



The new Triumph Stag's 2 plus 2 body is available either as a soft top or with a detachable hard top.

JOHN BOLSTER tries

The new Triumph Stag

The Triumph Stag is an entirely new model for which there must be an immense demand. In brief, British Leyland have produced a 2 plus 2 GT which has all the looks, refinement and performance of continental cars like the Mercedes-Benz 280 SL at just over half the price. In fact, it can probably see off the opposition fairly comfortably in at least two of these three respects, and how Lord Stokes proposes to satisfy the potential demand one would be interested to know.

The heart of the Stag is a very interesting new engine. It is a V8 with a single overhead-camshaft for each head, with chain drive. It is, in effect, the "other half" added to the inclined four-cylinder Triumph engine used in the Saab 99. The in-line valves are operated directly through inverted bucket tappets, seating in wedge-shaped combustion chambers in aluminium cylinder heads. The cast-iron 90 deg block carries the forged alloy steel crankshaft, which has integral balance weights, on five main bearings. A bonded rubber torsion vibration damper is on the front end.

An excellent vintage feature is the positive drive to the water pump, through skew-gears from a jack-shaft which also drives the distributor. The fan is belt-driven separately and has a viscous coupling to reduce noise at high revs. The engine is very much over-square with dimensions of 86 mm by 64.5 mm (2997 cc), and on the moderate compression ratio of 8.8 to 1 it develops a net output of 145 bhp at 5500 rpm. It is interesting that fuel injection is not at present standardised, an electric fuel pump at the rear of the car delivering to two horizontal Stromberg carburettors within the vee. An inertia switch cuts off the fuel supply in the event of an accident, a valuable safety feature.

The V8 engine can be mounted in unit with a manual gearbox, similar to that of the Triumphs 2.5 PI. Alternatively, a Borg-Warner automatic transmission has been developed for this power unit. The hypoid final drive housing is secured to the rubber-mounted sub-

frame that also carries the rear suspension.

No separate chassis frame is employed, the body being a pressed-steel monocoque. It is a two-door 2 plus 2 and is available either as a soft-top or with a detachable hard-top. In either case, a padded roll-over bar gives the structural rigidity that a roof normally confers. It is an extension of the door pillars and has a central member that projects forward to join the screen. This overhead construction is immensely rigid and reinforces the whole body, acting like a roof in eliminating scuttle shake.

Independent front suspension of the MacPherson type is used, with semi-trailing arms behind. The rack and pinion steering has power assistance as standard. To give an

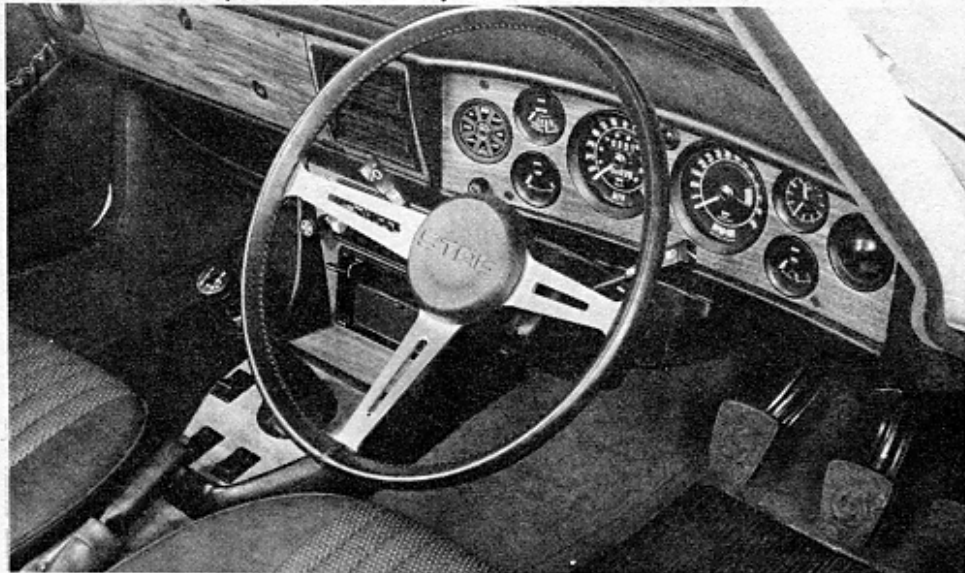
idea of the size of this new GT, it has the same track as the 2.5 saloon and is 6½ ins shorter in the wheelbase, but still 1 ft longer than the TR6. The very delightful styling of the body is unmistakably the work of Giovanni Michelotti.

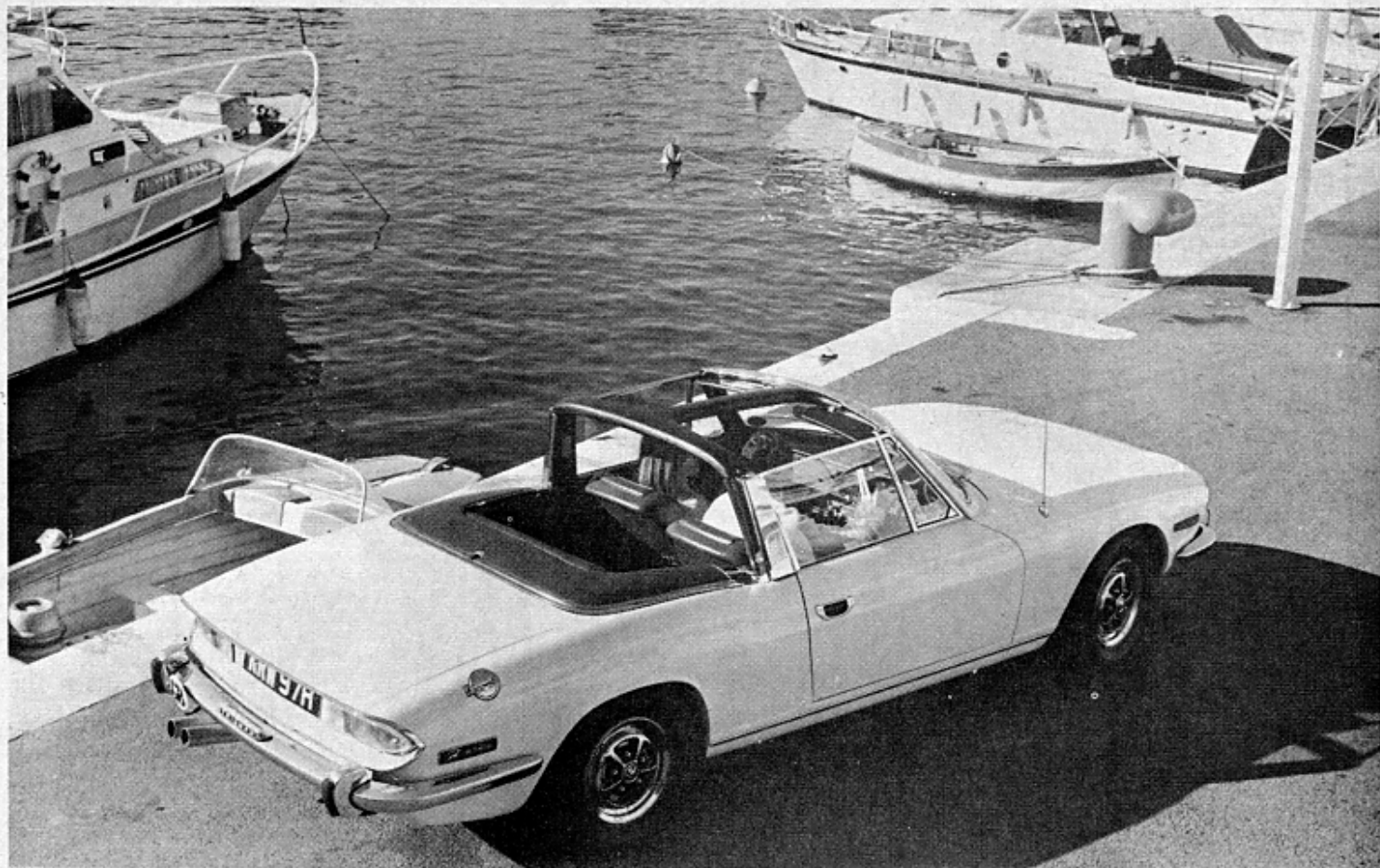
A brief test

I was able to try the Stag in Belgium on roads ranging from fast, smooth straights to the most appalling pavé, with plenty of corners thrown in, plus some heavy traffic. I chose an open car because the weather was superb, and I was not at all disappointed that it had automatic transmission. Triumph and Borg-Warner had already demonstrated such an extraordinary rapport over the 2.5 PI that I wanted to see if they could do it again with the 3-litre V8. They could!

The Stag is as far as it could possibly be from a hairy sports car. It is very quiet indeed and the engine is especially smooth, with hardly a suspicion of the V8 exhaust

The interior is well planned with a nicely laid out dash.





beat. There is a lot of torque in the lower and middle ranges, the car feeling very lively in consequence, and one is very seldom tempted to select the ratios manually, though there is provision for so doing. The transmission works very smoothly and there is no need to use high revs on the lower gears, though the engine spins very freely when required to do so.

The car rides astonishingly well over bad roads but does not feel excessively "soft" and is steady at its maximum speed, which appears to be just below 120 mph. The steering is extremely light, which is a little disconcerting at first, but it is found with experience to give adequate feel of the road. The insulation of road and tyre noises is of a very high standard indeed. There is enough understeer to give high-speed stability in side-winds but the Stag is well-balanced for taking fast curves; the amount of roll is rather less than one expects with such comfortable suspension.

Everything about the Stag is luxurious, but it accelerates like a sports car and seems very happy to cruise at 100 mph. The new Triumph 3-litre V8 engine is delightfully willing and plays with the relatively light 2 plus 2 body. This is a very important addition to the British Leyland range which will bring prestige to its makers and pleasure to its owners. We hope to publish a full-length road test soon.

Car Reviewed: Triumph Stag open 2 plus 2, price £1,996 or £2,042 with hard top, including tax.
Engine: Eight cylinders, 86 mm by 64.5 mm, 2997 cc. Single chain-driven overhead camshaft to each bank. Compression ratio 8.8 to 1. 145 bhp at 5,500 rpm. Two horizontal Stromberg carburetors.
Transmission: Single dry plate diaphragm-spring clutch. 4-speed all-synchromesh gearbox with central change, ratios 1.0, 1.386, 2.10, and 2.995 to 1. Chassis-mounted hypoid unit, ratio 3.7 to 1. Optional extra: Borg-Warner automatic transmission.
Chassis: Combined steel body and chassis. MacPherson independent front suspension with anti-roll bar. Power-assisted rack and pinion steering. Independent rear suspension by semi-trailing arms with coil springs and telescopic dampers. Disc front and drum rear brakes. Bolt-on steel wheels fitted Michelin 185 HR 14 radial ply tyres.
Equipment: 12-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Rev-counter. Water temperature, battery condition and fuel gauges. Heating, demisting and ventilation system. Two-speed windscreen wipers and washers. Flashing direction indicators. Reversing lamps. Optional extra: Refrigerated air conditioning.
Dimensions: Wheelbase 8 ft 4 ins. Track, front 4 ft 4½ ins; rear 4 ft 4¾ ins. Overall length 14 ft 5¾ ins. Width 5 ft 3½ ins. Weight 1 ton 5 cwt.
Performance: (approximate) Maximum speed 118 mph. Speeds in gears: third 79 mph, second 52 mph, first 36 mph. Acceleration: 0-30 mph, 3.5 s; 0-50 mph, 7 s; 0-60 mph, 9.5 s; 0-80 mph, 16 s; 0-100 mph, 29 s.

The rear of the car is unmistakably Triumph (above). Cutaway drawing of the new 3-litre V8 engine, which gives 145 bhp (below).

