




SPECIAL: THE T SERIES MG

THERE IS LITTLE LOGIC in the notion that the MG sports car was made any poorer by the 1956 change to envelope-type bodywork (the MG-A). Nonetheless, there are a great many otherwise reasonable enthusiasts who are steadfast in a seemingly irrational belief that something precious was lost in the change. These people are not, as one might think, a vanishing breed, for their ranks are constantly being replenished by late-comers who have acquired "perpendicular-period" MGs from their original or subsequent owners. Whether such converts are accumulated through pure personal choice or from economic necessity is of little consequence. What *is* important is that all grow quite fond of their T-series MGs and are as interested in them as any group of car owners anywhere. This interest manifests itself in a steady trickle of letters

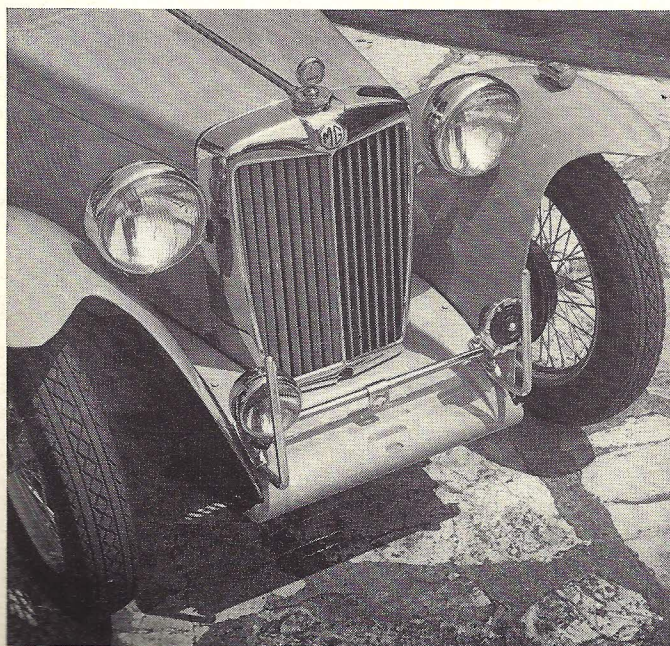
asking us for information and we have, therefore, decided to take care of these requests all at once. Our motivation is primarily a desire to gather up a lot of loose ends, but we must confess that there is also a lot of pure nostalgia; we have our irrational moments too.

The reports included here, covering the TC, TD and TF model MGs, are condensed from information gathered and reports written in *Road & Track* when the cars were new. We have tried to retain the immediacy and flavor of those reports. Of course, the data panels are more complete than those originally published, because we have since expanded and revised our data panels. No effort has been made to draw comparisons between these and more modern cars; such comparisons are difficult to handle fairly and we leave them squarely up to the individual.

MG - TC

 1949—The advent of the TC on the American market has not been accompanied by any great fanfare, but the idea of using a small sports car for fun driving has already begun to capture the imagination of a public heretofore interested only in transportation.

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 the ultra-quick steering. The latter point was at first quite disconcerting and we literally staggered down the street for a few blocks. Very soon, however, we got the feel of it and its charm grew with the miles.



A gearbox that must be used properly, and can be, was something new to us, but it soon proved to be sheer pleasure. With a foolproof synchromesh on the upper 3 gears, 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 merrily away all the while. For a 4-cylinder unit the powerplant is remarkably smooth; it will run up to 5500 rpm without complaint and we once touched 6200 rpm in 2nd gear.

The results of the timed high-speed runs may cause something of a flap among MG owners, but we took several runs and the results agree with reports published in England. It is certain that the axle ratio is near perfect for the best possible top speed, as the engine peaks at 5200 rpm, which matches very closely our best run of 78.9 mph.

The quick steering has been mentioned (1.7 turns, lock to lock), but this is not quite so quick as it sounds, for the turning circle is a rather poor 37 ft. The suspension is very stiff at the rear and the MG corners as if on rails. If the proper gear is selected—high is not powerful enough—a corner may be taken in a beautiful drift, with very little sawing at the steering wheel. There is a slight understeer, which changes to oversteer when cornering vigorously, but this can be corrected by using relatively low tire pressures in front and correspondingly higher ones at the rear.

Unfortunately, this is somewhat 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 much over rough roads. High speed stability was not good; one run, at 90 mph downhill, proved this. Keeping a straight course at that speed proved to be almost impossible.

With all its faults, the TC will probably prove to be dearly loved. It is extremely durable and many of these cars owned by our friends have taken terrible abuse without complaint or trouble. Styled in the true classic tradition, one hopes that the MG Car Co. will continue this model without bowing to the new fashion of all-enveloping bodywork.