

MG

TC 1949

78 ROAD & TRACK

TRYING TO EXPLAIN rationally one's feeling for the MG-TC is somewhat like trying to expound on the difference between a Picasso and a Millet—it's difficult, no matter how hard you try—though there are many obvious and important divergencies in approach, thought and feeling.

Casting aside sentimentality, the only reason the TC appeals is because of its appearance. What else counts—in a car? Any clod, especially a clod, can appreciate a Millet, but it takes something more to feel the fine points of the TC. Or does it? The TC had something that defies description—class, style, appearance—whatever it was, we suggest (humbly) that the TC was a thoroughbred in appearance, if not in price. The epitome, if you please, of an era not so far past as to be forgotten by our elders, and recent enough to be respected by *nouveau* enthusiasts.

Appearance, then, is the prime consideration. The TC was long, lean and lithe. It looked fast and racy, in the idiom of the past, regardless of whether it really was fast or not (it wasn't!). But if you gave a good modern industrial designer the job of cleaning up some of the early MGs the net result would be—the TC. Either by accident or intent, the net result was (and is) an almost impeccable automobile design.

Consider, for example, that long hood, with the windshield almost in the middle of the chassis. "Nonfunctional," cry the idealists, but actually if you must seat a man low and just in front of the rear axle—where can his legs go but under the cowl? Naturally, the engine belongs behind the front axle, and the radiator dead-center above. Never mind about polar moment of inertia or K^2/ab ratio—good cornering takes stiff springs, preferably wrapped in strong

tape to make them even stiffer and, theoretically, better.

Or consider the matter of wheels. A sports car is designed to be raced, and racing demands wire wheels for strength and lightness, plus the very necessary ability to be quick-changed when every second counts. What is more honest than a BIG wheel, say 19 in., to give the personification of a hairy-legged monster designed to traverse any type of road or track, regardless of its condition—and at any speed?

And the engine. If it won't turn 5500, or even 6000 rpm on occasion, it just isn't even worth thinking about. No matter about the cubic inches; it's the bhp per inch that counts. The big Yanks have their bags of lb-ft, but the tiny engine with the right choice of gears—that's the way to drive a car—and let the driver enjoy it.

Maybe all this doesn't adequately describe the MG-TC (we

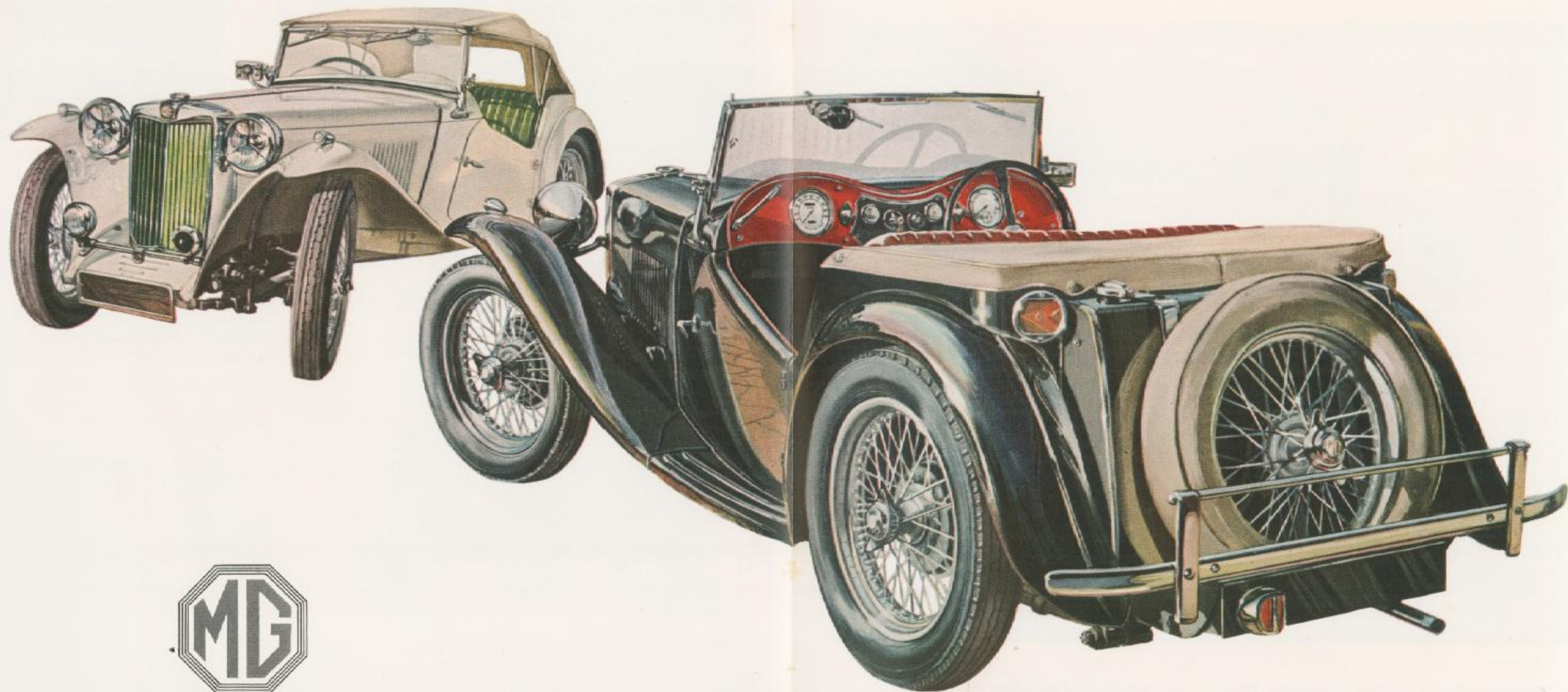
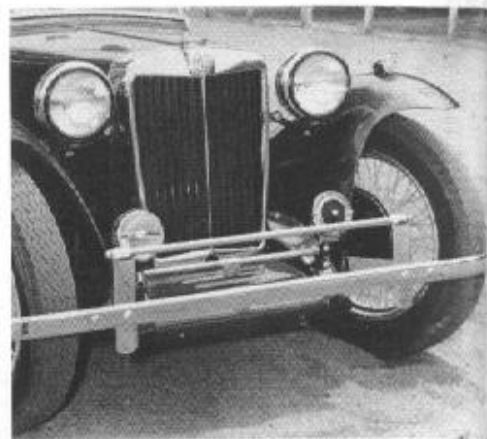
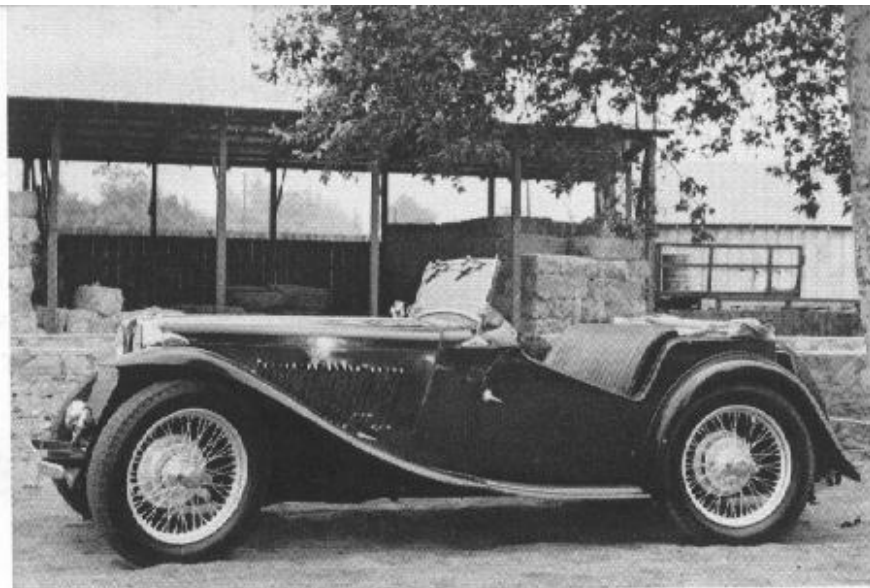
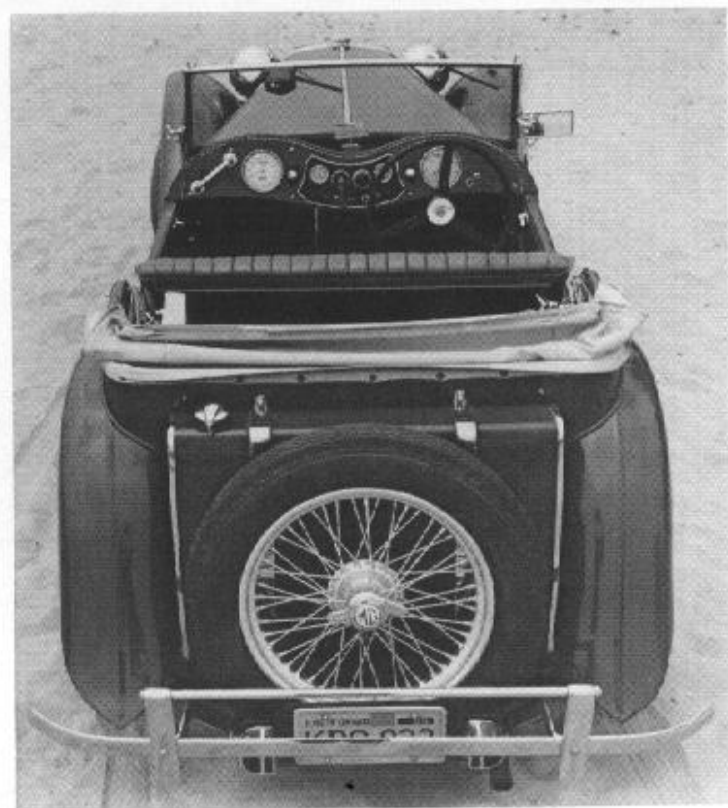


ILLUSTRATION BY WM. A. MOTTA



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know it doesn't). But the fact remains that no other car, regardless of price, will ever quite have the spot in the hearts of enthusiasts as this big-little car, the MG Midget. And when we see one restored, especially one that is authentic (and not *over-restored*), our hearts tend to function faster than our reason—justifiably, we like to think.

There are some things one just can't explain, and the TC is No. 1.

The TC pictured here is the possession of auto upholstery expert Bill Colgan, of Burbank, Calif. Bill did the complete restoration of his car (including new top and upholstery) as well as the upholstery of Tommy Wolfe's Aston Martin featured in last month's *Road & Track*. 