

# MG sales pick up in Thailand



## NEW MG EXTENDER

The full nine-model MG Extender range is as follows:

### NEW MG EXTENDER GIANT CAB

- NEW MG EXTENDER GC 2.0 C 6MT
- NEW MG EXTENDER GC 2.0 D 6MT
- NEW MG EXTENDER GC 2.0 GRAND D 6MT
- NEW MG EXTENDER GC 2.0 GRAND D 4AT
- NEW MG EXTENDER GC 2.0 GRAND X 6MT

### NEW MG EXTENDER DOUBLE CAB

- NEW MG EXTENDER DC 2.0 GRAND D 6MT
- NEW MG EXTENDER DC 2.0 GRAND D 4AT
- NEW MG EXTENDER DC 2.0 GRAND X 6MT
- NEW MG EXTENDER DC 2.0 GRAND 4WD X 6MT



ABOVE: This is the 'Double Cab' MG Extender...

BELOW: ... contrasted with the two-door 'Giant Cab' version.



If you thought that the launch of an all-electric MG ZS EV was a step into the unknown for our favourite marque, you may wish to look away now or, alternatively, you might wish to celebrate that the MG name is being developed into a whole range of important new market sectors.

Bearing in mind the latest offering of MG Motor in Thailand, and the wider context of where MG is in terms of national sales charts in Thailand, the fact remains that MG's variants are doing extremely well, climbing into the top 10 sales league alongside some other well-known international brands.

We've already seen the new MG V80 minibus, an exclusive-to-Thailand version of the LDV/Maxus equivalent. The 'V80' name did seem to have echoes of the V8-engined MGs of the past but, sadly, the MG V80 van has to make do with the two-litre



ABOVE: It's not every day that a new MG is launched in a muddy off-road situation. The last time we can recall this happening was with the MG Metro 6R4 rally car.

SAIC diesel powertrain. The LDV van is already on sale in the UK but, despite the fact that the V80 is right-hand drive (to suit Thai driving arrangements), there are no plans to bring over an MG-badged variant.

The slightly oddly named MG Extender has also joined the fray. This is another cross-pollination exercise from SAIC's Maxus brand. It is a pick-up truck available with a so-called 'Giant Cab' or a longer 'Double Cab', the latter with two doors each side. The source vehicle is the Maxus T70, which is in itself an improved version of the earlier Maxus T60.

This rugged-looking pick-up comes with a 2.0-litre diesel common-rail engine, direct injection technology and a variable-geometry turbocharger. Its peak output is 161bhp@4,000rpm while peak torque is 375Nm. Six-speed automatic transmission (6AT) and six-speed manual transmission



The four-door Double Cab interior, showing the six airbags...

(6MT) are available and there is also an option of two- or four-wheel-drive. Those with nostalgia for the 'good old days' of the MGB and MG Midget may be interested to know that the rear suspension relies on traditional leaf springs. In tandem with double wishbones at



...and the corresponding two-door Giant Cab interior.



« the front, MG calls this set-up the 'European Tuning Suspension'. Other technology is arguably rather more contemporary, however. All four corners have disc brakes as standard, with the increasingly common suite of 'Anti-Lock Braking', 'Electronic Brake Assist', 'Electronic Brake Force Distribution', 'Stability Control System', 'Traction Control System', 'Tyre Pressure Monitor System', 'Hill Start Assist System', 'Hill Descent Control System', 'Blind Spot Detection' and 'Lane Departure Warning System'. There are also six air bags in total, on the front and side as well as curtain bags, pretensioner safety belts for the driver and front passenger, panoramic cameras, and range detection sensors on the front and rear.

Either side of the big grille, with its enormous MG badge, there are the inevitable projector headlamps and daytime running lamps, whilst at the back is a reverse parking camera. The instrument cluster is defined by MG as: 'appearing to be sporty' and the specification includes a multi-function steering wheel, 10-inch colour touch-screen with smart phone connectivity and a smart key entry system. The Double Cab models add electronically-operated front seats, foldable rear seats and a dedicated air conditioning system for rear occupants: good equipment levels



**ABOVE:** The fascia of the MG Extender doesn't bear a awful lot of resemblance to emerging MG design trends but, unsurprisingly, follows the pattern of Roewe and Maxus. Quality is said to be reasonable... and the big touch-screen will be popular.



for what is essentially a utility type of vehicle. The colour choices are: Arctic White, Black Knight, Silver Metallic, Scarlet Red or Metal Ash Grey.

MG Sales (Thailand) Co. Ltd and SAIC's Thai subsidiary, SAIC Motor-CP Co. Ltd., jointly unveiled the MG Extender at a big launch at '8 Speed Khao Yai Race Circuit' at Pak Chong, Nakhon Ratchasima. Naturally we turned to our local counterparts for their first impressions and it seems that they were generally cautious but optimistic on the basis that SAIC has the financial clout to make a success of the MG Extender.

The Bangkok Post pointed out that the Thai pick-up arena 'isn't for the faint-hearted', adding that anybody trying to carve out a niche needed to offer something compelling to drag customers away from the big-selling Isuzu and Toyota brands, two



**ABOVE:** Oh, but haven't we been here before? This is the one-off MG TD Pick-up created by Al Moss for his eponymous sports car parts supplier.



**ABOVE:** Extender at the 8 Speed Khao Yai Race Circuit during the Thai media launch.

heavyweights which, the Post pointed out, have 70% combined share 'in a market selling half-a-million units annually... Many people merely bought the D-Max or Hilux because of their strong brand credentials'. Whilst the Bangkok Post was lukewarm in its praise, it did recognise the marketing might of SAIC.

What particularly caught our eye was the fact that the popular North American 'Jalopnik' website picked up on the Extender story and proclaimed that 'the MG pick-up looks better than new American trucks'. Jalopnik contributor Andrew Collins declared: 'it looks awesome. I'm totally smitten by this thing's vaguely GMC-looking grille with its Subarusque headlights and chunky fenders. I've got a real thing for pronounced haunches... and the MG Extender is wearing them really well'.

Collins concluded that, while magazines will never be able to



**ABOVE:** How often do you expect to see an MG Extender laden like this? Probably more likely when it is on perhaps its second or third owner.

test the MG pick-up in the U.S.A, '...I'd love it if some American truck designers took a hard look and took some hints. The MG Extender, of all things, does a better job blending agro-toughness with simplicity in a way that's really aesthetically pleasing.' Here at MGEnthusiast,

we like to keep an open mind; the idea of an MG pick-up truck seems to have some appeal, as a rugged lifestyle vehicle that can easily double as a work-horse. Daniel Gregorius, of MG Motor UK, tells us he has no plans to bring it to the UK but we would love to hear your thoughts.

## MG Hector sales are impressive

A lot of prestige, both Indian and Chinese, rests on the shoulders of the India market MG Hector, launched in the summer. We have followed its gestation and remarkable pre-launch hype with great interest over recent months and it is evident that both the Indian media and, more importantly, the Indian consumers, have lapped it all up. Although it is easy to

see through the thin veneer of 'Britishness' which has been applied to the image of the Hector, there is little doubt that it is a competent, well equipped and attractive proposition for anyone in the market for such a vehicle even if, to many eyes, the Hector suffers from the same 'small wheel' problem shared with many Chinese cars and SUVs.

The important factor is sales



**ABOVE:** MG Hectors lined up at MG Motor India's production facility, awaiting despatch to their eager new owners. 1508 units were sold in July alone.



**ABOVE:** The production of the MG Hector got under way in Gujarat in May 2019, ahead of the July on-sale date. The factory is set to expand, allowing output of the Hector to rise and for other MG models to be built for the India market

and here the Hector has made a very good start in a market which, like many throughout the world, has stagnated, leading other manufacturers to cut back production and lower forecasts.

MG Motor India announced in August that it had sold 1508 Hectors in the launch month of July, followed by saying that it had temporarily stopped bookings. 'We have received an overwhelming response with 28,000 bookings for the car' the company announced, adding that a date for 're-opening of bookings' will be announced soon. MG Motor India plans to increase production of the Hector to 3000 units per month during the final quarter of 2019.