

Autotest

Triumph GT6 Mk. 2 (1,998 c.c.) 2233

AT-A-GLANCE: Much improved version of 6-cylinder Spitfire coupé. New rear suspension gives safer, more predictable handling, but steering still too slow and front-end too heavy. Excellent performance and outstanding economy possible. Good brakes. Heating and ventilation improved. Good value.

MANUFACTURER

Standard-Triumph International Ltd., Coventry.

PRICES

Basic	£879	0s	0d
Purchase Tax	£270	17s	6d
Seat belts (approx.)	£8	8s	0d
Total (in GB)	£1,158	5s	6d

EXTRAS (inc. P.T.)

Overdrive*	£62	0s	3d
Wire wheels	£39	3s	4d
Occasional rear seat	£19	11s	8d

* Fitted to test car

PRICE AS TESTED £1,220 5s 9d

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Mean maximum speed	107 mph
Standing start $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile	17.3 sec
0-60 mph	10.0 sec
30-70 mph through gears	10.2 sec
Typical fuel consumption	28 mpg
Miles per tankful	270

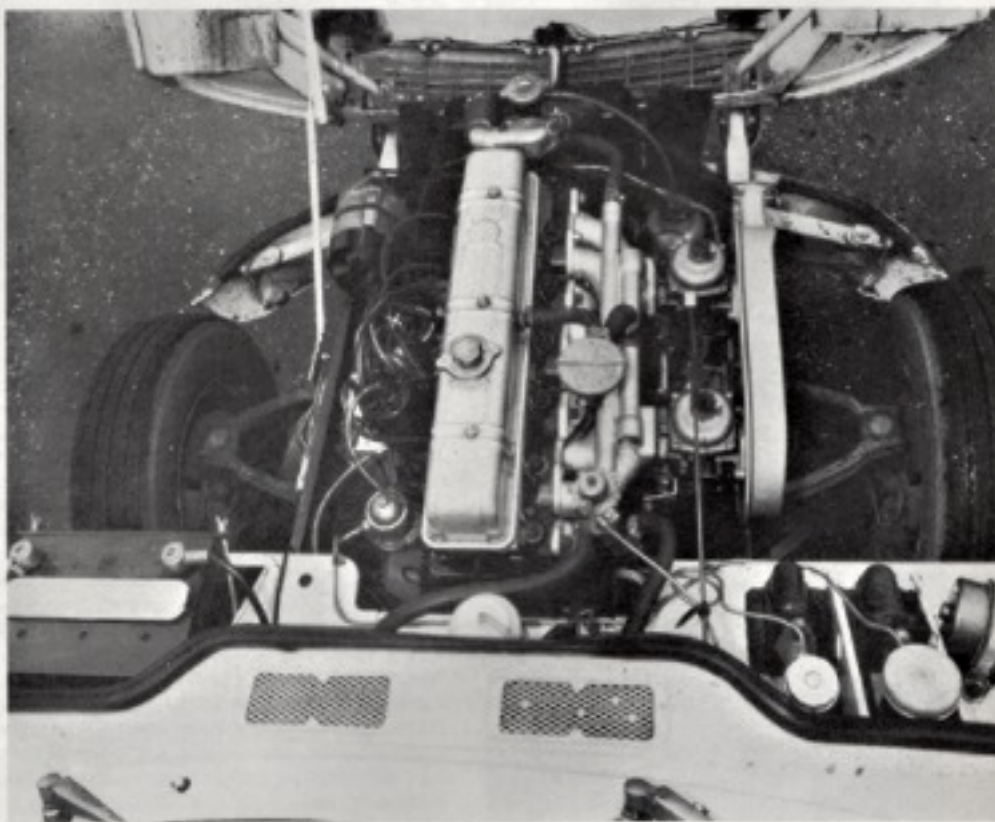


EVERY once in a while we get extra satisfaction in our role as road testers when big manufacturers heed the opinions we express. When we tested the Triumph GT6 in September 1967, we criticised the rear suspension and poor ventilation so strongly that they set up and took positive action to improve the car. Last September (almost a year to the day from when our first test appeared) the GT6 Mk. 2 was announced with new rear suspension, more power and a much improved heating and ventilation system.

Basically the GT6 is a Triumph Spitfire fitted with the six-cylinder 2000 engine. To make it more suitable for a sports car though, better breathing and a slightly higher compression ratio give it a net output of 104 bhp at 5,300 rpm. This is 10 per cent more than on the Mk. 1 GT6 and almost 16 per cent more than on the 2000 saloon.

Since the most dramatic change concerns the modifications to the rear suspension, we shall deal with these first. Previously the GT6 had swing axles at the back, like the Spitfire and Herald which are unchanged. Now the GT6 and the Vitesse 2-litre have a modified system which retains the transverse leaf spring acting as an upper wishbone but incorporates a simple reversed lower wishbone and a semi-trailing lower link to provide triangulation. The previous rigid drive shaft has a rubber "doughnut" coupling close to the hub to provide angular flexibility and accommodate plunge.

The result of this simple solution which has required a minimum of chassis modifications, is tremendously effective. Before, the GT6 was extremely throttle sensitive on the straight as well as in corners, with a disturbing tendency to dive in at the front if the accelerator was



Top left: When there's a bit of space to spare, it is hard to resist the temptation to chuck the little car around a deserted car park. Below: The six-cylinder engine fills the length of the bonnet, with room each side to get at things



Top right: Wheel camber is well controlled now, thanks to rear-end revisions. The bars on the window are for the heated glass. Above: Non-gloss wood veneer, a padded wheel and new switches are features of the Mk. 2 GT6. Fresh-air vents are new too

released. It called for a very determined and skilled technique to corner it fast, and we felt it would be all too easy to get into real trouble in an emergency brake-and-swerve situation. Now the back end feels so much more stable and secure that it is hard to believe that so little has been done. There is still a noticeable and rather excessive amount of squat and dive when using all the engine torque in the gears, but not nearly as much track and wheel camber change and it is now possible to hurl the little car into corners very fast and very late, stab the throttle hard and pull round with the tail hanging on surprisingly well.

With 56 per cent of the weight over the front wheels, the GT6 understeers very strongly and the steering feels slow to respond. At 4.3 turns between locks it sounds low geared until one remembers that the turning circles on the small Triumphs are exceptionally tight: 25ft between kerbs in this case. So it is still a car which needs learning before someone new to it can get the best from it. It would handle even better if it could be more evenly balanced like the Vitesse.

Total wheel movement at the rear seems to be less than before and we reached the limit of suspension travel when cornering very hard indeed with maximum roll angle on the MIRA track. On the road the ride is quite good for a sports car without coming up to the excellent standards set by other models in recent years. Radial-ply tyres bump noticeably over ridges and broken roads but all in all there seems to be a reasonable balance between sporting and touring requirements. On French roads though we would expect to experience a rough time, especially if we set off to the south with a full load of luggage.

There is now a choice of axle ratios on this model, if overdrive is specified. The standard gearing is 3.27 to 1, which can be retained with overdrive or replaced by a 3.89-to-1 unit. Our car had the overdrive (£62 extra) and the lower final drive, which gave all the same gear ratios as on the Mk. 1 version we tested before.

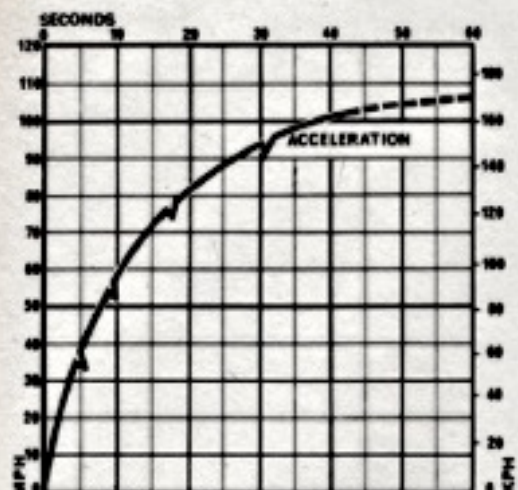
Compared with the previous model, therefore, the Mk. 2 is a lot quicker on acceleration but about the same on top speed. From rest to 60 mph now takes 2sec less (10 instead of 12sec) and 100 mph can be reached from a standing start in under 40 sec.

Flexibility is every bit as good as before, if not better, and it is possible to pull away from as low as 10 mph in direct top without snatch or pinking on four-star premium fuel. At the bottom end, acceleration is not improved (30-50 mph in overdrive top, Mk. 1 9.2sec, Mk. 2 9.5sec), but from 50 mph onwards the latest car can pull clean away (60-80 mph in OD top, Mk. 1 14.6sec, Mk. 2 12.1sec).

The changes to the cylinder head have improved economy as well as boosting the power, and at a steady 70 mph the Mk. 2 covers 33.3 miles on a gallon instead of 31.5. Overall we obtained 25.2 mpg compared with only 20.2 mpg on the Mk. 1. The reason for this inordinately large difference is the shape of the steady-speed fuel consumption graph, which is now above 40 mpg all the way to 55 mph in overdrive top. We measured these figures in overdrive because the higher axle without overdrive gives almost the same gearing (20.15 instead of 21.15 mph per 1,000 rpm).

Driven hard in the lower gears most of the time, the GT6 consumption can drop towards 22 mpg, but with a bit of care it can also be boosted to well above 30 mpg. An owner who

PERFORMANCE



MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Gear	mph	kph	rpm
O.D. Top (mean)	107	172	5,100
(best)	107	172	5,100
Top	94	152	5,600
O.D. 3rd	93	150	5,500
3rd	77	124	5,700
2nd	54	87	5,700
1st	37	60	5,700
Standing 1/4-mile	17.3 sec.	78 mph	
Standing kilometre	32.4 sec.	95 mph	

MOTORWAY CRUISING

Indicated speed at 70 mph	74 mph
Engine (rpm at 70 mph)	3,320 rpm
(mean piston speed)	1,645 ft/min
Fuel (mpg at 70 mph)	33.3 mpg
Passing (50-70mph)	6.5 sec
Noise (per cent silent at 70 mph)	85 per cent

TIME IN SECONDS	3.5	5.2	7.2	10.0	13.7	18.2	26.2	39.3
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TRUE SPEED MPH	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
INDICATED SPEED	33	43	53	63	74	84	95	105

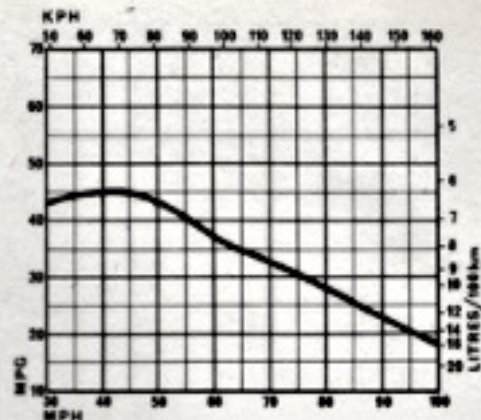
Test distance 1.022 miles.

Mileage recorder 3.1 per cent over-reading.

SPEED RANGE, GEAR RATIOS AND TIME IN SECONDS

mph	O.D. Top (3.12)	Top (3.89)	O.D. 3rd (3.91)	3rd (4.88)	2nd (6.92)	1st (10.29)
10-30	—	7.8	8.0	5.9	4.0	2.7
20-40	9.5	6.5	6.8	5.0	3.2	—
30-50	9.5	6.7	6.8	5.2	3.7	—
40-60	9.4	6.9	7.1	5.6	—	—
50-70	10.4	7.9	8.0	6.5	—	—
60-80	12.1	9.5	9.5	—	—	—
70-90	15.4	13.2	12.3	—	—	—
80-100	25.7	—	—	—	—	—

CONSUMPTION



FUEL

(At constant speeds—mpg)

30 mph	43.4
40 mph	45.0
50 mph	43.4
60 mph	37.0
70 mph	33.3
80 mph	27.8
90 mph	21.8
100 mph	18.9

Typical mpg . . . 28.0 (10.1 litres/100km)

Calculated (DIN) mpg 30.4 (9.3 litres/100km)

Overall mpg . . . 25.2 (11.2 litres/100km)

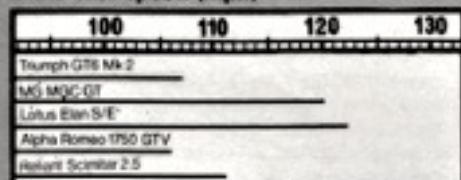
Grade of fuel . . . Premium, 4-star (min 97RM)

OIL

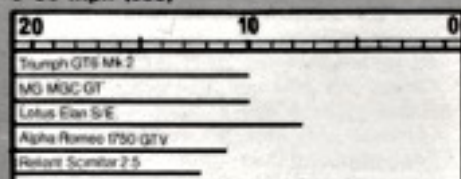
Miles per pint (SAE 20W/50) 1,000

HOW THE CAR COMPARES

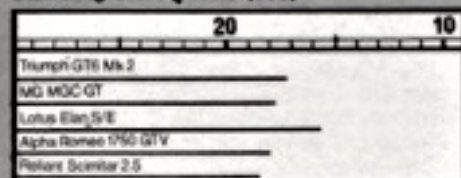
Maximum speed (mph)



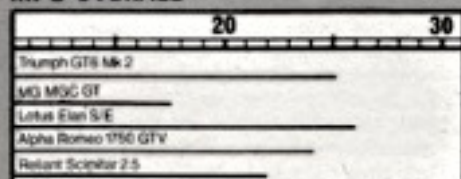
0-60 mph (sec)



Standing start 1/4-mile (sec)



MPG OVERALL



PRICES:

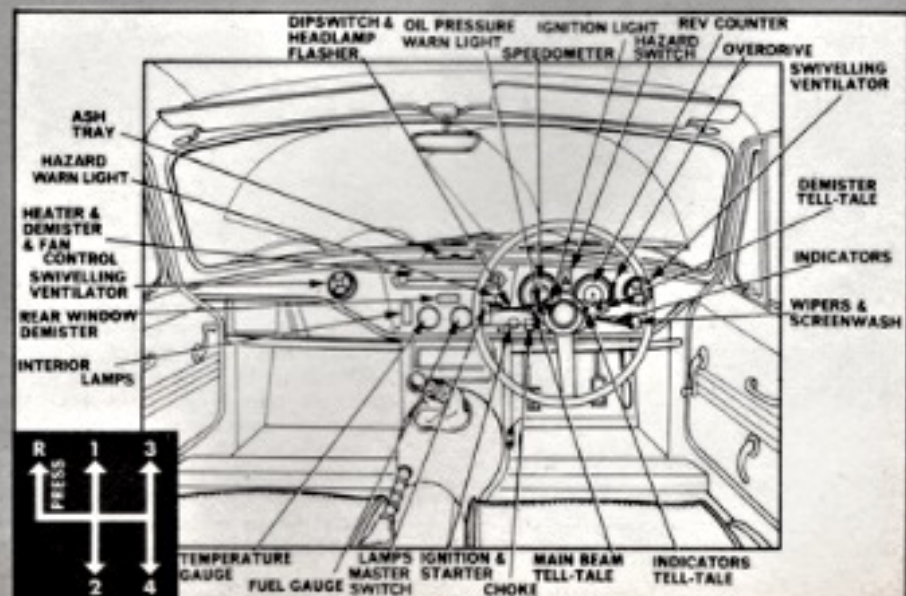
Triumph GT6 Mk. 2	£1,148
MG MGC GT	£1,383
Lotus Elan S/E Coupe	£1,941
Alfa Romeo 1750 GTV	£2,300
Reliant Scimitar 2.5	£1,482

TEST CONDITIONS Weather: Dry and cloudy. Wind: 0-5 mph. Temperature: 3 deg. C (37 deg. F). Barometer 29.88 in. Hg. Humidity: 82 per cent. Surfaces: Dry concrete and asphalt.

WEIGHT Kerb weight 17.8 cwt (1,988lb—900kg) (with oil, water and half full fuel tank). Distribution, per cent F, 56; R, 44. Laden as tested: 20.8 cwt (2,330lb—1,058kg).

TURNING CIRCLES Between kerbs L, 25ft 1in.; R, 25ft 5in. Between walls L, 26ft 11in.; R, 27ft 3in. Steering wheel turns, lock to lock 4.3.

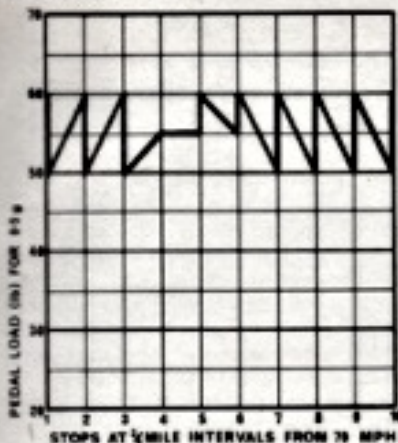
Figures taken at 8,200 miles by our own staff at the Motor Industry Research Association proving ground at Nuneaton.



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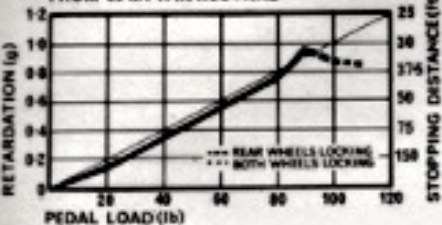
BRAKES



RESPONSE (from 30 mph in neutral)

Load	g	Distance
20lb	0.15	200ft
40lb	0.33	91ft
60lb	0.53	57ft
80lb	0.74	41ft
85lb	0.96	31.4ft
Handbrake	0.31	97ft
Max. Gradient 1 in 4		

FROM 30 MPH IN NEUTRAL



CLUTCH

Pedal 30lb and 5.5in.

SPECIFICATION

FRONT ENGINE, REAR-WHEEL DRIVE

ENGINE

Cylinders	6, in line
Main bearings	4
Cooling system	Water: sealed system, pump, fan and thermostat
Bore	74.7mm. (2.94in.)
Stroke	76mm. (2.99in.)
Displacement	1,998 c.c. (122 cu.in.)
Valve gear	Overhead, pushrods and rockers
Compression ratio	9.25 to 1 Min. octane rating: 97 RM
Carburetors	Twin Stromberg 1.80 CD
Fuel pump	Mechanical diaphragm type
Oil filter	Full-flow, renewable element
Max. power	104 bhp (net) at 5,300 rpm
Max. torque	117 lb.ft (net) at 3,000 rpm
Max. bmep	144 psi at 3,000 rpm

TRANSMISSION

Clutch	Borg and Beck, diaphragm spring, 8.5in. dia.
Gearbox	Four-speed, all-synchromesh
Gear ratios	Top 1.0 OD, top 0.80, Third 1.26 OD, third 1.01, Second 1.79, First 2.65, Reverse 3.12
Final drive	Hypoid bevel, 3.27 to 1 standard, optional 3.89 to 1 with overdrive

CHASSIS AND BODY

Construction . . . Separate cruciform chassis

SUSPENSION

Front	Independent, wishbones, coil springs and telescopic dampers
Rear	Independent, transverse leaf spring, lower links, semi-trailing arms, telescopic dampers

STEERING

Type	Afford and Alder rack and pinion
Wheel dia.	15in.

BRAKES

Make and type	Girling disc front, drum rear
Servo	None
Dimensions	F. 9.7in. dia, R. 8in. dia 1.25
Swept area	F. 197 sq.in., R. 63 sq.in., Total 260 sq.in. (248 sq.in./ton laden)

WHEELS

Type	Pressed steel disc, stainless trim, 4 1/2in. wide rim
Tires—make	Dunlop SP 88
—type	Radial ply tubeless
—size	155 SR-13in.

EQUIPMENT

Battery	12 volt 56Ah
Alternator	28 amp a.c.
Headlamps	Lucas sealed beam, 120/90 watt (total)
Reversing lamp	2 standard
Electric fuses	3
Screen wipers	Two-speed
Screen washer	Standard, manual plunger
Interior heater	Standard, fresh air
Heated backlight	Standard
Safety belts	Extra
Interior trim	Pvc seats, Pvc headlining
Floor covering	Carpet
Jack	Screw scissor
Jacking points	4 under frame
Windscreens	Zone toughened
Underbody protection	Phosphate dipping before painting

MAINTENANCE

Fuel tank	9.75 Imp. gallons (44 litres) (no reserve)
Cooling system	11 pints (including heater)
Engine sump	8 pints (4.5 litres) SAE 20W/50
	Change oil every 6,000 miles.
	Change filter element every 12,000 miles

Gearbox and overdrive	2.5 pints SAE 90EP Check level every 6,000 miles
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Final drive	1 pint SAE 90EP Check level every 6,000 miles
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Grease	2 points every 12,000 miles
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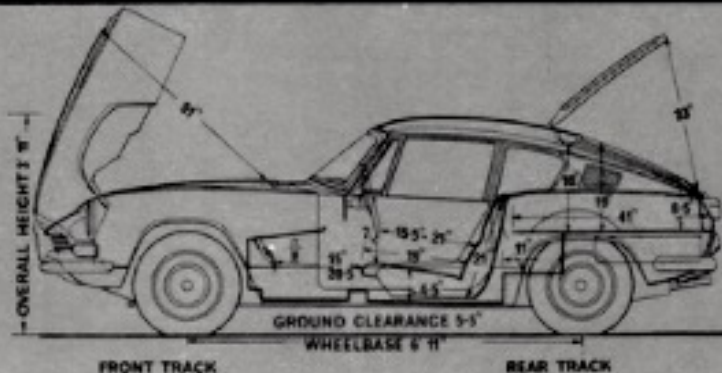
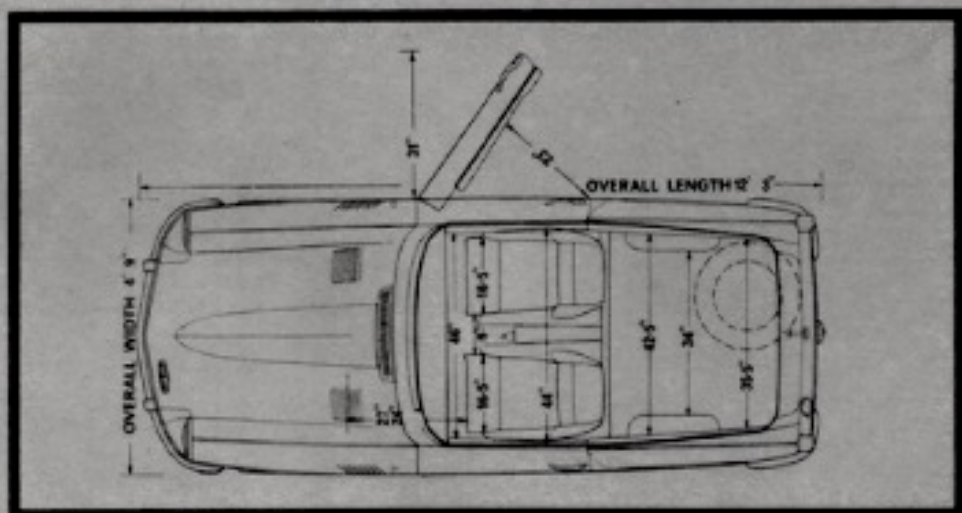
Tyre pressures	F. 24; R. 28 psi (normal driving) F. 24; R. 28 psi (fast driving) F. 24; R. 34 psi (full load)
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Max. payload	448lb (203kg)
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PERFORMANCE DATA

Top gear mph per 1,000 rpm	16.9
Overdrive top mph per 1,000 rpm	21.15
Mean piston speed at max. power	2,650 ft./min.
Bhp per ton laden	100

STANDARD GARAGE 16ft x 8ft 6in.



SCALE 0.3in. to 1ft
Cushions uncompressed

TRIUMPH GT6 . . .

knows his car and how to get the best from it should manage 28 or 30 mpg without spoiling the fun of having such a car.

Although the specification of the brakes reads the same as before, they performed better with much improved resistance to fade and lighter pedal responses. The handbrake though could not hold the car on a 1-in-3 gradient, and it felt none too secure on a 1-in-4. Restarting was no problem on either slope.

The gearchange was slicker too on this latest car with more effective synchromesh and less stickiness. Ratios are well chosen, but the

advantage of overdrive is doubtful when an alternative high axle is available without the extra cost. Overdrive third is practically identical with direct top. On the test car the engagement and disengagement were jerky and often delayed.

Much more has been done inside the GT6 than one realises at first glance. All our previous criticisms of poor ventilation have been answered, and a Triplex "Hotline" heated rear window is standard. Although there are now little extractors in the rear quarter panels, it is the extra louvres on the sides of the bonnet which make the biggest improvement. Before, most of the engine heat was being funnelled down the transmission tunnel and radiated to the cockpit. Now it escapes from these vents and the gearbox runs much cooler.

At last there are proper heater slides sunk

safely into the top edge of the fascia, and swivelling eyeball nozzles each side for fresh air. These do not have a very great volume of through-put, but they do provide a refreshing breeze on the driver's face. All the old-fashioned push-pull switches have been replaced by flush rocker-type, identified by clearly marked symbols. A four-way hazard-warning flasher is standard and the combined washer-wiper switch is particularly well placed and easy to find.

Unfortunately visibility has not been improved and our shorter drivers still found that the seats were too low. The fixed angle of the backrests suited everybody on our staff, and the relative pedal and wheel positions seemed right as well. The column length can be adjusted over a small range with an Allen key and spanner in the usual Herald way.

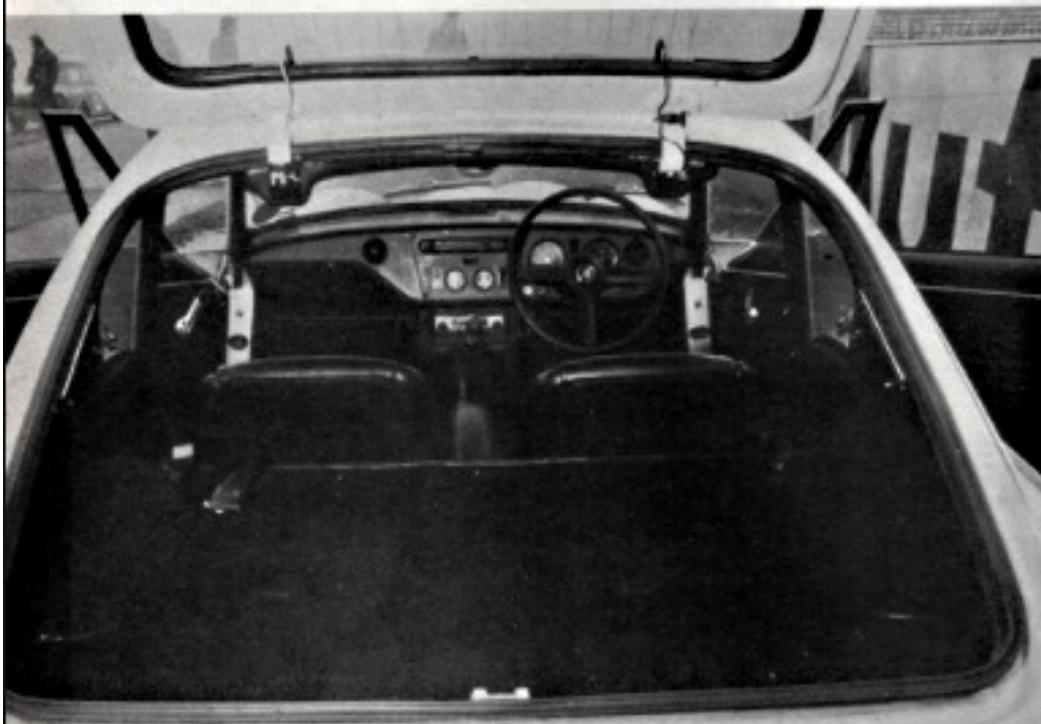
The hard edge to the seats which we complained about before has now been softened and the wrap round at the back locates the hips and shoulders well when cornering fast. Door handles are a safer design but still difficult to reach.

Being safer and much easier to drive fast, the Mk. 2 GT6 is a whole lot of fun whatever the conditions. It is tiny yet extremely quick, which makes it ideal for London traffic provided one has a pair of outside mirrors in addition to the interior one. On motorways it cruises nicely at the limit with less than 3,500 rpm on the rev counter and very little wind noise.

In twisty lanes the driver has to work harder than he expects to keep a tidy line, not because of the handling limitations any more but because of the slow steering and strong understeer. On all counts though, the GT6 is now a very desirable car; one which keeps you young, not only because of the agility needed to climb in and out, but because of its verve and spirit. Six-cylinder smoothness in a car of this size is a satisfying luxury and there is a lot more about the car now which continues to be appreciated the longer the acquaintance.

When we suggested the improvements needed 18 months ago, we admitted that this might lead to a higher price. Considering what is involved, a basic list figure only £88 higher is very good value indeed and even at £1,150 tax paid (but without seat belts or any extras) the GT6 is far from expensive and well worth having.

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Above: This is the luggage space, reached through the lift-up tailgate and carpeted throughout. Passers-by can see what you are carrying

Below: Bumper protection at the back is minimal, and the lamp clusters are in need of tidying up. Fancy wheels are dummies in the form of stainless steel trims

