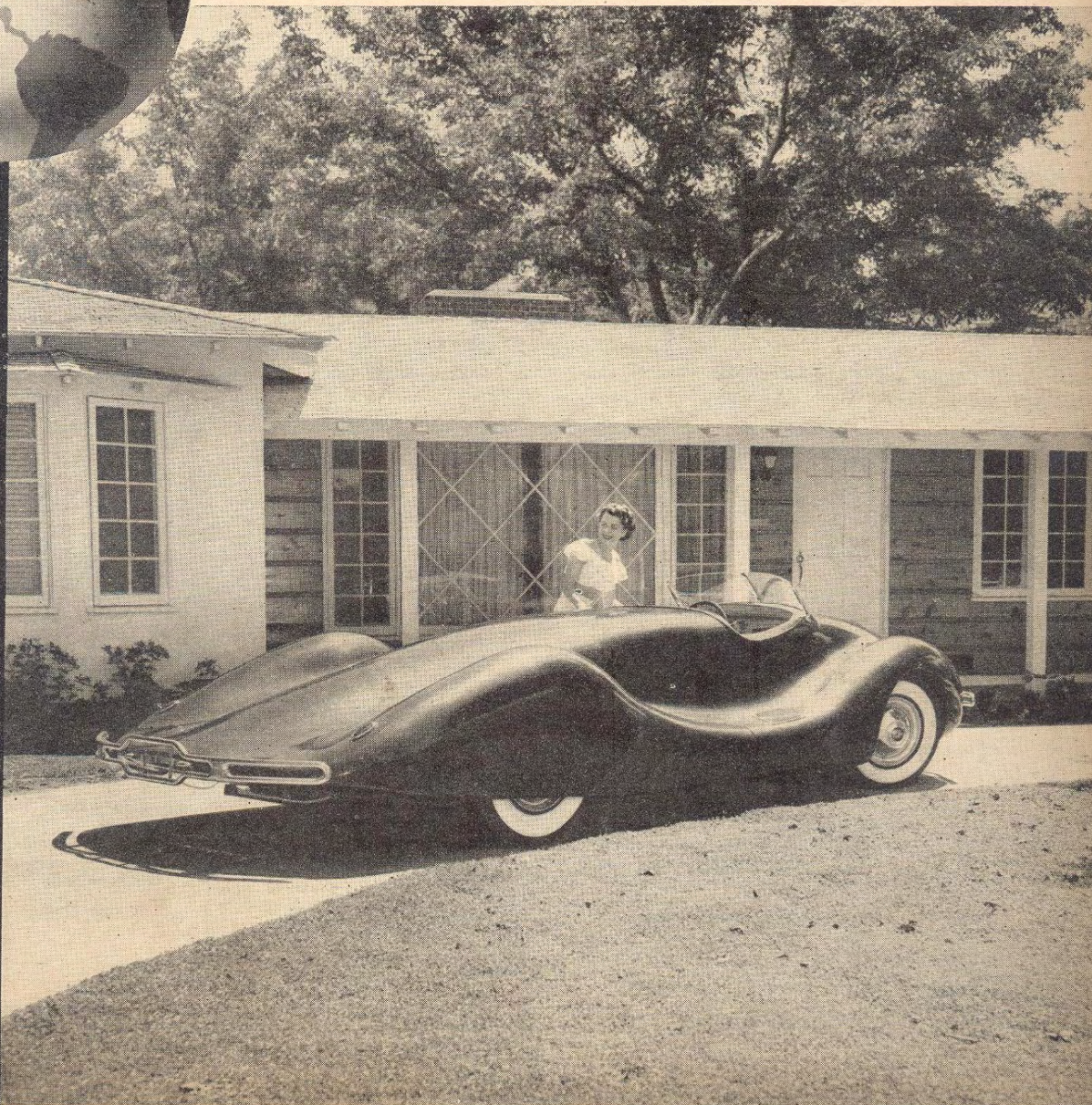


MOTOR trend



the
magazine
for a
motoring
world



TWENTY FIVE
CENTS

OCTOBER 1949

MOTOR TRIALS

road testing the M.G.

by WALTER A. WORON, Editor



TO MOST PERSONS, the MG Midget has always been a question mark. As they see it drive down the street or streak along the highway, a look of wonderment comes over their faces. Does it really perform? Or does it just look like it?

Determined to settle this matter, at least to our satisfaction, two members of our staff journeyed to a local foreign car dealer, International Motors, Inc. There we arranged for a road test of the latest series MG, the "TC."

The MG was originally developed by several mechanics working in the Morris Garages, who assembled one car from parts of other Nuffield cars (Morris and Riley). The car performed so well that it was put into full-scale production. Since its introduction in 1929 by the MG Car Company (a division of the Nuffield Group), the car has become very popular, here as well as in England.

The MG Midget is powered by a four-cylinder, overhead valve, 1250 cc (76.25 cubic inch) engine with twin carburetion. It develops 54.4 bhp at 5200 rpm, which, with the weight of 1736 pounds (unloaded) gives the car a horsepower/chassis weight ratio of 31.85:1.

Instead of taking out one car, we had the advantage of using two MG's—one unsupercharged and the other equipped with a Shorrock supercharger. In this manner, we were able to switch off and check the performance characteristics of each car.

Slipping behind the wheel (on the right side of the car) of this two-seater, even though the space was comparatively small, was an easy matter. The spring-spoked steering wheel and column are adjustable for length and angle, while a release lever below the seat allows the seat to slide back and forth on tracks.

A turn of the ignition key, a pull on the starter button (located on the dash) and the engine started. As you step on the throttle you check your rpm on the tachometer, located on the dash immediately in front of you. (The speedometer is on the extreme left side of the dashboard.) Idling at 1000 rpm for a few minutes and checking your oil pressure to see that it is above 40 psi, you place the car in gear and drive off.

The gearshift is a short-handled control, with the gear positions being outlined on the top of the knob. The shift is conventional except for first gear being where reverse normally is, and reverse being to the extreme right and below neutral. Second, third and fourth gear are in the positions of first, second and third.

Until you get used to it, the clutch and brake pedals seem to be very close together, but with a little driving, this fact is soon forgotten.

Driving through traffic was an easy matter, for the MG was able to dart in and out of holes too small for the conventional-size automobile. Sitting on the right made it surprisingly simple to judge distances.

The car for this road test was furnished to MOTOR TREND by International Motors, Inc., foreign car dealer at 5670 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, California.

As you drive along, the instruments that you watch the most are the tachometer and the oil pressure. For normal shifts, you get the tach at least above 2000 rpm, but for acceleration, you shift at about 5000 rpm.

After a tour through traffic, we entered steep, twisting mountainous roads. In the blown car, we climbed at 55 mph with no difficulty in fourth gear. On the same grade in the unblown MG, it was necessary to shift into third and sometimes into second.

The steering, although hard as compared to normal American stock cars, is high-g geared and therefore is extremely fast, which makes it very satisfactory for quick control. It requires only one and a half turns from lock to lock. Because of the suspension and frame design, the car has good stability at high speeds and for fast cornering. The frame is of box section type, and is suspended with longitudinal semi-elliptic leaf springs, both front and rear. Large double-acting hydraulic piston-type shock absorbers are used for damping.

Coming down out of the mountainous roads, it was sometimes necessary to shift down in gears, which was easy with the synchromesh gearbox. When necessary to use the brakes, positive braking action was assured, for the hydraulic brakes have a lining area of 104 square inches. The foot pedal operates all four wheels, while the hand brake, with a racing type quick-release lever, operates the two rear brakes only.

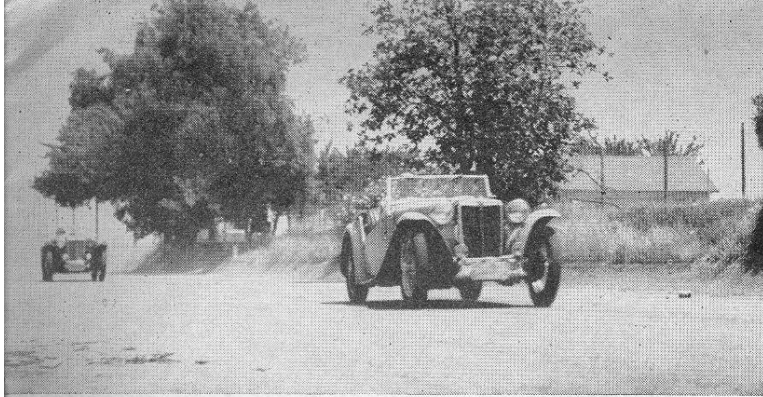
After more driving, we arrived at a lonely road where we were able to make acceleration tests without any fear of accidents. Before the actual clocked tests, we had a drag race between the supercharged MG and the unblown MG. Up until this time it did not appear that the blown MG traveled much faster than the unblown model. This test, however, showed otherwise (see accompanying photo).

For the acceleration tests, one member of the staff sat in the passenger's seat while the foreign car representative (who was more familiar with the car) drove the MG. With clock watch in hand and averaging two runs in each direction, we observed the following:

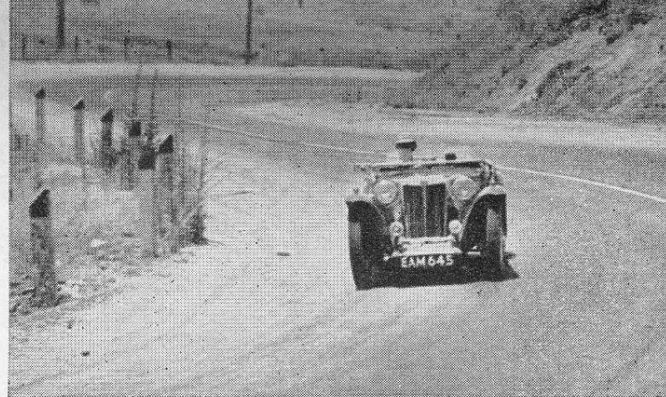
TEST	UNBLOWN MG	BLOWN MG
0-30 through gears	6.2 secs	4.9 secs
0-60 through gears	20.3 secs	14.2 secs
10-40 in third gear	9.2 secs	8.15 secs
20-60 in high gear	27.6 secs	17.25 secs

As can be observed from the above figures, the blown MG easily outperformed the unblown car. The acceleration figures of the unblown model are not outstanding insofar as compared to American stock cars, but the second and third gears are fairly high, being 1.95:1 and 1.35:1, respectively. Low gear is 3.38:1. The blown MG accelerates quite satisfactorily.

Unfortunately, we were unable to make top speed or fuel consumption tests, but from the figures published by the



DRAG RACE—In a 1/4-mile acceleration race between the blown MG and the unblown model, the former came off the easy victor.



HILL CLIMB—The climbing and cornering characteristics of the MG showed up to good advantage on this winding road.

factory, it is understood that the MG will do 80-85 mph and will give 34 mpg at a steady 50 mph. With the blower installed, the MG will do approximately 15 mph faster in top gear.

After the acceleration tests, we went home by a slightly different route. Upon arrival at the garage, although we were quite pleased with the car's performance, it was such that we were thoroughly intrigued with the MG's possibilities. So, a few days later, we took off with another car (belonging to E. Alan Moss) to a more rugged area.

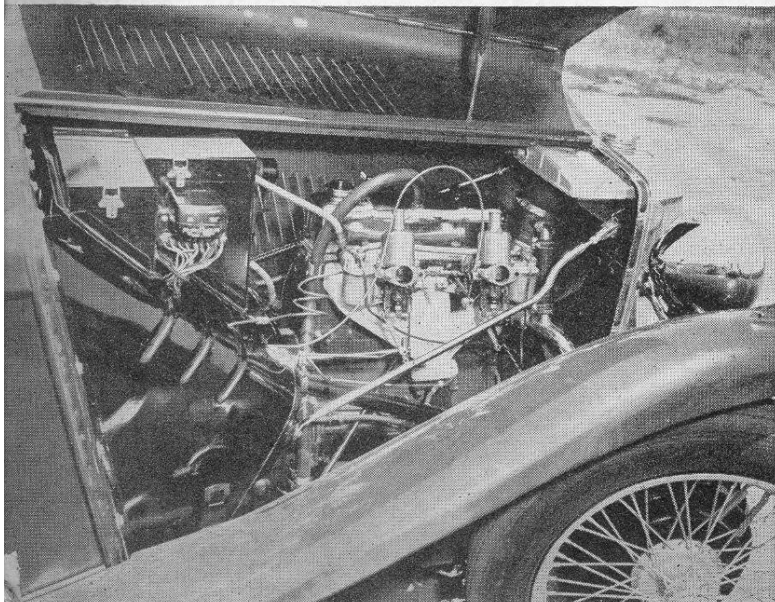
This site was covered with deep-rutted dirt roads taking off in all directions, with trails going up the sides of adjacent hillsides. These trails are those used from time to time by motorcycle hill climb enthusiasts.

One of the first tests we performed was that of trying the climb characteristics up a motorcycle trail. Although we were unable to reach the top, the speed with which we climbed the hill does credit to this small car.

The car was driven over rough bumps, but because of its necessarily low ground clearance (6 inches) the bottom will scrape on bad ruts. We did some fast cornering and power-on slides and found that the car always maintained its equilibrium and always felt like it had plenty of reserve power.

When we were finished with the road test, we were thoroughly impressed with the MG Midget. Although it is not a family car, due to the fact that it only seats two people, and has a minimum of luggage space, we felt that such fine performance from such a small car does it credit—the MG Midget is truly a sports car.

UNBLOWN—The compact engine of the unblown MG is shown here. Note the dual downdraft carburetors, and the toolboxes mounted on the firewall. Engine is a four-cylinder in-line.



DETAIL SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

No. of cylinders	.....	4
Bore	.....	66.5 mm (2.59 inches)
Stroke	.....	90 mm (3.51 inches)
Capacity	.....	1250 cc (76.25 cubic inches)
Maximum bhp	.....	54.4 at 5200 rpm
Compression ratio	.....	7.25:1

TRANSMISSION

Single dry plate heavy-duty clutch	
Final gear ratios	.....
	First and reverse—17.32:1
	Second—10.0:1
	Third—6.93:1
	Fourth—5.125:1
Rear axle—Three quarter floating with spiral bevel final drive. Ratio, 5.125:1	

FUEL

Carburetors	.....	Twin S.U. semi-downdraft
Tank capacity	.....	61.4 litres (13 1/2 gallons)
Consumption average	.....	25-32 mpg

CHASSIS

Box-section side members with tubular cross-members.
Underslung below the rear axle and upswept over the front axle.

WHEELS

Wire-spoked, center-lock, knock-off hub caps
Tires—19 x 4.50

DIMENSIONS

Tread	.....	45 inches
Wheelbase	.....	94 inches
Turning radius	.....	37 feet
Overall width	.....	56 inches
Overall height	.....	53 inches
Overall length	.....	139 1/2 inches

BLOWN—A Shorrock supercharger is shown installed on the engine of this MG. The use of a blower increases the top speed by about 15 mph and greatly increases acceleration.

R. E. PETERSEN

