

The Motor Road Test No. 30/57 (Continental)

Make: M.G.

Type: M.G. A Coupé

Makers: M.G. Car Co. Ltd., Abingdon-on-Thames, Berkshire

Test Data

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CONDITIONS: Weather: Wind 10 to 15 m.p.h.; showery. (Temperature 78°F., Barometer 29.6 in. Hg.). Surface: Concrete: Monthley Track. Fuel: British and French Premium.

INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h.	3% fast
Speedometer at 60 m.p.h.	3% fast
Speedometer at 90 m.p.h.	4% fast
Speedometer at 100 m.p.h.	7% fast
Distance recorder	accurate

WEIGHT:

Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles)	18½ cwt.
Front/rear distribution of kerb weight	52/48
Weight laden as tested	21½ cwt.

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Flying Monthley Lap	101.2 m.p.h.
Best one-way ¼km. time equals	103.8 m.p.h.
"Maximile" Speed. (Timed quarter-mile after one mile accelerating from rest.)	
Mean of four runs	92.0 m.p.h.
Best one-way time equals	94.8 m.p.h.
Speed in Gears at recommended limit of 5,500 r.p.m.	
Max. speed in third	68 m.p.h.
Max. speed in second	42 m.p.h.
Max. speed in first	26 m.p.h.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

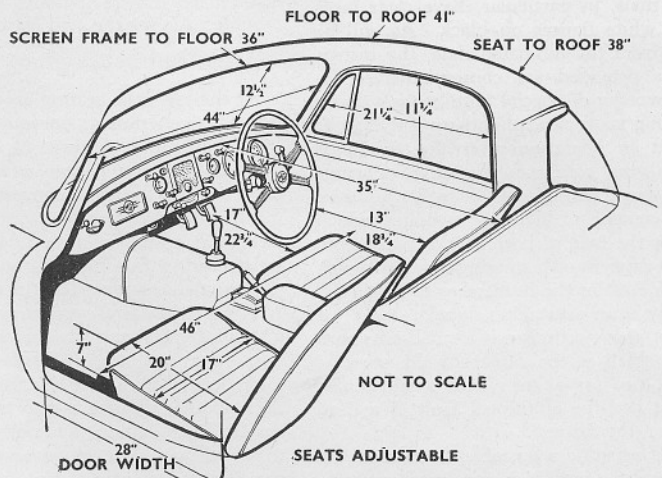
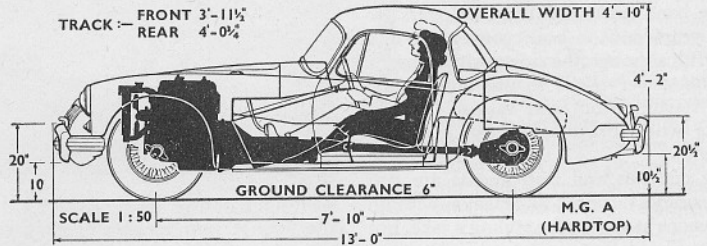
47.0 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level.
43.2 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level.
35.4 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level.
31.2 m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level.
28.8 m.p.g. at constant 80 m.p.h. on level.
24.8 m.p.g. at constant 90 m.p.h. on level.
Overall Fuel Consumption for 742 miles, 26.9 gallons, equals 27.6 m.p.g. (10.2 litres/100 km.).
Touring Fuel Consumption (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration) 31.5 m.p.g.
Fuel Tank Capacity (makers' figure) 10 gallons.

STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs:	
Left	28½ feet
Right	29½ feet
Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock	2½

BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.

0.94g retardation (equivalent to 32 ft. stopping distance) with 90 lb. pedal pressure.
0.80g retardation (equivalent to 37½ ft. stopping distance) with 75 lb. pedal pressure.
0.52g retardation (equivalent to 58 ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure.
0.27g retardation (equivalent to 115 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure.



ACCELERATION TIMES from standstill

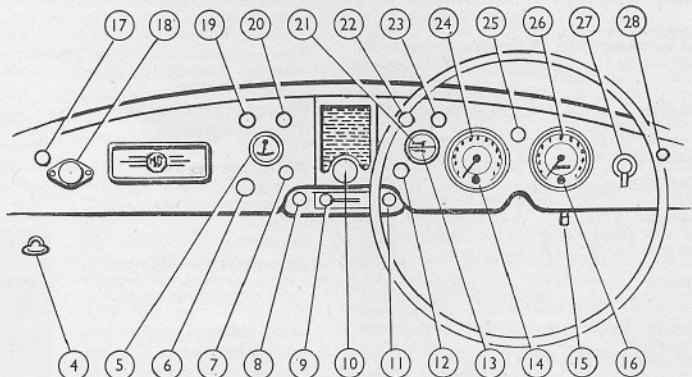
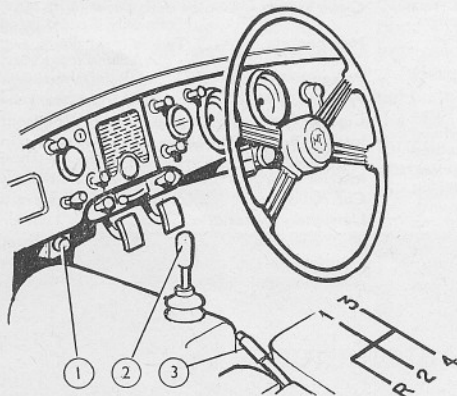
0-30 m.p.h.	5.0 sec.
0-40 m.p.h.	7.2 sec.
0-50 m.p.h.	10.8 sec.
0-60 m.p.h.	15.7 sec.
0-70 m.p.h.	21.4 sec.
0-80 m.p.h.	32.1 sec.
Standing quarter mile	19.8 sec.

ACCELERATION TIMES on upper ratios

	Top gear	3rd gear
10-30 m.p.h.	13.6 sec.	8.1 sec.
20-40 m.p.h.	13.6 sec.	7.9 sec.
30-50 m.p.h.	13.8 sec.	8.1 sec.
40-60 m.p.h.	12.6 sec.	8.7 sec.
50-70 m.p.h.	13.7 sec.	10.4 sec.
60-80 m.p.h.	17.6 sec.	—
70-90 m.p.h.	28.1 sec.	—

HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds.

Max. gradient on top	1 in 10.7 (Tapley 210 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on third	1 in 7.3 (Tapley 305 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on second	1 in 4.75 (Tapley 472 lb./ton)

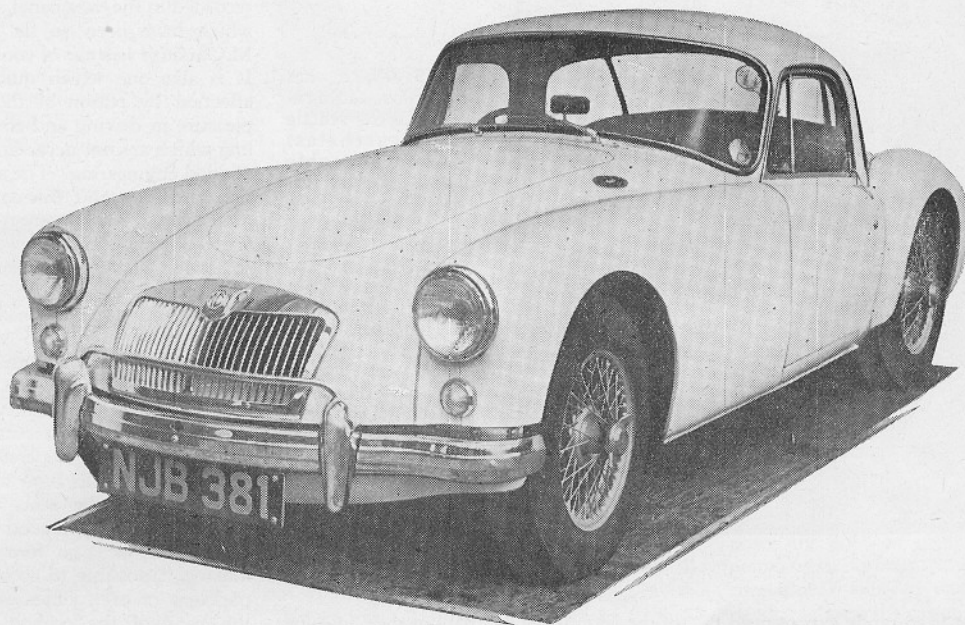


1, Headlamp dip switch. 2, Gear lever. 3, Handbrake. 4, Bonnet catch release. 5, Fuel contents gauge. 6, Windscreen washer control. 7, Choke control. 8, Ventilator control. 9, Temperature and heater fan switch. 10, Horn button. 11, Demisting control. 12, Starter

button. 13, Water thermometer. 14, Dynamo charge warning light. 15, Trip re-setting knob. 16, Headlamp main beam indicator light. 17, Map reading light switch. 18, Map reading light. 19, Windscreen wipers switch. 20, Ignition

switch. 21, Oil pressure gauge. 22, Lights switch. 23, Fog lamp switch. 24, Tachometer. 25, Panel light switch. 26, Speedometer and distance recorder. 27, Direction indicator switch. 28, Direction indicator warning light.

The M.G. A Hardtop Coupé



An Economical 100 m.p.h. Car with Exceptional Roadworthiness

IN the world of motoring there are many cars capable of exceeding 100 m.p.h.; indeed, most current American productions are capable of this feat. In contrast, the majority of European cars place an accent on economical running as exemplified by a fuel consumption of, say, better than 25 m.p.g. Standing between these two extremes there is a choice of four cars, all of European origin, which will beat by a useful margin both the 100 m.p.h. and the 25 m.p.g. mark, the latest recruit to this select company being the M.G. A model with the fixed-head coupé body.

Reference to our road test of the car in original form with open body but raised hood will show that the maximum speed on a flat and level road was 97.8 m.p.h., but the coupé model recently tested on the banked Montlhéry track displayed a sensibly superior performance by returning an overall lap time equivalent to 101.2 m.p.h. with a fastest half kilometre at 103.8 m.p.h. There is therefore no question of the

ability of this car to exceed the three figure mark and anyone who questions the utility of this feat in itself should consider the implications thereof upon acceleration in the upper speed ranges and in the ability to cruise with the engine running on a modest throttle opening.

So far as acceleration is concerned, the figures show that making full use of the gearbox the M.G. will run up to 80 m.p.h. within 25 sec. from a speed of 40 m.p.h. and even if the driver remains in top gear between these two speeds the time needed is only 30 sec. A speed of 80 m.p.h. is therefore readily within the compass of the car on any reasonable section of road and in this condition the piston speed is only slightly in excess of 2,500 ft/min. and the engine is delivering little more than half maximum power.

The high acceleration of the car is perhaps of particular value on British roads; the aspect of a comfortable 80 m.p.h. cruising is of especial value abroad and it is perhaps significant that an extremely high proportion of M.G. A. production is exported.

Road surfaces abroad are notoriously poorer than they are in England and for this reason we were particularly impressed by the robustness of the car and the entire absence of chassis wave or body shake even when speeds considerably greater than 80 m.p.h. were being sustained on Continental highways. This high stiffness factor not only ensures freedom from deterioration of door windows, window frames and other small items in the general structure but also gives the driver and passenger a psychological impression that high speeds can be maintained in safety, whereas some more flimsily built vehicles suffer not only from mechanical disabilities

but also impose strain and anxiety upon the occupants.

The impression of safety engendered by the M.G. is, fortunately, founded on fact. Although with the recommended tyre pressures, squeal is somewhat prevalent with high-speed cornering, with the higher pressures adopted on Montlhéry circuit, this annoyance disappears, and cornering power comes up into the racing car class which is not particularly surprising in view of the 30 years' continuous competition experience which lies behind the car.

Although automobile engineering has reached the point where the maximum speed, acceleration and fuel consumption of a new car will conform closely to predictions derived from the drawing board, this is by no means true in regard to steering and handling characteristics and the prototype M.G. A. models were developed on a special course to a point where the speed through a given series of corners was equal to the best obtainable irrespective of selling price.

The coupé displays almost neutral steering characteristics coupled with exceptional rapidity of response under the influence of the absolutely positive rack and pinion steering gear. The steering wheel itself might perhaps be placed farther from the driver for the benefit of those who prefer the modern straight-arm control position and over rough surfaces there is noticeable shake on the wheel which does not in any way affect the straight running of the vehicle. By the standards of the family car more than usual physical effort has to be exerted on the wheel, but this is a very small price to pay for that feeling of absolute mastery over the attitude of the vehicle which is one of the most desirable features a car

In Brief

Price (including wire wheels, heater, screen washer, etc., as tested), plus purchase tax: £1,158 15s. 9d.	
Basic price of £724, with 363 7s. 0d. purchase tax equals £1,087 7s. 0d.	
Capacity	1,489 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight	18½ cwt.
Acceleration:	
20-40 m.p.h. in top gear	13.6 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears	10.8 sec.
Maximum direct top gear gradient	1 in 10.7
Maximum speed	101.2 m.p.h.
"Maximile" speed	92 m.p.h.
Touring fuel consumption	31.5 m.p.g.
Gearing: 17 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m.; 29 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed.	



SEATS which are rather low-set in relation to the scuttle are nevertheless very comfortable and give good lateral support; there is a central armrest on the transmission tunnel and, on the car tested, an optionally extra ash-tray. Just forward of this is the stubby gearlever which gives very pleasant, positive use of the gearbox.

The M.G. A Hardtop Coupé

haps reduced by the wire wheels fitted.

It is clear from the very good figures recorded in the data panel and the remarks which have been so far made that the M.G. coupé is a car of considerable merit. It is also one which quickly commands affection by reason of those qualities of pleasure in driving and comfort in travelling which are not necessarily the outcome of good engineering. The suspension is on the hard side and this fact is the more noticeable if the tyres are run on the higher limits of pressure. If, however, bumps are somewhat more than usually noticeable neither pitch nor roll can normally be discerned and long high-speed journeys cause little physical and no mental fatigue.

Comfort could be further improved by raising the seats an inch or two which would at the same time give a better view over the rather high scuttle, as with the standard position a person of moderate height scarcely has both wings of the car in view. But the seats themselves are comfortable and give good support against side forces, a large fore and aft travel making it possible to accommodate small packages or even suitcases in the well at the back of the cockpit. The inboard mounting of the spare wheel causes an intrusion which is particularly noticeable in the somewhat shallow rear locker and for serious touring it would certainly be necessary to fit the optionally offered external luggage rack. Other minor matters which justify criticism are the somewhat limited arcs swept by the windscreen wipers and a rather haphazard layout of instruments and switches, although the principal items of road and

can have and yet is so rarely experienced.

The clutch gives a firm take up and very rapid gear changes can be made, despite the rather wide gap between top and third gear, the speed on the latter being restricted to 70 m.p.h. unless the driver is prepared to take the tachometer needle past the 5,500 r.p.m. mark into the red section. When the acceleration figures were obtained the needle was kept below this area and if the maximum r.p.m. had been increased to the competition limit of 6,000 r.p.m. slightly better times might have been recorded.

As a counterpart to the somewhat wide gap between top and third gear the latter is an excellent ratio to use either in traffic or on country roads as it gives very vivid acceleration between 10 and 60 m.p.h., some pinking from the engine however being noticeable below 2,000 r.p.m. unless 100 octane fuel is used.

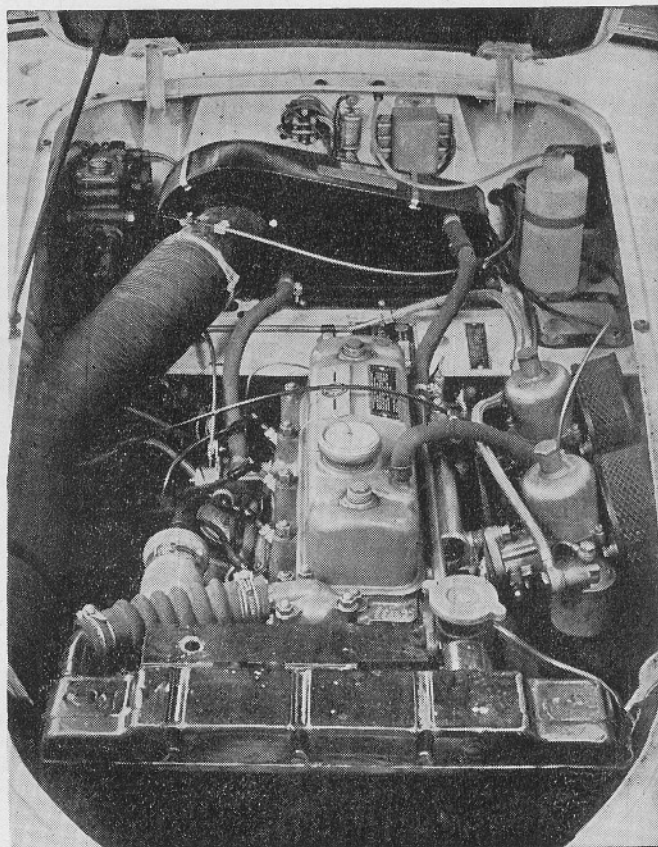
The engine cannot be called mechanically quiet. There is a rattle from the pushrod valvegear which is an established characteristic of the type and does not denote mechanical defect but the gearbox and rear axle are free from objectionable noise. The attraction of the fully open car cannot be denied and the name M.G. is especially identified with this type. Nevertheless, from a strictly practical point of view it must be pointed out that despite the introduction of wind-down windows and wrapround rear window the coupé M.G. went on the scales only 32 lb. heavier than the open type; it is $3\frac{1}{2}$ m.p.h. faster and returns a fuel consumption 1 m.p.g. better. Any resonant effects which may be introduced by the use of a closed body are more than offset by the reduced wind noise and buffeting which follow from the enclosure of the occupants and by reason of a well-designed and carefully positioned wrapround windscreen.

The overall fuel consumption was based upon hard driving (including some 50 laps

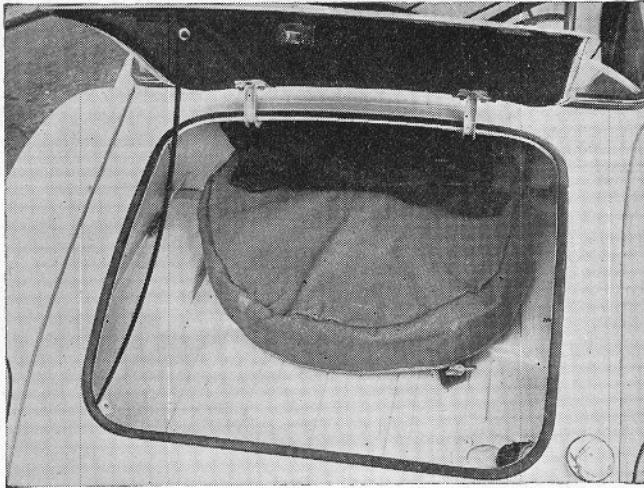
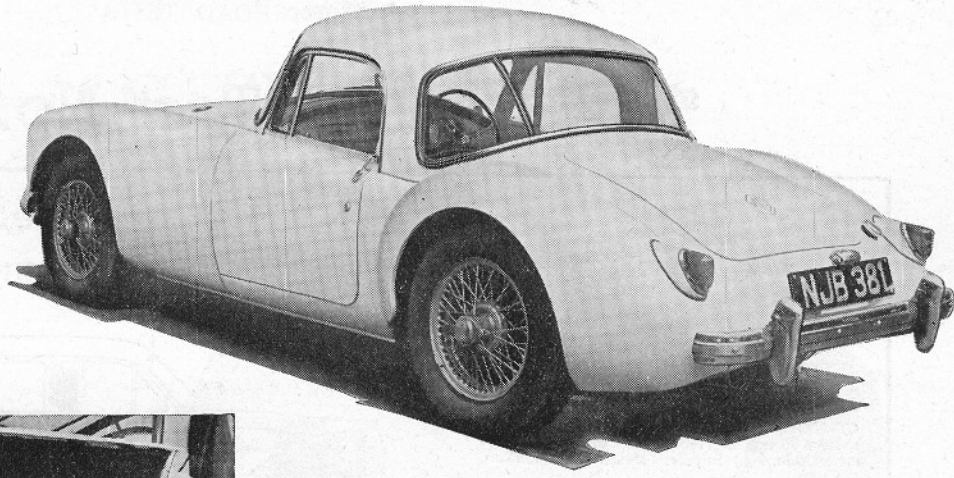
of the Monthéry circuit) but the M.G., by reason of the characteristics set out above encourages the driver to make full use of the performance available, this procedure being also wholly acceptable to the passenger.

Should it be necessary to drive really hard the brakes will be found equal to all demands made upon them, pedal pressures being reasonable, stopping consistent and free from the generation of smoke or smell, the drum temperatures being per-

TWO inclined S.U. carburetters feed mixture to the four-cylinder o.h.v. engine. Plugs, coil, advance and retard unit, dipstick, carburetters and oil filler are easy to reach.



EXCELLENT rearward visibility follows from the use of a wrapround rear window which in conjunction with big door windows reduces the "blind" quarters to a near-minimum.



WITH spare wheel and tool roll carried in the boot, little room is left for luggage, but there is additional space behind the seats and an external luggage rack is available as an extra.

ted the entrance of rain water as well as raising the noise level.

No car is perfect and these minor criticisms must be viewed against the background that this is a car in which the exceptional performance, safety and pleasure are derived from simple mechanical components in large-scale production. In consequence, spares and maintenance costs are not out of line with ordinary commercial practice and no special mechanical skill or tuning aptitude is needed to keep the car in 100% mechanical condition. The accessibility of the engine components is adequate and an inspection of the chassis shows that the running gear is exceptionally robust and that the number of points needing regular lubrication has been reduced to nine.

Moderately priced, economical to run and maintain, remarkably fast, exceptionally safe and above all a constant pleasure to drive and be driven in, it is not surprising that the M.G. A is beating all production records at Abingdon and that it has established itself as the most popular sports car in the world.

engine speed are clearly displayed immediately before the driver.

A nearside door lock is logical enough for the bulk of cars sold with left-hand drive but for the home market a lock on the driver's door would be more appropriate and as in a closed car, the driver would probably not wear headgear, the

absence of a sun vizard is hard to excuse.

The car tested had a built-in heater and ventilator which seemed more successful at supplying heated air, which was unwanted at this time of year, than fresh air at ambient temperature; which was more to be regretted as opening either the side windows or the ventilating panels permit-

Specification

Engine

Cylinders	4
Bore	73.025 mm.
Stroke	89 mm.
Cubic capacity	1,489 c.c.
Piston area	25.97 sq. in.
Valves	Pushrod o.h.v.
Compression ratio	8.3/1
Carburettors	Two inclined S.U. 1½ in.
Fuel pump	S.U. electrical, rear-mounted
Ignition timing control	Vacuum
Oil filter	Full flow Tecalemit
Max. power (net)	72 b.h.p.
at	5,500 r.p.m.
Piston speed at max. b.h.p.	3,220 ft./min.

Transmission

Clutch	Single dry plate
Top gear (s/m)	4.3
3rd gear (s/m)	5.908
2nd gear (s/m)	9.52
1st gear	15.652
Reverse	20.468
Propeller shaft	Open
Final drive	Hypoid bevel
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m.	17
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed	29

Chassis

Brakes ...	Lockheed hydraulic (2 l.s. front)
Brake drum internal diameter ...	10 in.
Friction lining area ...	134.4 sq. in.
Suspension:	
Front ...	Coil and wishbone, i.f.s.
Rear ...	Semi-elliptic
Shock absorbers:	
Front ...	Armstrong incorporated in upper wishbone pivots
Rear ...	Armstrong hydraulic
Steering gear ...	Rack and pinion
Tyres ...	Dunlop 5.60—15

Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle	Yes
Battery mounting	Behind seats
Jack	Screw-type
Jacking points	Front wishbones and rear springs
Standard tool kit: Ring-type tappet spanner, wheelbrace (copper hammer with wire wheels), tappet gauge, sparking plug spanner, pliers, grease gun, adjustable spanner, 2 tyre levers, cylinder head nut spanner, tyre valve spanner, distributor screwdriver and gauge, tyre pump, 3 box spanners, 3 o/e spanners, screwdriver, recessed screwdriver, tommy bar, jack, brake bleeder tube, gearbox plug spanner, touch-up paint-pencil, tool roll.	
Exterior lights: 2 head, 2 side-indicator, 2 rear/brake/indicator.	
Number of electrical fuses	Two
Direction indicators	Flashing type, self-cancelling
Windscreen wipers	Electric, self-parking
Windscreen washers	Optional
Sun vizors	No

Instruments: Speedometer with decimal trip distance recorder, rev. counter, oil pressure gauge, water thermometer.

Warning lights Ignition, indicators, headlamp main beam

Locks:

With ignition key	Ignition
With other keys	None
Glove lockers	None
Map pockets	Two
Parcel shelves	None
Ashtrays	One between seats
Cigar lighters	None
Interior lights	Instrument panel, map-reading light

Interior heater Fresh-air type with de-mister Car radio Optional, Radiomobile

Extras available: Radio, heater, wire wheels, fog lamp, white-wall tyres, 4.55/1 axle gears, twin horns, external luggage carrier, radiator blind, rim embellishers, telescopic steering column, screen-washer, badge bar.

Upholstery material Leather over foam rubber Floor covering Carpet

Exterior colours standardized 5

Alternative body styles Open 2-seater

Maintenance

Sump	6½ pints, S.A.E. 30
Gearbox	4 pints, S.A.E. 30
Rear axle	2½ pints, Hypoid 90
Steering gear lubricant	Hypoid 90
Cooling system capacity	10 pints (2 drain taps)
Chassis lubrication	By grease gun every 1,000 miles to 9 points
Ignition timing	7° b.t.d.c.
Contact-breaker gap014-.016 in.
Sparking plug gap019-.021 in.
Valve timing: I.o. 16° b.t.d.c.; i.c. 56° a.b.d.c.; e.o. 51° b.b.d.c.; e.c. 21° a.t.d.c.	

Tappet clearances (hot)017 in.
Front wheel toe-in	Nil
Camber angle	1°
Castor angle	4°
Tyre pressures:	
Front	17 lb.
Rear	20 lb.
(Fast driving, 18 lb. and 23 lb.)	

Brake fluid Lockheed
Battery type and capacity Lucas SG9E, 12-v.
Miscellaneous: Tyre pressures as inflated for high speeds 22 lb. and 26 lb.