

No. 692 (Post-War Series).—M.G. MAGNA FOUR-SEATER

THERE are some few cars, not necessarily of any one type, destined to be a success from the commencement. The new model which has inspired this remark is the M.G. Magna. This is definitely a car of the moment, and there are two sharp divisions at present—those who have tried the Magna, and those who have not. The former may almost be said to be equivalent to wanting to own one.

The Magna should be to the economical six-cylinder sports car class what the Midget has come to be in the smaller four-cylinder world. For £250 what one gets is this: A six-cylinder machine, noticeably but not freakishly low built, with a four-speed gear box, obviously laid out with sports car ideals in mind, yet giving the things that practically every driver wants, or would appreciate if he knew.

Add to this a trim little four-seater body—it being the open car that has been tested—with an imposing length of bonnet and scuttle, yet a perfectly clear view forward, and not the slightest suggestion of unwieldiness. In fact, one of the most marked points is the extreme ease with which the car can be handled on crowded roads, and the lack of effort associated with manœuvring it.

The strongest first impression is that the machine feels solid and rigid in the right way, suggesting a strong chassis properly built, and can be taken round curves and corners just as one pleases, the position of the steering wheel and other controls, coupled with this stability, making for confidence and accuracy right from the beginning, as nothing else can.

The Magna can maintain well above a genuine 70 miles an hour, as the timed speed in the accompanying table shows. That is excellent when one is in a hurry or feels like speed, for there is no particular sense of effort even at the limit; but the great charm of the car lies not at all in this maximum, good though it is to have in reserve. It is utterly fascinating to drive the car even in traffic, with its bright acceleration, or to cruise for mile on end at never more than 50 or 55, a speed which is reached very

quickly, the engine running smoothly and quietly with just a pleasing but subdued note from the exhaust, simply because the "feel" of the car is exactly right—thoroughly satisfactory to an unusually enthusiastic driver, or subtly removing some of the doubts and difficulties of a possibly less experienced or less interested driver.

Five miles an hour is feasible on top gear without jerk or snatch, and hills are taken in the car's stride. But for those who like to use it there is what is probably the most delightful gear box fitted to a car of moderate price: four speeds with three close ratios, meaning that 60 can be reached on third and 40 on second, with a low first that will take the machine, fully loaded, up a hill of the trials order with power in hand, controlled by a short, stiff lever working in a visible gate, and with a really easily operated catch to guard reverse. The positions of the lever for the various ratios are different from what is normal, but that is a thing to which one is quickly accustomed; third and second gears run quite quietly, first being noisier by comparison, though it

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DATA FOR THE DRIVER

12-70 h.p., six cylinders, 57 × 83 mm. (1,270 c.c.).
 Tax £12.
 Wheelbase 7ft. 10in., track 3ft. 6in.
 Overall length 11ft. 6in., width 4ft. 2in., height 4ft. 6in.
 Tyres: 4 × 19in. on detachable wire wheels.

Engine—rear axle gear ratios.	Acceleration from steady 10 to 30 m.p.h.	Timed speed over ¼ mile.
19.2 to 1	—	—
9.56 to 1	6 sec.	—
6.3 to 1	8½ sec.	—
4.78 to 1	11½ sec.	72.58 m.p.h.

Turning circle: 35ft.
 Tank capacity 6 gallons, fuel consumption 26 m.p.g.
 12-volt lighting set cuts in at 15 m.p.h., 8 amps. at 30 m.p.h.
 Weight: 19 cwt. 1 qr.
 Price, with sports four-seater body, £250.

Chassis described in "The Autocar" of September 11th, 1931.

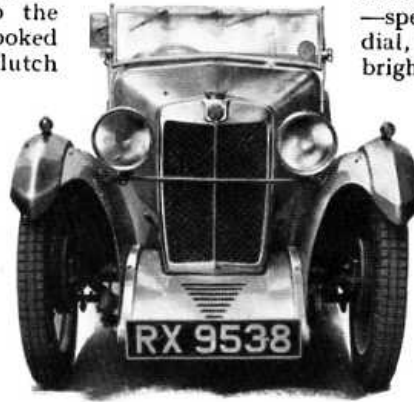
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is seldom used for more than a few yards. The steering is very light, but not to the point of being indefinite, and the spring-spoked wheel has a nice thin rim, whilst the clutch works lightly, too, and takes up the drive smoothly. The brakes have plenty of power and, what is more, do not make the car swerve when they are put on hard. The hand-brake lever is of what is termed racing type, and is excellent in every way, besides having at its base an adjustment that can be taken up by hand.

As has been mentioned, the car holds the road very well indeed, helped by big double-acting friction shock absorbers front and rear, so that it might be expected that at quite low speeds, with the shock absorbers tight, the effect would be hard. That, however, is largely a question of adjustment to taste. Even the back seat is comfortable by sports car standards; there is good leg room for one tall passenger, and reasonable space for two normal people.

The separate front seats have pneumatic cushions and backs, the latter sloping rearward rather more than is usual in the interests of firm support for driving, though this is a point that comes rather to be liked. Each seat is quite easily adjustable, but a more rapid action might be preferable; the hood goes up easily and there are good side screens to make the interior snug, whilst a tonneau cover normally fits over the back seats. The front seats tilt forward to give access to the back compartment, the two doors being wide.

In each door is a wide pocket, above which is a small



arm-rest on each side. The grouped instruments—speedometer, ammeter, and oil feed indicating dial, in place of a normal pressure gauge—are brightly lit indirectly. A fuel gauge and an engine thermometer would be welcomed. The single-panel screen folds flat on the scuttle, if wished, and has a twin-blade suction wiper, which works at as much as 50 m.p.h.

A great thing is the instantaneous starting of the engine at all times. The accessibility of the engine, the tools—carried in a locker beneath the bonnet—the clutch housing and gear box, as well as the interior of the driving compartment for cleaning-out purposes, is excellent, because what is usually the scuttle is included in the hinged portion of the bonnet, and therefore opens up.

With its polished valve cover, and nicely red-painted cylinder block, the engine looks pleasing, and, on the practical side, the sparking plugs are eminently accessible, also the coil, distributor, and the electrical fuse box. Even with the fan belt removed the engine does not run hot. Also beneath the bonnet are two groups of lubricators, facing outwards ideally, which feed oil from the usual pressure gun through pipe lines to most of the chassis bearings, leaving very few to be dealt with individually.

An unusual point is the concealment of the filler for the fuel tank by a hinged lid in the side of the body tail; this is undeniably neat, but not too convenient.

The head lamp beam is good, and either the dimming switch or the horn button can be operated without moving the right hand from the wheel.