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TWIN CAM MG-A

MG-A gets new lease on life with 1600 cc, double overhead cams and 107 bhp.

PHOTOGRAPHY: POOLE

THE EXISTENCE of an experimental double-overhead cam MG is not news to Road & Track readers. The real news is that the dohc version of the MG engine is now in production.

Externally the only visual evidence of what lies concealed under the hood is the special Dunlop disc wheels with knock-off hubs. The rest of the car is essentially MG-A in all details except the following:

1) The twin-cam engine has 1588 cubic centimeters, by virtue of a cylinder bore increase from 2.875 to 2.969 inches.
2) Dunlop caliper-type disc brakes are used.
3) Tires are 5.90-15 "Roadspeed" instead of 5.60.
4) The frame is specially braced for added torsional rigidity.

The rest of the specifications are the same, including an 8-inch clutch, 4.30 axle ratio and suspension details.

The twin-cam "1600" engine has an aluminum cylinder head with a 9.90 compression ratio. It develops 107 brake horsepower at 6500 revolutions per minute. The camshafts are driven by a duplex roller chain and the cam followers are described by MG as "inverted buckets." The bottom end of this unit is considerably different from the standard BMC "B" series engine. There is the larger bore obtained by suitable core changes, a heavier crankshaft with thicker cheeks, lead/indium bearings, racing-type connecting rods (non-split upper end) and a new oil pump of the eccentric rotor type.

As for performance, the new 1600 should do much to restore interest in the under-1600 cc production class. The curb weight will be within 20 or 25 pounds of the standard MG-A and the resultant figure of 20.6 pounds per horsepower (with driver) would indicate a potential that might give even a certain $6000 German import (the one with 120 bhp) some real trouble in both sales and competition.

Available as either a roadster or as a coupe for about $3500, this is a car which we can hardly wait to test.