

MG: TC, TD, TF & A

Immediately after World War Two, English manufacturing companies were fighting over very short supplies of raw materials. Car makers like MG were certainly no exception and all the company could do was to dust off their pre-war model and offer it as the TC.

The 1900-lb. TC body style was decidedly pre-war and under the skin it was all pre-war parts as well. The engine was a twin-carburetor, 1250cc unit making 54 hp. The transmission was single-plate dry clutch with a four-speed synchromesh. The brakes were nine-inch hydraulic units and the 19" wheels the usual center-locking wires. It was almost as if the intervening war years had never happened!

Despite this, the TC found a ready market; in the car's four-year production run (until 1949), 10,000 were built, a substantial number of which were shipped to the U.S. and Canada. Early race fields were jammed with TCs, in fact some very early B.C. races had fields entirely of MGTCs and TDs. Some hardy souls upgraded their performance with superchargers and ran them very successfully in modified classes.

The replacement for the TC, the TD, looked quite similar but had a completely new chassis which greatly improved handling. The same TC engine and transmission were used, but the bumpers and body fenders gave the TD a more "civilized" look.

As a result of this, the TD found an even larger market than the TC, selling almost three times as many in a similar four-year period. A Mark II version of the TD was introduced during its production run, with slightly more powerful engine (60 hp) and improvements in suspension. The TF model, introduced in 1953, was next, but it was viewed only as stopgap measure, as an entirely new car was needed. Essentially the TF was the same as the TD, no improvement in performance but with a more streamlined body look that was still unmistakably MG. It finally was upgraded in performance in 1955 with an increase to 1466cc (65 hp), and the car was called the TF 1500.

Many local drivers got their starts in these MG "T" models, both pre-and post-MGA introduction. The list is long; a few include Mike Balfe, Ralph Ormsbee, Pat Pigott, Jack Scoville, Arleigh Pilkey, Ray Rairdon, Frank Nau, and G.B. Sterne.

When the MGA arrived in 1955, its complete departure from previous styling, with a low body and sweeping fenders came as a shock to MG aficionados. It was powered by a new 1489cc four-cylinder engine and had a transmission from MG's Magnette saloon. The chassis was still

a based on the T series, but suspension upgrades and lower c.g. gave it much better handling characteristics.

The MGA engine was updated very shortly after the initial production from 68 hp to 72b hp. On its launch the car was extremely well received; it offered very good value for money in the MG tradition and it sold very well with a large number going to the USA where it did much to revive MG's flagging reputation.

The MGA continued in open and closed forms until 1958 when another high-performance version was added to the range. This was the MGA Twin-Cam, which was essentially aimed at competition use. In appearance, there was very little to distinguish this car from the other standard MGA models. Twin SU carburetors were fitted as standard, giving a power output of around 110 hp that was sufficient to propel the Twin Cam to a maximum speed approaching 115 mph. Four-wheel disc brakes were added.

Shortly after the introduction of the MGA Twin Cam, the standard cars were given a 1588cc (80 hp) version of the standard pushrod version of the B-series engine, becoming the MGA 1600 in the process. They were also equipped with disc brakes on the front wheels.

The MGA Twin Cam needed special mechanical care, developed a bad reputation, and was dropped in early 1960.

MGAs made up a good percentage of the race fields in the latter years of the 50s. They sometimes ran in marque races against Sprites, but usually competed in production classes F or G. Some of the top drivers of these cars include John Hall, Bob McLean, John Razelle, and Alex Reid (Twin-Cam).

In 1961, the MGA 1600 MkII appeared with a 1622cc version of the standard B-series engine that now developed 90 hp. 1961 was the last full year for the MGA and its variations, in 1962, after around 100,000 cars had been produced, the MGA was dropped in favor of the MGB.