

THE MGA MARK II:

HOW TO WIN SALES AND INFLUENCE TASTES



Adhering to a well-tried and proven policy, new MG still retains the same body with which the marque was endowed seven years ago.

Engine boost for newest car to wear the octagon

IF you went out and asked 100 people in the street to name one make of sports car, you could be sure that ninety of them would name the MG. Such is the fame of the little car which is credited with introducing the car-conscious American to sports cars.

The MG has a wonderful sporting heritage, having scored literally thousands of competition wins and having set innumerable speed records during the 35 years or so of its production life.

The latest result of this heritage is the MGA 1600 Mark II, fourth of the "A" series and using virtually the same body as the original MGA, which was introduced in 1955. About 100,000 MGAs have been produced and they have won thousands of friends, many of them including the fanatical adherents to the squarelook MG of pre 1955.

I venture to say that the MGA is probably the most successful sports car ever mass produced. By successful, I refer not to its competition performances, but to its performance as a sales win-

ner and influencer of tastes for BMC.

The latest car is very little different physically from its predecessor. A slightly modified grille, new tail lights, and additional chrome trim on the instrument panel, distinguish its appearance. Mechanically, the changes have been a little more extensive.

The main change is a bigger and more powerful engine. This coupled with a drop in axle ratio from 4.30 to 4.10 has done a lot to improve the initial acceleration of the new MG. The motor has a capacity of 1622 cc, which has been achieved by a cylinder bore increase to an even 3 in. The stroke is left untouched at 3.5 in.

BMC quote the developed power as 90 bhp — is an increase of 13 percent — for the 8.9 to 1 compression engine, and 84.6 bhp for the 8.3 to 1 engine which is the one that will be available in Australia.

The very rigid chassis remains unchanged, as do the braking arrangements — discs on the front, drums on back.

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On the road the Mark II has noticeably improved performance over the earlier 1600. The extra capacity more than makes up for the lowered back-end, and although the drag factor hasn't been altered, the car achieves a genuine 100 mph with considerably more ease than the old model.

Although at this stage no one in Australia has published a road test we anticipate that the Mark II would achieve a top speed in excess of 105 mph while pulling between 5600 and 5700 rpm.

Anyone who has owned an MGA will harangue for hours on the exemplary roadholding qualities of the car. We won't go so far as to say that the car is the best handling sports car available today, or that it has the best steering. However, it is perfectly true to say that it is a car without handling vices.

Any rank beginner could climb into an MGA and drive fast without any fear of the car playing tricks on him. The steering (rack and pinion) is as close to neutral as you'll get on a sports car today. The car oversteers, and the "tailout" attitude can be provoked and held with relative ease. The steering, typical rack and pinion, has no backlash or play. High speed stability is very easy; it's not necessary to make adjustments with the steering wheel when going in a straight line. Occasionally the wheel transmits a road shock, but thanks to a very rigid frame and body, there is no scuttle to speak of.

The rigid riding qualities of the MGA have been the subject of criticism in recent years. The claim is that they haven't improved greatly since it was introduced in 1950, and in many ways this

is largely true. However, the really firm ride of the earlier T series cars is no longer evident, by virtue of the fact that the seats of the A are located within the chassis and more towards the front of the car.

The ride can be improved by lowering tyre pressures, but with the tyres fitted as standard by the factory, tyre squeal has always been something of a problem; lowering the pressures only makes matters worse, as well as making life more difficult for the tyres themselves.

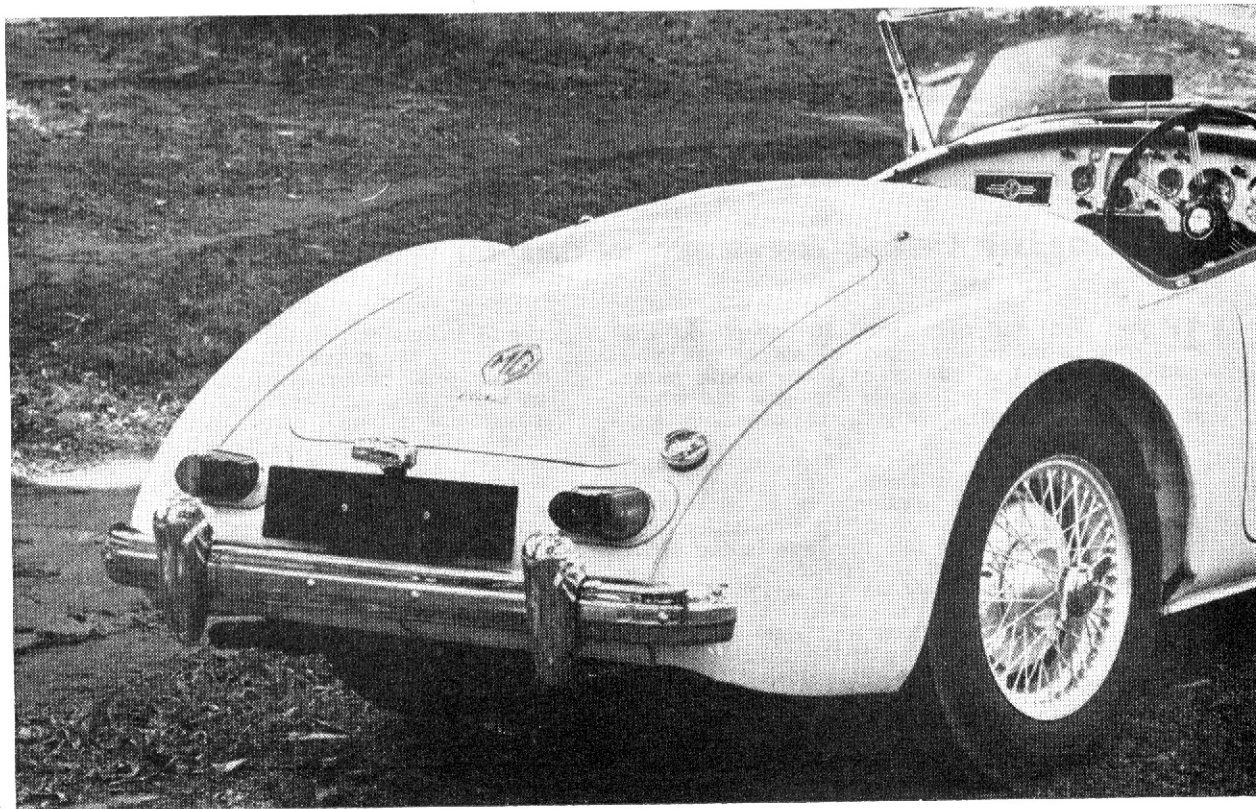
The brakes are a very successful combination of discs and drums. Unlike some manufacturers who are troubled by high pedal pressures and great pedal travel, the MGA's brakes clicked right from the start. No boosting mechanism has been fitted, indeed none has yet been necessary. The advantages of discs of course are now universally known, and the combination of these on the front, coupled with generous drums on the rear, is perfectly suited to the MGA's performance.

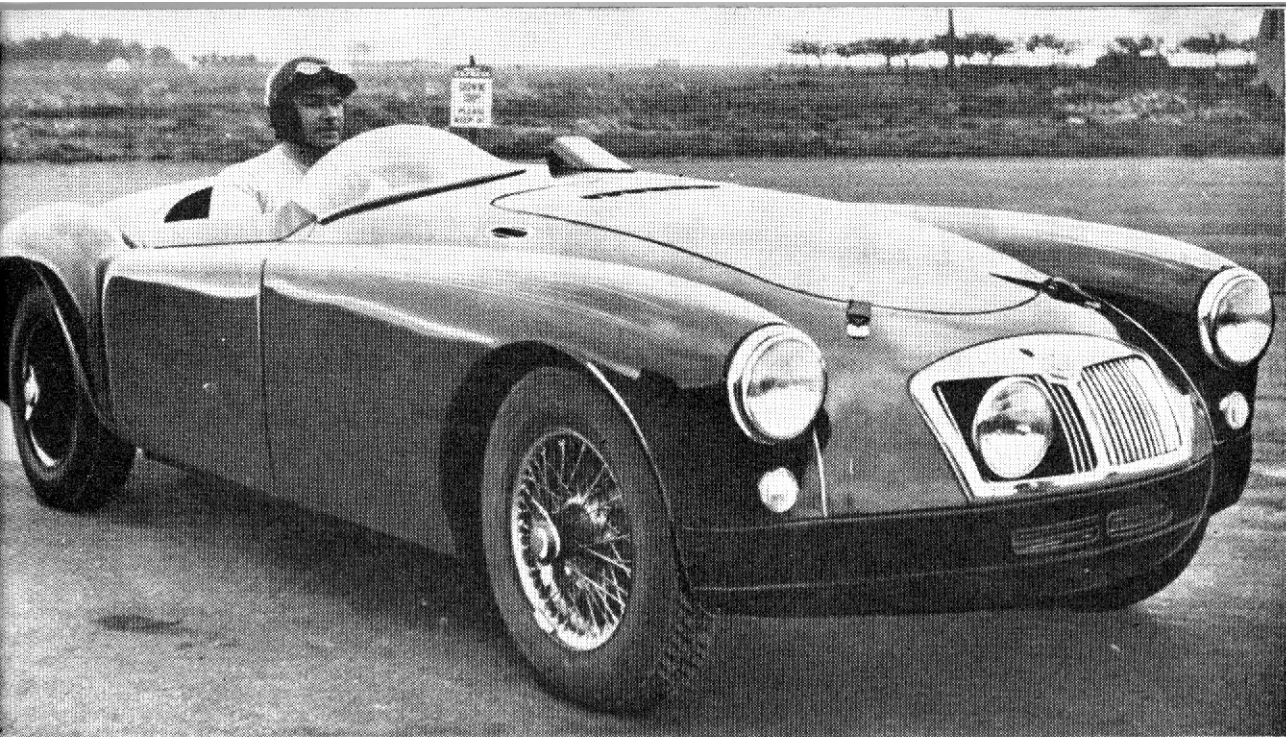
Australians will welcome BMC's (Australia) decision not to go to the higher compression ratio that is used overseas. This will still enable the cylinder head to be "worked over" and experimentation with fuel blends should pay dividends.

In typical MGA fashion, the Mark II rumbles noticeably on deceleration, but it will pull smoothly away in top gear from 18-20 mph. At the other end of the scale, the tachometer has a yellow zone from 5500 to 6000 rpm, and the red extends from 6000 to 7000. The unit, from past experience, revs readily to 6000 although this should be held only momentarily. Revving beyond 6000 is asking for trouble.

The gearbox, which has always given good service, remains unchanged. The shift itself is very stiff on new cars, but frees up after several thousand miles. Synchro on second, third, and top is very positive and does its job very well.

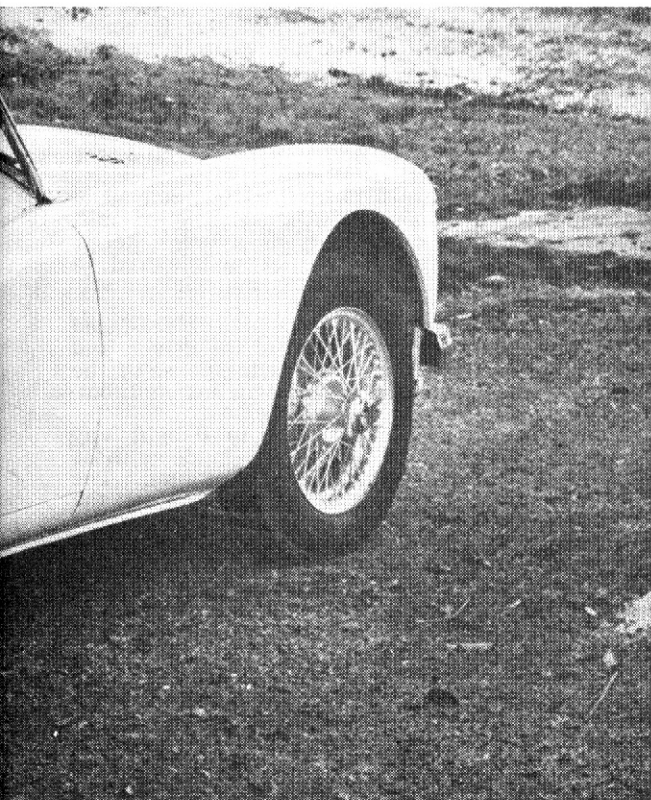
Other details on the car which remain unchanged include insufficient room for the feet (although the dipper switch has been more con-





This prototype MGA brought the MG Car Company back into racing after an absence of 20 years. It ran at Le Mans in this form.

veniently relocated) and a pull-type starter switch. The driving position is still rather too close for most tastes, and the bucket seats don't offer much in the way of support. Despite these shortcomings, the MGA Mark II has become an even more desirable motor car, and one which would afford any owner a great deal of enjoyment. It looks well, goes well, handles well, and in spite of the brutal treatment that the characteristics encourage seems to last well. Like its predecessors, it will be acclaimed by thousands of satisfied owners. ●



Make and model MG-A

ENGINE:

Cylinders four, in line
 Cubic capacity 1622 cc
 Valve arrangement pushrod overhead
 Maximum power 93 hp at 5500 rpm

GENERAL:

Brake type disc/drum
 Transmission type four speed
 Wheelbase 7 ft 10 in
 Weight (approx.) 17½ cwt

PERFORMANCE:

Top speed 105 mph
 Speeds in gears:
 I 29 mph
 II 49 mph
 III 80 mph
 IV 105 mph
 V NA
 Standing quarter mile 18.8 secs
 0 to 30 mph 4.0 secs
 0 to 50 mph 9.2 secs
 0 to 70 mph 17.7 secs
 0 to 100 mph NA
 0 to 120 mph NA

The MG is still the best known and most popular sports car in the world. More than 100,000 A-types have now been produced.