America's
Sports Car
Magazine

NOVEMBER, 1955
VOLUME 7, No. 3

'The old order changeth' and yields place to the new MG "A" on our November cover, framed in the familiar orangy which formed the radiator cap of earlier models.

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ROAD & TRACK, November, 1955
'After many a summer' there has been born at Abingdon-on-Thames a new and beautiful baby. Its birth, in a sense, closes a door on the traditional past and ushers in a modern era at the MG factory. Even the car's designation starts again at the beginning of the alphabet. Below, the baby's proud parents, John Thornley and Sid Ennever, stand beside their brainchild, the MG "A."
...a prototype becomes a production car

On the outskirts of a small village in England, situated in almost rural surroundings stands an interesting, rather old, red-brick factory building. This is the Abingdon-on-Thames works, where the late Cecil Kimber finally settled his rapidly growing business of building Morris "hot-rods." That move was made in 1929, and in the ensuing productive years there have been many changes in MG cars—but none like we find for 1956!

Cecil Kimber died in a railroad accident during the war, but even his enthusiasm and genuine flair for creating wonderful automobiles could scarcely have surpassed this new effort of the mighty British Motors Corporation. One can only imagine the months of top level arguments which preceded the decision to drop the traditional and go ahead with the modern design.

The most complete, most extensive design change in 20 years summarizes the new MG, henceforth the "A" model. Only the TD/TF front suspension appears to be unchanged. There is a new frame, engine, transmission, rear axle, and of course a new body. Remarkably, the wheelbase, tread, horsepower and weight are nearly identical to the superseded TF/1500.

Greatest interest probably focuses on the new styling, and the accompanying photos show that a more streamlined form has been chosen, principally to improve salability to a growing segment of the population who have become interested in sports cars and care nothing about fine old traditions. A second reason for the complete change-over in policy is, of course, the demand for high top speed, even in a 1½-litre car. The new contours add almost exactly 10 mph to the "flat-out" speed, with no change in engine output.

The chassis frame of the "A" model proves that no attempt has been made to save weight, for the MG has always been notable for its sturdy construction. The side rails are box section (as before) but now swing out behind the front wheels and back in again at the rear wheels. This allows a lower seating position with both seats between the frame rails. To assure rigidity in cranked frame rails, a new truss structure is built up under the cowl. (Illustrated in the drawing of EX-179, R & T for Nov. 1954, page 36).

At first glance the new engine appears to be a bored-out version of the BMC 1200 cc unit. This is not true, for the BMC "1500" engine is a completely new design, though also used in the Austin A-50, the Morris Oxford and the Magnette sedan. It is longer than the old A-40 engine, has larger bearings, a heavier crankshaft, etc. Only the stroke is the same at 89 mm. (3.50 inches). In the "A" version there are minor variations from the 60 bhp Magnette model, so that the output is now 68 bhp at 5500 rpm despite a compression ratio of only 7.35 to 1.

The all-new cockpit includes built-in radio, heater and radical steering wheel.
Sure sign of change: at long last an MG appears with a trunk.

Front view shows the new grille and a glimpse of the BMC engine.

The new gearbox is a modification of the Magnette's, but with closer ratios designed to give 45 mph in 2nd and 70 mph in 3rd gear, at 5500 rpm. The rear axle is a BMC standardized design featuring hypoid gears and ¾ floating axle shafts. The axle ratio has been dropped from 4.375:1 to 4.30:1 and the following ratio options will be available: 3.7, 3.9, 4.1, and 4.55.

Next to the design changes, the most interesting item concerning the new MG is the long list of options which will be available to suit the needs of competition minded purchasers. Whether this list will include the Le Mans cylinder head (82.5 bhp at 6000) is not announced, but knock-off wire wheels and 5.50 racing tires are cataloged options.

Originally scheduled for announcement in June of this year, the exact date is still indefinite due to an unexpected delay in making up the body dies. A few cars should be here by fall, but deliveries in quantity cannot be expected until early in 1956.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1955</th>
<th>Bore &amp; stroke</th>
<th>Displacement</th>
<th>Axle ratio</th>
<th>Bhp at rpm</th>
<th>Top speed (est.)</th>
<th>Cruise speed</th>
<th>0 to 60 (est.)</th>
<th>60 to 100 (est.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>$1995</td>
<td>73 x 89 mm</td>
<td>1466 cc</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>68 at 5500</td>
<td>94 mph</td>
<td>74 mph</td>
<td>16.5 secs</td>
<td>20.0 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curb Weight</td>
<td>2000 lbs.</td>
<td>2000 lbs.</td>
<td>72 x 90 mm</td>
<td>1466 cc</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>68 at 5500</td>
<td>94 mph</td>
<td>74 mph</td>
<td>16.5 secs</td>
<td>20.0 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelbase</td>
<td>94.0 in.</td>
<td>94.0 in.</td>
<td>73 x 89 mm</td>
<td>1466 cc</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>68 at 5500</td>
<td>94 mph</td>
<td>74 mph</td>
<td>16.5 secs</td>
<td>20.0 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tread, front</td>
<td>47.4 in.</td>
<td>47.4 in.</td>
<td>73 x 89 mm</td>
<td>1466 cc</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>68 at 5500</td>
<td>94 mph</td>
<td>74 mph</td>
<td>16.5 secs</td>
<td>20.0 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rear</td>
<td>48.8 in.</td>
<td>50.0 in.</td>
<td>73 x 89 mm</td>
<td>1466 cc</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>68 at 5500</td>
<td>94 mph</td>
<td>74 mph</td>
<td>16.5 secs</td>
<td>20.0 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tire size</td>
<td>5.60 x 15</td>
<td>5.50 x 15</td>
<td>73 x 89 mm</td>
<td>1466 cc</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>68 at 5500</td>
<td>94 mph</td>
<td>74 mph</td>
<td>16.5 secs</td>
<td>20.0 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engine</td>
<td>BMC</td>
<td>XPEG</td>
<td>73 x 89 mm</td>
<td>1466 cc</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>68 at 5500</td>
<td>94 mph</td>
<td>74 mph</td>
<td>16.5 secs</td>
<td>20.0 secs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Side elevation drawing indicates the relative positioning of engine, seats and spare.

MG COMPARISON TABLE

ROAD & TRACK, November, 1955
Designed to steal your heart!

The entirely NEW MG A

White with black leather upholstery... is one of a rainbow of brilliant new MG A color schemes available.

High in Style! High in Spirit!

There's promise of action in every line of this sleek new beauty. And, promise becomes reality when you experience the eager surge of its powerful new engine—the sureness of big, new oversize brakes—the solid road feel that puts the new MG A in a class by itself. Designed to steal your heart... make a date for a test drive today!

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