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Wow!

# An MGB that bites

TAKE an MGB, lift out the cast-iron four-cylinder engine and drop in the light alloy three-and-a-half-litre Rover V8. It weighs no more, so you don't have the handling and steering problems that dogged the six-cylinder MGC. The result is a smooth and quiet surge of power that transforms the car so that it can compete with sports models costing thousands more, writes GORDON WILKINS.

Standing start tests through the gears had to be done on a damp track with a light powdering of snow and I had to hold off to avoid wheel spin right up to 50 m.p.h. but I did see 0 to 60 in 7.3 sec., 0 to 70 in 9.7 sec., and 0 to 100 in 20 sec.—so in the dry the car should be sensational.

It is more economical than other cars of similar performance (overall consumption of 20-22 m.p.g.) because the engine is having an easy time. Cruising at 70 m.p.h. in top is achieved at a little over 3,000 r.p.m., while Continental motorway travel at 100 in overdrive represents little over 3,500 r.p.m.

Ken Costello, of Costello Engineering in Farnborough, Kent, has now converted nearly 40 MGBs. The engine goes in neatly with minor modifications to engine mountings and scuttle. The oil filter is moved to the wheel valance. The conversion, costing £975, includes a new glass fibre bonnet with



GORDON WILKINS

### The Costello MGB—Ferrari look outside, Rover V8 in.

bulge to clear the engine, plus new grille and badges.

Radiator, clutch, propeller shaft and differential are from the MGC. The gearbox of the MGB has a heavy, jerky action but the converted car's V8 helps by cutting

the need for gear changing. In top gear it will go from 20 to 80 m.p.h. faster than a V12 E-type and from 20 to 100 m.p.h. it will leave behind a Porsche 911E running in the fourth of its five gears.

The MGB suspension handles

the performance very well without much tendency to axle tramp when accelerating hard on rough roads. The brakes, with special hard pads, cope well though they did smell hot after some hard driving on winding roads.

John Fry says "going through some MG papers the other day I came across an article from the Observer dated 3rd February 1972 on the Costello MGB which had just launched. The "Wow!" comment was added by my father before he forwarded the clipping to me when I was living in South Africa!

According to DVLA checks I have made the car seems to be still about – it is taxed to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 but has not had an MOT for a year or two, but of course it no longer requires one".

The article mentions "Ken Costello has now converted nearly 40 MGBs, costing £975 which includes a new glass fibre bonnet with a bulge plus new grille and badges".

The V8 Webmaster recalls buying a 12 month old MGB Roadster in 1970 for £975.