea of using a small sports car for fun driving has captured the imagination of a public normally interested only in transportation. The recent price reduction from \$2395 to \$1895 should do much to accelerate acceptance of this new way of life.

Certainly the first time we took the wheel of a TC, it felt strange indeed—what with the right-hand drive, left-hand shift, low seating position and ultra-quick steering. The latter point was quite disconcerting at first, and we literally staggered down the street for a few blocks. Very soon, however, one gets the true feel of the car and its charm grows with the miles.

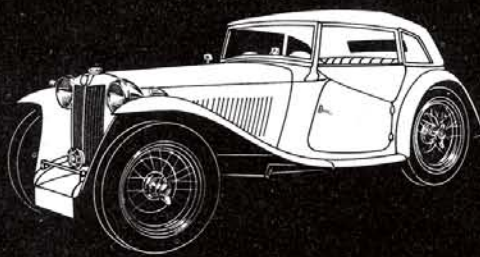
A gearbox that must be used properly, and can be, is something new to us but it soon proved to be sheer pleasure. With a fool-proof synchromesh on the 3 upper ratios one anticipates the need of the next moment and employs the British "downshifting" technique. The MG is not designed to be a high-gear performer, but proper use of the gears gives remarkably brisk performance, the engine buzzing away merrily all the while. For a four-cylinder unit the powerplant is remarkably smooth; it will run up to 5500 rpm at least without complaint or worry, and we once touched 6200 rpm in 2nd gear.

The results of the timed high speed runs may cause some "flap" among MG owners, but our data was taken with an ample run-up and agrees with similar reports published in England. We found no important difference in speed between top-up and top-down, but overseas reports say that folding the windshield forward adds 2 or 3 mph. Having no goggles or vizor, we did not try. Suffice it to say that the axle ratio is near-perfect for best possible top speed since the engine peaks at 5200 rpm which is very close to the best run of 78.9 mph.

The quick steering (1.7 turns, lock to lock) has been mentioned, although the turning circle is rather poor at 37 ft. The suspension is very stiff at the rear and the MG corners like the proverbial train—"as if on rails." If the proper gear is selected (high is not powerful enough) a corner can be taken with a beautiful drift with very little "sawing" of the steering wheel. There is a slight amount of understeer which is not objectionable and can be reduced by using relatively low tire pressures in front and rather high pressures at the rear. Unfortunately this treatment is at cross-purposes with the ride characteristics, for the front end seems too soft for the rear (or vice-versa) and the radiator bobs up and down rather too fast over rough roads. High speed stability is not too good and requires alert attention to the steering on narrow roads. One run, down-hill, at 90 mph indicated, proved this—keeping a safe straight course at this speed being almost impossible.

With all its faults the TC will prove to be a dearly loved possession. It is extremely durable and many of the cars owned by our friends have taken really terrible treatment and abuse without complaint or trouble. Styled in the true classic sports car tradition, one hopes that the MG Car Co. will continue this model without resorting to the new fashion of all-enveloping bodywork. The TC has a character all its own and already has taught us that driving can be fun once more.

R & T CLASSIC TEST NO. 3



1949 MG-TC

SPECIFICATIONS

List price	\$1895
Wheelbase	94.0
Tread, f and r	45.0
Tire size	4.50 - 19
Curb weight, lbs.	1840
distribution, %	47/53
Test weight	2180
Engine	4 cyl, ohv
Bore & stroke	2.62 x 3.54
Displacement, cu in.	76.3
cu cm.	1250
Compression ratio	7.25
Horsepower	54.4
Peaking speed	5200
equivalent mph	80.6
Torque, ft.-lbs.	63
peaking speed	3000
equivalent mph	46.5
Gear ratios, overall	
4th	5.12
3rd	6.93
2nd	10.1
1st	17.3

PERFORMANCE, Mph

Top speed, avg.	75.0
best run	78.9
3rd (5500)	63
2nd (5500)	44
1st (5500)	25
see chart for shift points	
Mileage range	22/28 mpg.

ACCELERATION, Secs.

0-30 mph	5.7
0-40 mph	8.8
0-50 mph	14.0
0-60 mph	21.2
0-70 mph	34.3
Standing start 1/4 mile	21.8

TAPLEY DATA, Lbs/ton

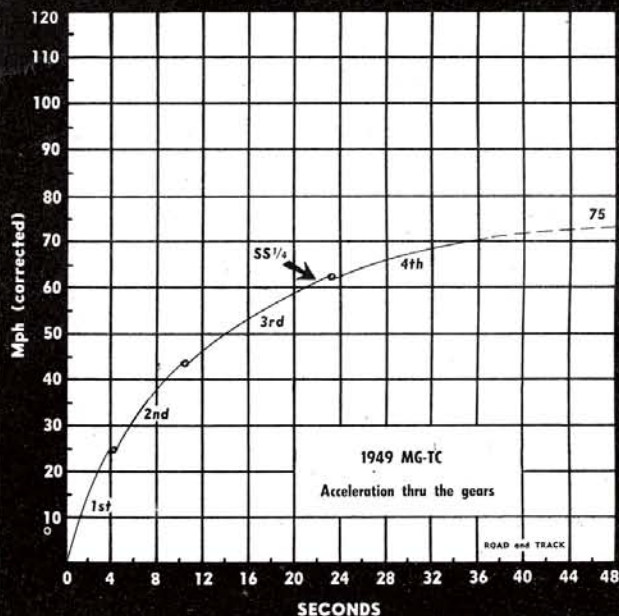
4th	170 @ 40 mph
3rd	240 @ 36 mph
2nd	350 @ 32 mph
1st	430 @ 23 mph
Total drag at 60 mph, 120 lbs.°	

SPEEDO ERROR, Mph

Indicated	Actual
30	30.5
40	39.9
50	49.3
60	58.2
70	68.1
82	78.9

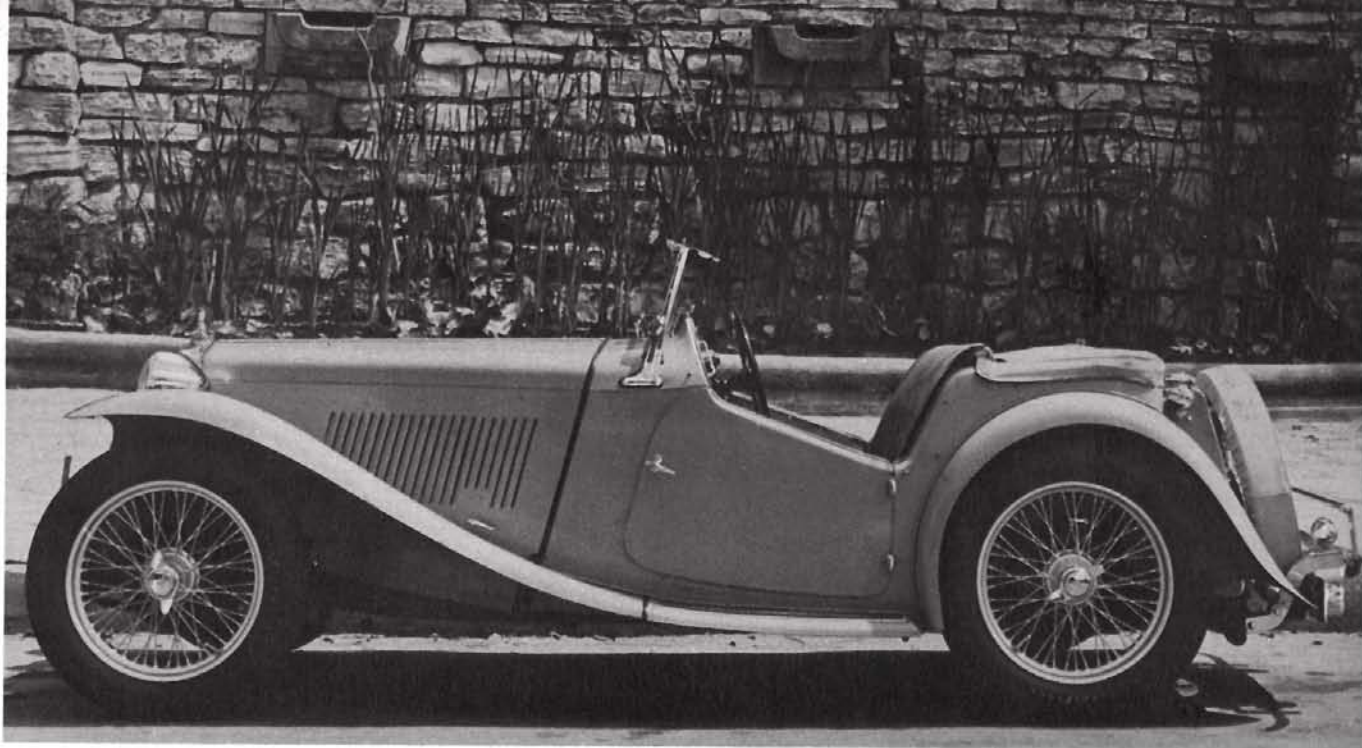
CALCULATED DATA

Lbs/hp (test wt.)	40.0
Cu. ft./ton mile	78.3
Engine revs/mile	3870
Piston travel, ft./mile	2280
Mph @ 2500 fpm	65.6





Salon



MG's Greatest ---the Classic TC

FOR SOME unaccountable reason there has never been a road test of an MG-TC published in *Road & Track*. Perhaps this omission was due to the fact that at the time we began putting out regular monthly issues, the TC was being superseded by the TD; perhaps also we assumed that the TC was so familiar to our early readers that a formal introduction would have been presumptuous. But these are flimsy excuses, and the hard fact remains that only now—nearly ten years after our first issue—are we finally paying homage to the one car above all others that kindled the spark of the post-war sports car movement in the U.S.A. And during the years of taking the TC for granted, it has slowly changed from contemporary to classic. There are always those who will argue that true classics must date from before the Second World War, but most enthusiasts will agree that the rank of classic for the TC is unassailable, if for no other reason than that it stems directly from the TB model introduced in early 1939.

The illustrious history of the British MG has been told many times in many places and probably nowhere better than in John

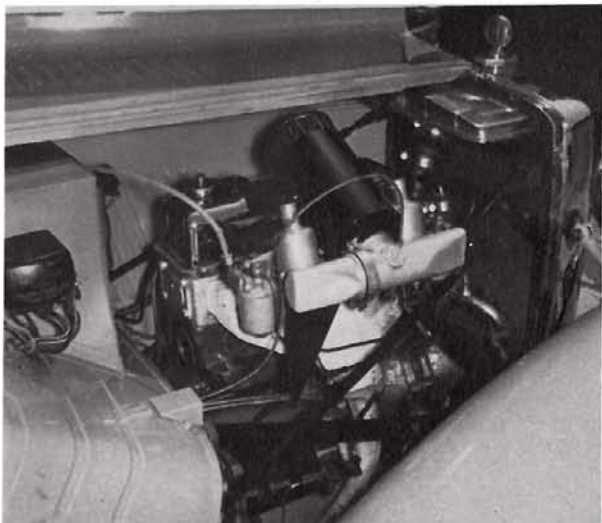
W. Thornley's definitive book, "Maintaining the Breed." We will not attempt to recount the saga here because we are concerned mainly with one model. It is worth remembering, however, that the very first MG was built in 1923—a lean body mounted on a Morris Oxford chassis and fitted with a polyv Hotchkiss engine. It topped 80 mph and created quite a sensation, but it was not until 1930 that MG's racing history is generally considered to have begun. In 1929 the car's name-initials, which have puzzled so many through the years, were explained as being in honor of Sir William R. Morris and standing for his original company, "Morris Garages," and they have stood ever since suffixed by a bewildering alphabet of model designations to confound the layman and delight the expert. The first MG Midget appeared in 1929, and then began the long series of brilliant racing achievements and record runs which actually have yet to see an end.

Nowadays there is an almost unanimous feeling among sports car people that the TC represents the high-water mark of MG achievement. There are MGs that are faster, roomier, far better riding, quieter—but there has never been a model that stood for so much

Restored in pale blue paint with tan leather, this TC is a steady Concours favorite in Southern California.



photography: Poole

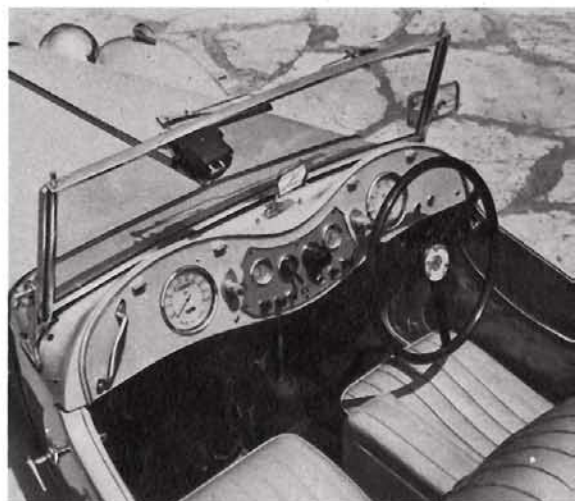


A winning show car must be spotless inside as well as out.

that is "thoroughbred" about a sports car. It is hardly exaggerating to say that when in the late 'forties the TC made its appearance on the highways of this country, it stood out from other vehicles like Swaps or Nashua in a field of plow-horses. For a comfort-loving public it was wretchedly impractical; your spine was jolted, your knees bumped, you were hot in the sun and wet in the rain, you had no luggage space and only 54 bhp—but for the first time in many a year you were *driving* a car. A person felt that it was *part* of him, as quick and responsive to his commands as a well trained mare, and for many a U.S. driver this was something new and wonderful. Inevitably concessions to comfort (TD), performance (TF-1500) and modern styling (A) had to come, but somehow with each succeeding model the prestige of the TC just continues to grow. As those running acquire more and more miles, finding a really "clean" one becomes more and more difficult. When, therefore, we encountered the TC shown on these pages at a Bakersfield concours d'élégance (where it won its class), we examined it thoroughly, found it just about as "clean" as they come, and decided to present it in Salon.

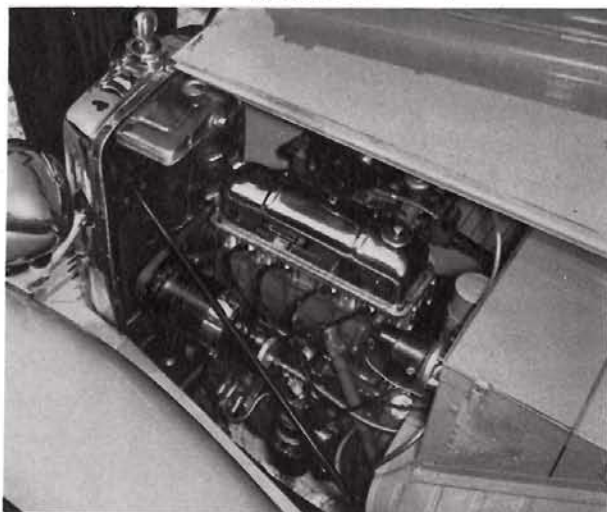
Mr. Paul Vusovich is a sales representative for Cadillac's factory retail division at 5151 Wilshire Blvd. in Los Angeles, and as such, not the most likely person to be an MG owner. When, however, he purchased this car two years ago for \$620, it was not in the best of shape. A minor accident involving a crumpled fender decided him

Optional equipment includes tire cover, arm rest, and "trafficators."



TCs came with right-hand drive, but having tach and speedo widely spaced was more symmetrical than practical.

Left side of engine shows a very large 12 volt generator for a very small car.

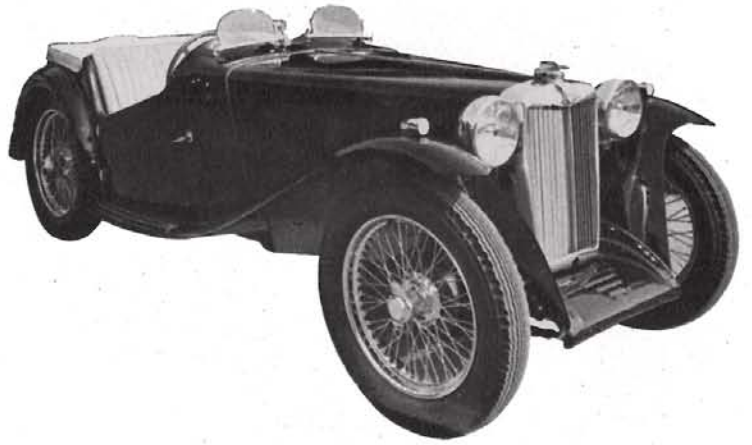


on the restoration undertaking, and, although not as elaborate a job as shown on the next page, his work was sufficient to win a roomful of trophies including best-in-show at the Palm Springs concours last February. Mr. Vusovich's aim was not to have the gaudiest TC possible, but rather an authentic restoration of the car to its original state. The body was not removed, but its baby-blue paint was scrupulously matched and the tan leather refurbished. More than \$2000 dollars have been spent bringing the car up to its present condition, but with concours-ready TCs as highly prized as they are today (even a reasonably preserved one can bring from \$1200-1500), it is not inconceivable that Mr. Vusovich could retrieve his investment, should he ever decide to sell. At present, however, he is content to bring home an occasional cup and give his wife and five children turns riding around on the weekend.

On the next page you will find a picture story of some of the work involved in restoring a TC if you want to go "all-out." The car has been a frequent competitor to (and once victor over) our Salon TC, but owner V. E. Ellsworth's emphasis is more on competition trim. In either case, there is hardly a sports car of any make or country more worthy of the attention a proud owner can lavish upon it than the MG-TC, and if we seem overly affectionate it might be because we sometimes wonder—without the TC bug to bite people a few years ago, who would have started reading "America's Sports Car Magazine"?

Restored MG-TC of V.E. Ellsworth, Mercury International Pictures, Hollywood . . . "much rubbing, many man hours . . . original budget a mere memory . . . body now has 30 coats of lacquer . . . tan paint under fenders, runningboards, hood, matches upholstery."

photography: Ray M. Johnson



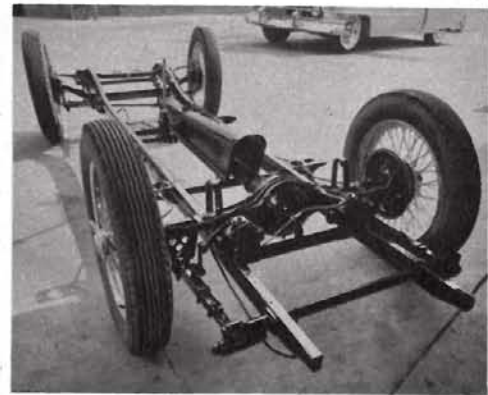
Restoring an MG-TC



" . . . where did all those parts come from?"

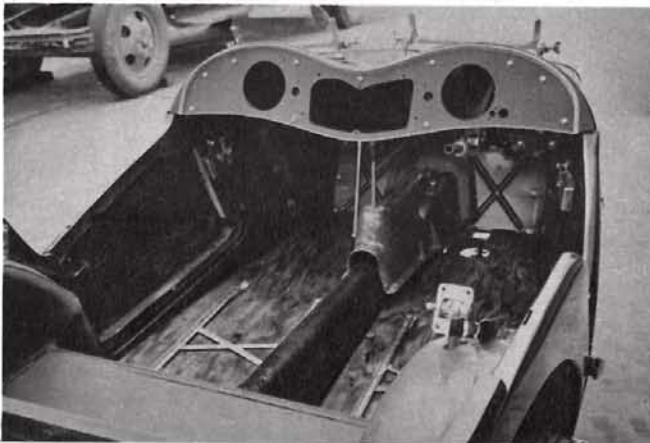


" . . . removing old paint proved a huge job."

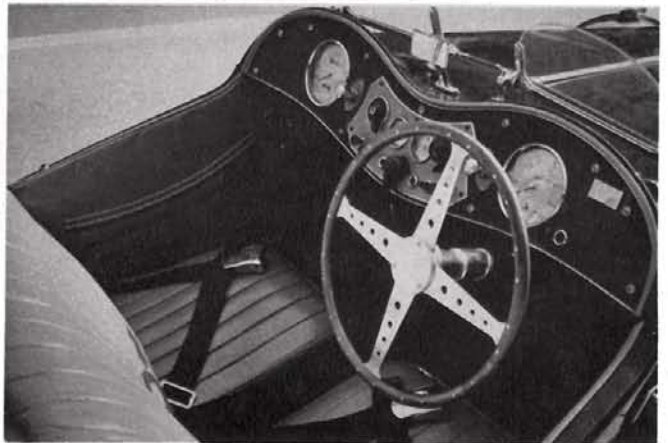


" . . . begins to look like a car again."

" . . . body assembled and ready for upholstery."



" . . . baked crackle enamel dash made from sheet steel."



" . . . right side of engine . . . more hand-rubbed lacquer."



" . . . engine work by Moss Mtrs. . . . chrome everywhere."

