



MG "B" GT V-8

road test report by W. R. Taylor

PURSUIT OR ENFORCEMENT cars of the two-seater variety are slowly gaining in popularity and probably the majority of cars of this type that are in service with Police Forces are MG "B" GTs. This car combines a businesslike appearance with a reasonable performance, and is capable of carrying a surprising amount of equipment. Now, announced this week, we have a new model, which should make this one of the finest enforcement cars available — the MG "B" GT V-8.

External appearance is unchanged except for the cast aluminium wheels and the V-8 motif on the grille and rear panel. Under the bonnet lies the 3½-litre Rover V-8 engine, basically the version used on the Range Rover and fitted with a low compression head thus allowing the use of 3-star fuel. To permit the existing MG bonnet to be used the carburettor layout is altered to place it near the bulkhead, but, in spite of the tight fit, items needing regular attention are reasonably accessible. The performance is exceptionally good though because of the quietness and smoothness of the unit this is sometimes not appreciated. Acceleration is vivid, but there is no "kick-in-the-back" and the power coupled with well-chosen gearing gives first-class top-gear flexibility—the car will accelerate smoothly, and continuously, from 18 m.p.h. in overdrive top.

The ratios of the gearbox offer a really worthwhile range of speed in each gear. The gearbox is basically that used in the MG "C" but Laycock overdrive on top gear is fitted as standard—and is necessary. One problem that exists with this car is that the tachometer must be watched closely when accelerating hard as it's not too difficult to over-rev the engine due to its quietness. I'm glad that British Leyland

decided against using the Rover "S" gearbox on this car as it's just not up to the type of work it would get and the "C" gearbox has a nice short "gate" that permits very fast changes if desired.

British Leyland have followed through with all the components on this car and have rated the suspension—and brakes—to the performance. The suspension gives a firm but not a harsh ride and is free from pitch and choppiness on practically all surfaces. The standard of ride is very high for the type of car. This suspension, coupled with the rack and pinion steering and the radial tyres, gave the MG "B" GT V-8 exemplary handling and roadholding even on wet roads. The steering is not heavy and offers good feel and precision and is quick to respond to the demands of the driver.

Lockheed brakes are used, discs at the front and drums at the rear, and have vacuum servo-assistance. The brakes have a fine positive feel about them that add to confidence and their power certainly matches the performance of the car. They maintained their good standard of efficiency throughout the test and there was no measurable fade after the fade test.

Getting in and out of the GT V-8 is no more difficult or easier than the MG "B" GT, or any other car of this type, but a worthwhile improvement in the seating is immediately noticed. The new seats are very comfortable and answer many of the complaints of the past; a good eight-hour stint at the wheel was not particularly tiring. Control layout as far as the gear lever, pedals, and steering wheel were concerned was quite good and the switches for the Police equipment were handy. But the remaining switches for the standard equipment of the car seemed to have been scattered around without much thought. The handbrake position close to the driver's seat is not particularly easy to use but this would be cured by the use of a "fly-off" type. Some of the important warning lamps are partially obscured from the driver by the lower edge of the instrument panel, while the use of a white warning lamp for the heated rear window is almost dazzling at night. There is no convenient interior light to allow the crew to write in a natural position.

The rear tailgate opens upwards and, in so doing, obscures the beacon. The large aperture that is left permits easy access to the rear floor and the equipment. The carpeted rear floor, supplemented by the back of the occasional seat being folded down, provides a surprisingly large area for carrying cones, signs, and the like. A further advantage is that equipment stowed at the front end of this floor is also easily reached from the driving compartment.



The test car was equipped with a roof sign surmounted by a beacon and the sign was of a triangular shape with the "V" pointing forwards. During the test the opportunity was taken to remove the sign and beacon and go through the entire test data procedure again. It was perhaps unfortunate that during the period I had the car there was little or no wind and, certainly, both sets of test data were obtained when there was no noticeable wind about. The results from this sign were rather different from those obtained with other designs—top speed was unchanged and the difference in the acceleration times were so small that it could virtually have been time lost in the gear change so, at least, on this car and under those conditions, the roof sign had no detrimental effect on performance.

Comment: This car is very difficult to fault; it goes well, stops well, and handles well in the dry and the wet. It is so perfect for Police work it could have been designed specially for the job.

Recommendation: Traffic, with particular emphasis on enforcement.

Abridged specification

Engine: Eight cylinders, in two banks of four, set in 90 deg. "V" formation, 3,528 cc. Compression ratio 8.25:1 delivering 137 b.h.p. (DIN) at 5,000 r.p.m. Twin S.U. HIF6 carburettors. S.U. electric fuel pump.

Transmission: Four-speed gearbox with synchromesh on all forward gears and Laycock-type LH overdrive operating on top gear. 9½ in. diameter single dry plate diaphragm clutch hydraulically operated. Floor-mounted gear lever, direct-acting. Three-quarter floating rear axle with hypoid final drive with ratio of 3.070:1.

Brakes: Lockheed hydraulic with vacuum servo-assistance. Front, 10.7 in. diameter discs. Rear, 10 in. diameter drums with one leading and one trailing shoe. Handbrake operates rear drums through mechanical linkage.

Suspension: Front, independent with coil springs and lower wishbones mounted to a cross-member assembly with lever type shock absorbers with double levers to carry the top end of the swivel pin. Anti-roll bar. Rear, tube type axle with three-quarter floating drive shafts, rubber mounted semi-elliptic springs. Lever-type shock absorbers.

Steering: Rack and pinion.

Tyres: 175HR-14 radial.

Battery: 2 × 6 volt connected in series, 67 amp/hr. Alternator standard.

Measurements: Wheelbase, 7 ft. 6½ in. Track, front 4 ft. 1 in.; rear 4 ft. 1½ in. Length, 12 ft. 10¼ in. Width, 5 ft. Height, 4 ft. 2 in. Maximum ground clearance, 4½ in. Width with driver's door fully open, 7 ft. 8 in. Minimum width required for driver to get out of car, 6 ft. 9 in. Turning circle 33 ft. 6 in. Kerb weight, 2,427 lb.

Equipment on test car: Roof sign with beacon on top of it. The sign was triangular with the "V" to the front with Police on each side of the "V". The rear part of the sign was divided to show "Police" and "Stop". Signs and cones. First-aid box. Police equipment switch panel. Certified speedometer. Heavy duty rear springs.

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Road test data

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Weather during test period: Both wet and dry with occasional very light breeze. Temperatures, 8–16 deg. C.

Performance tests on dry tarmac dual carriageway. Brake tests on dry concrete carriageway.

Maximum speed in gears (at 5,200 r.p.m.): 1st, 40 m.p.h.; 2nd, 60 m.p.h.; 3rd, 94 m.p.h.; top, 120 m.p.h.; overdrive top, 123 m.p.h.

Acceleration through the gears (mean of four runs): 0–30 m.p.h. in 3.2 sec.; 0–40 m.p.h. in 4.7 sec.; 0–50 m.p.h. in 6.8 sec.; 0–60 m.p.h. in 9 sec.; 0–70 m.p.h. in 11.7 sec.; 0–80 m.p.h. in 15.1 sec.

Acceleration in gears (mean of four runs) in seconds:

	3rd	Top	O/d top
20–40 m.p.h.	5.2	7.1	9.4
30–50 m.p.h.	5.3	7.6	9.2
40–60 m.p.h.	5.3	8.1	9.7
50–70 m.p.h.	5.5	6.8	9.3
60–80 m.p.h.	6.1	7.6	10.2

Overall fuel consumption under simulated operating conditions: Town patrol work, 12.5 m.p.g. Town and rural patrol work, 17.6 m.p.g. Rural patrol work, 24.4 m.p.g. High speed and motorway, 20.9 m.p.g.

Overall fuel consumption for entire test period, 19.9 m.p.g.

Instrument correction: Speedometer at 30 m.p.h., accurate. Speedometer at 60 m.p.h., 1 per cent fast. Distance recorder, accurate.

Brakes: Footbrake at 30 m.p.h., 88 per cent. Handbrake at 20 m.p.h., 37 per cent. Steering: Turns of steering wheel between locks, 2½.

Price: £2,293.96.

Please note the photos used for the article in 1973 are not available for reproduction so alternative images have been used.