SCOOP TEST: TVR GRIFFITH V MARCOS GT

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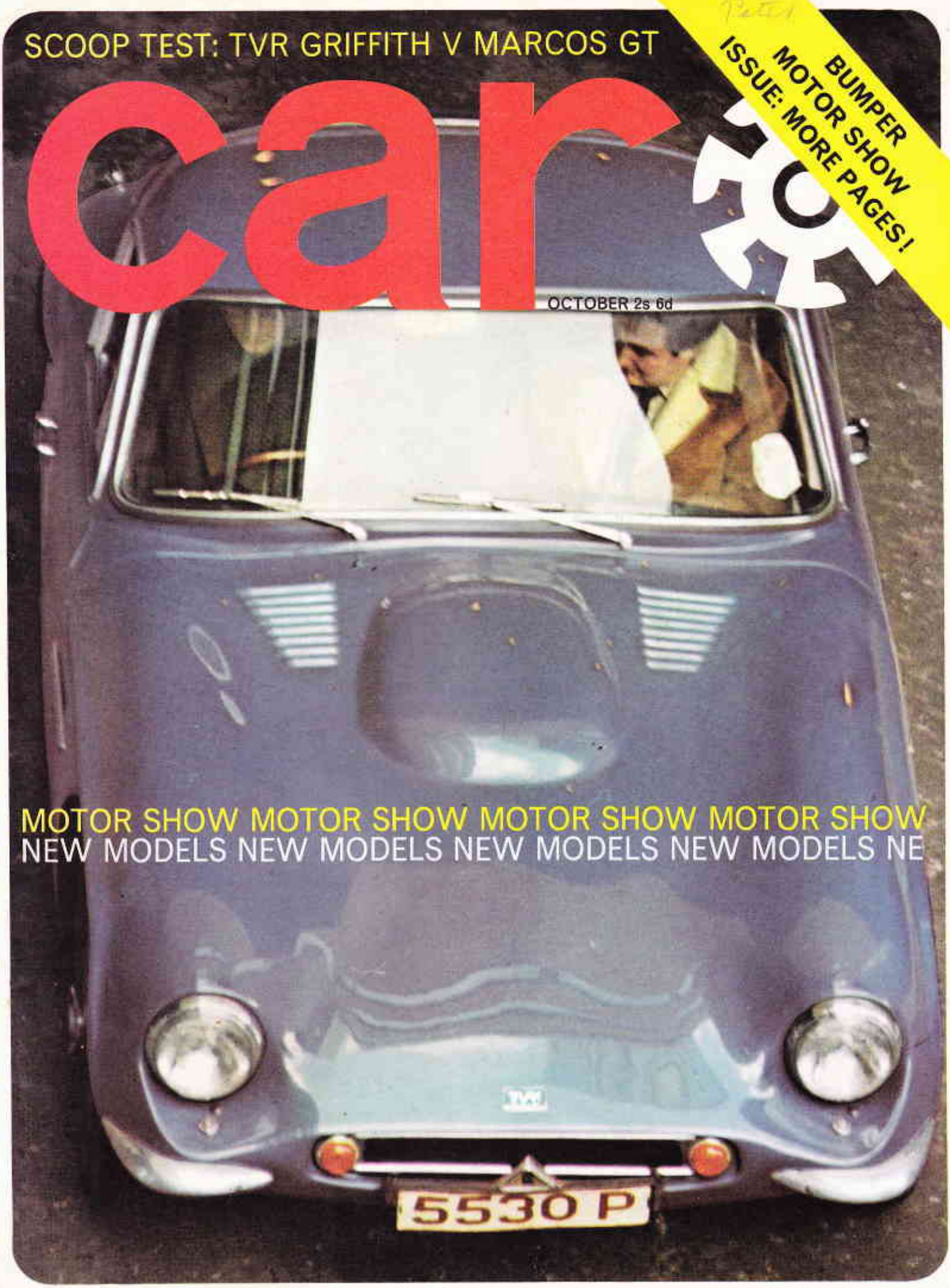

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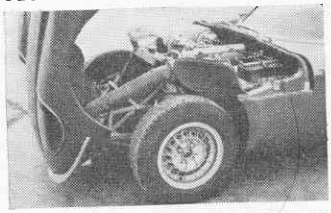
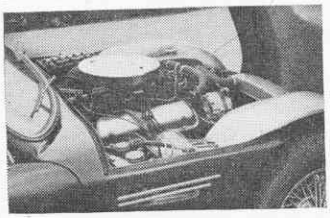
Giant test

Marcos 1800 GT
TVR Griffith 200

WHO SAYS CARS ARE getting too much alike? If you looked for ever so long in ever such peculiar places you couldn't possibly light upon a less conventional, more dissimilar couple of glassfibre-bodied GT two-seaters than these. And yet they're both on offer to anybody who cares to walk into the showroom and ask for them – at within £260 of the same (admittedly pretty steep) price!

We refer, of course, to the Marcos 1800 and the TVR Griffith 200. Contrary to what you might expect, the one with the bigger number in its name is the one with the smaller engine; more than 60percent smaller, in fact. The same car is also the more expensive of the two, and the slower, and the less practical. But at the same time the Marcos is probably one of the most interesting technical exercises ever offered for public sale while the TVR is simply an uncommonly successful Anglo-American hotrod. The fact that it is the latter which emerges with more bonus marks on CAR's crool, crool scorecard is just one of those tearful things we enthusiasts have got to face. As Ferrari and one or two other people are due to find out within a year or two (see page 27), 'there ain't *no* substitute for cubic inches . . .' Now read on.





WHEN JEM MARSH AND Frank Costin set out nearly 10 years ago to design the first Marcos their idea was simply to amalgamate Jem's experience of chassis design and engine and suspension tuning, all of it accumulated during a long spell of 750 Club racing and special-building, with Frank's theories of aerodynamics and stress-engineering in plywood, most of which he had acquired during 15 years or so of service in the aircraft industry combined with an even longer-established enthusiasm for gliding. There was no real intention that the car should be anything but a racer, although it was certainly tested on the road (in the mountains of North Wales in fact, as Jem never tires of pointing out) during development, and indeed for the first six or seven years of its existence – until long after Frank Costin himself ceased to have anything to do with the project – the Marcos was known and respected purely as a 1000cc-class sports-racer.

Then came this sudden thirst to produce a modified version for the road. The tiny company had already suffered several vicissitudes, moving house more than once and producing the odd car under the most difficult conditions imaginable, although the design itself had improved to the point where it was no longer either quite so ugly or quite so exclusively arborial. Specifically, a nose section in glassfibre had replaced the original wooden snout and a modified roof profile had appeared instead of the early verandah arrangement. Because the essence of the original Marcos was a fully stressed plywood punt structure extending right up the sides, and because the gullwing doors which were consequently essential for access to the very cramped cockpit invariably leaked water all over the occupants whenever they were opened in the rain, Jem and his design staff (consisting of brothers Dennis and Lionel Adams) decided to do away with the roof altogether and make the first non-competition Marcos a two-seat open roadster with very small, normally hinged doors and weather equipment.

Meanwhile Jem himself had managed to interest a wealthy West-country enthusiast in backing a long-overdue expansion and consolidation move centred on a disused cotton mill beside the river at Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire. Actually the money-man was even more interested in long-term development prospects, but for the present he agreed it would be best to get the open car under way and to continue with the existing modest but fairly successful club and international racing programme.

Then came the arrival of a completely new Marcos which had been designed to eliminate, among other things, the very faults that showed in the earlier model. The 1800 was a much more sophisticated development of the original car, based on a revised version of the early punt frame but with most of the stresses concentrated in the central tunnel instead of at the sides. This left room for much bigger doors, and chopping the punt off short at bulkhead level meant that all the major stresses associated with the front suspension, steering and main engine mounts could be concentrated in a stout tubular steel subframe.

Because the new construction system was obviously going to mean a heavier car, Jem Marsh had to start shopping for a stronger engine than the British Ford. After looking at one or two alternatives (including BMW's 1800, or rather 1600 as it was then) he chose the Swedish Volvo in 114bhp P1800 form. Then he began to worry about getting all that power to the back wheels without drama. There didn't seem to be any suitable off-the-peg independent set up that would fit, so the Marcos design team just had to sit down and nut out something of their own. The result is a highly sophisticated constant-track de Dion arrangement on vaguely Rover lines, using a TVR cast alloy housing for the Salisbury diff innards, coil springs, inboard drum brakes, double jointed halfshafts and stout *leading* location arms running forward from mounting points in the extreme rear – or should it be stern? – of the punt, with the straight, splined de Dion tube flexibly coupled between them. Front suspension used Herald components.

Over the whole lot went a dramatic new coupe body moulded entirely from glassfibre, designed by Dennis Adams and incorporating a unique form of 'moulded-in' seating on almost grand prix lines. By this we mean everything was adjustable *except* the seats themselves, which actually formed part of the car and were designed to take advantage of the natural support offered by the doors and the wide, well-upholstered central console. A sliding carriage for the pedals and hydraulic gear, coupled with steering which was adjustable vertically as well as for reach, meant any driver could achieve a comfortable semi-racing control position. Behind the seats there was room for ⇒

⇒→ a deep shelf on top of the fuel tank and a surprisingly deep luggage boot in the tail, with the spare wheel lying flat in a moulded recess at the bottom. Advantages of the whole layout included excellent weight distribution, reasonable aerodynamics, a very low centre of gravity and a technically efficient insteadofcompromisesuspension

The obvious snag was cost. Whereas the earlier roadgoing Marcos had carried a price tag that put it only just outside the Spridget/Spitfire market, the new one started off at £1687 (almost £1000 more) and soon rocketed right up over the £2000 mark, although admittedly these were fully built-up prices instead of tax-free home-assembly figures. Only recently has the 1800's cost come tumbling down again to £1935, or £20 less than the equivalent fixed-head E-type Jaguar. The car today is substantially unchanged from its original specification except that overdrive has been deleted from the list of standard equipment (with a consequent change in rear axle ratio), a Volvo gearbox has replaced the original all-synchromesh Ford (which kept breaking up under the strain), disc brakes have appeared at the back as well as at the front, the original way-out dashboard design has been modified for production reasons, some of the styling details have been revised, and graceful but rather flimsy glassfibre bumpers have been added front and rear.

By contrast to the passionate Marcos saga of dedication in the teeth of adversity, the TVR has grown up in an orderly hand-over-fist fashion – albeit with an even more liberal lacing of financial to-ing and fro-ing. The man who started it all was Trevor Wilkinson, who in 1946 at the age of 23 set up a tiny factory in Blackpool and called it TVR Engineering – getting the initials, allegedly, from his own christian name by a rather obscure process of elimination (TreVoR). After putting together a series of coil and leaf-sprung tubular-framed specials with powerbyflathead Ford, Wilkinson finally rustled up enough finance to move into a new factory at Layton, Lancashire, where he settled down to develop a rather dumpy glassfibre coupe body of his own design to match the chassis which he had finally refined into a tubular backbone affair with coil spring and wishbone suspension at both ends, using 1098cc Coventry Climax or 1500cc MGA power. First of the new Granturas was shipped to America, where the model went on sale in 1957 as the Jomar and was actually shown at the New York Show.

Meanwhile development went ahead at Layton, so that by 1962 Wilkinson was producing one a day of his latest Mark II version – mostly MG-powered, and with a redesigned chassis on similar but lighter and more refined lines (the wishbones were longer, too, allowing some more wheel movement to tone down the bumps a bit) together with a slightly modified body. This was TVR's heyday. Ken Richardson, once competitions manager at Standard-Triumph before the Leyland purge, joined up and started a full-scale race and rally programme including entries at Sebring and Le Mans with such drivers as Jack Fairman, Ninian Sanderson and Rob Slotemaker. That sort of thing turned out to be a bit *too* ambitious, though, and Ken Richardson soon disappeared – but sales kept up nicely, since the car was both light and fast and still had most of the features enthusiasts were clamouring for.

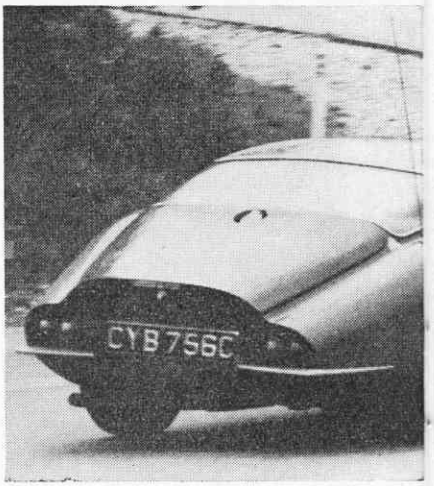
This state of affairs continued until Budget day, 1963, when Chancellor Maudling dealt his death-blow to Britain's mushrooming kitcar industry by halving the purchase tax rate on new cars. Suddenly TVR was in trouble; word went round that production had stopped and the company was going into liquidation with big debts outstanding. The fact that it was Burton the tailor who pulled the marque out of the fire by founding a new company, Grantura Engineering Ltd, and setting it up in a new Blackpool factory came as no surprise to enthusiasts – who remembered that it was Arnold Burton, son of the celebrated Montague, who had co-driven the third TVR team car in 1962's Tulip rally.

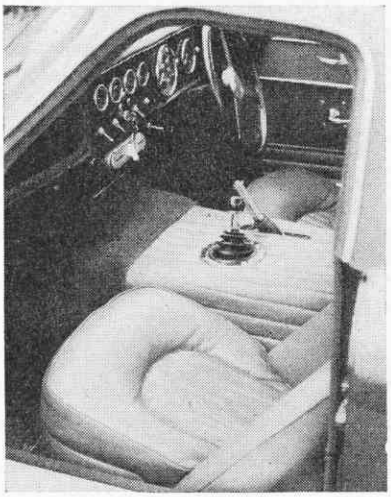
Time and motion

In the year-and-a-bit since his takeover Burton has put a broom through the old management setup, overhauled the dealer network, called in a group of time-and-motion men to set up a flowline production system, negotiated for a much bigger plant near Blackpool airport, tidied up certain aspects of the old design, introduced an 1800cc MGB engine, and generally done his best to get the show back on the road. But what has occupied his interest more than anything is a new project which the old company had just about got started – a tie-up with American importer Griffith Motors, Inc, of New York which involved inserting (in America) Ford's standard 'small' 289cu in V8 engine into an otherwise complete TVR for sale on the US market as the Griffith 200. Overwhelming initial orders from Griffith kept the factory working flat-out right from the time of the takeover, and production capacity is still strained to the limit, to put it mildly. But in the meantime the new regime has organised a major styling change to the old body – the first big one in seven years – aimed at increasing baggage capacity and steadying the car's behaviour at high speeds, as well as bringing forward an earlier special project, the long-wheelbase Trident which Wilkinson commissioned years ago from body stylist Trevor Fiore, it is hoped that at this stage the company can finally sort itself out and go ahead.

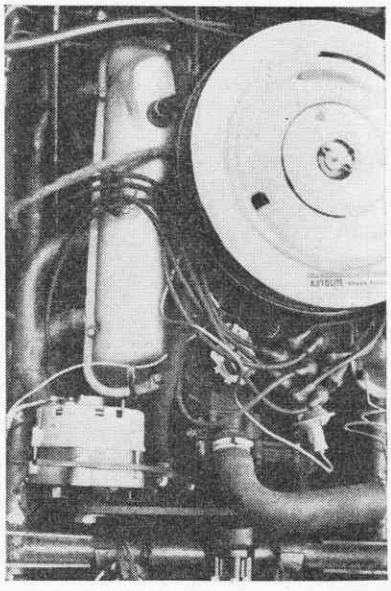
The Griffith 200 uses much the same frame as the later MG-engined cars (from Mark II onwards, in fact) except that it is strengthened in places to cope with the Ford engine's extra torque. A heavy duty Salisbury 3.9 to one diff unit is installed together with suitably massive halfshafts and stronger suspension mounts, damper settings are different, rugged 15in 72-spoke wire wheels are fitted with much wider 5K rims and 185mm Dunlop SP41 braced-tread tyres, and the cooling arrangements include a TVR radiator with Kenlowe electric fan. Brakes are 10.75in Girling discs in front and 9in drums at the back, with servo assistance as standard. All of this applies to the standard version which has the 4.7litre Ford engine installed in severely cooking trim. Output is quoted at 195bhp at 4400rpm, with 282 lb ft of torque muscling in at 2400, and the gearbox is the usual all-synchromesh Ford affair with fairly widely spaced rations. A special-equipment Griffith is available for a little over £100 more, with disc brakes all round, a twin-fan Kenlowe cooling unit and one or two other changes to match the high-performance version of the same engine with its 271bhp.

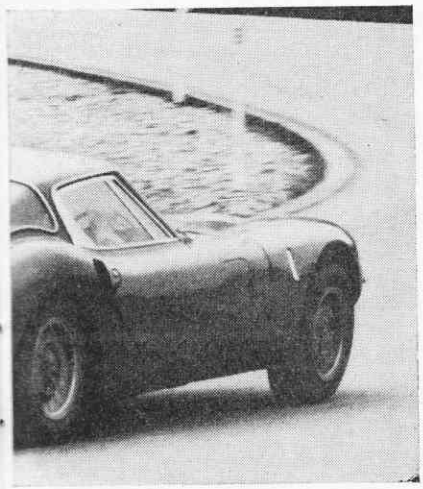
In case the basic TVR design isn't familiar by now, it's based on a fairly complicated tubular steel triangulated space frame which is pinched in at the waist to run *between* the driver and passenger, who sit on abbreviated tubular outriggers which also serve as mounting points for the unstressed glassfibre body. Although the suspension is basically the same front and rear, with double wishbones and coil spring/damper units, the lower wishbones at the back are in fact much longer than any of the others and the geometry differs quite a lot – as you can see if you compare the wheel angles front

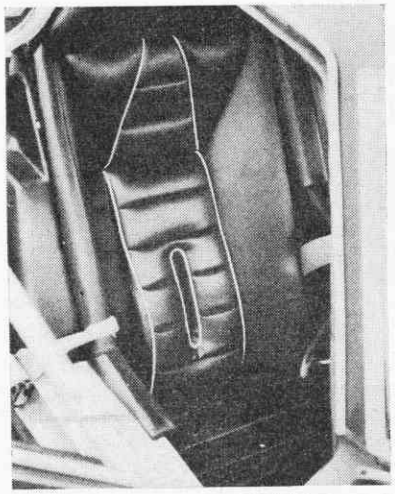


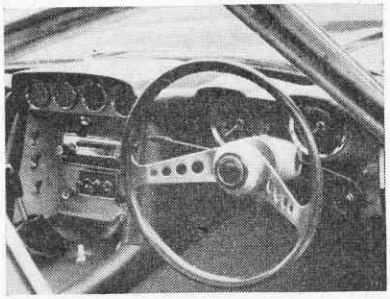


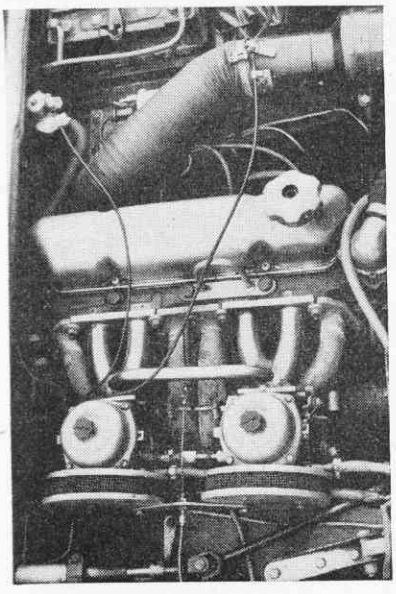
Marcos in action shows almost no body lean, though centrifugal force is enough to force driver against door (top). TVR interior (above left) has been changed since our test, but basic control layout remains the same and driving position is superb. Marcos features special seat insert (above right) for short drivers. Wheel control to right of steering column, by handbrake, controls pedal positions and column length is adjustable too. TVR engine is a very cooking US Ford, but alternator and four-choke carburettor are standard (below left). Marcos uses Volvo 1800cc unit with modified breathing











and rear in the action picture.

When you actually study the two cars side by side it's the Marcos, understandably, which looks infinitely the more dramatic. Its styling is obviously the work of a with-it professional and, although there is still quite a lot of room for improvement, its proportions are right and there's a general air of excitement about the whole thing which makes it an unparalleled turner of heads and gatherer of crowds. Points which we feel inclined to quarrel with are the way the front sits up like a dragster (or a Mustang), the general bulbousness round the centre section, the messiness of details such as badges and door handles, and minor inconsistencies such as the failure to provide a rearward opposite number for the neatly chamfered cutaway in the leading edge of each rear wheel-arch. Our car had the optional cast magnesium wide-rim wheels, which look lovely but work out quite breathtakingly expensive at £18 10s *each* (£18 10s x 5 — £92 10s!). It also had the latest combination sidelights, winkers and foglamps mounted in front of the air intakes for the brakes beneath the front bumpers. Its red paintwork looked less dramatic than some of the metallic finishes we've seen.

The TVR, by contrast, looks its age although nobody can deny that it has a purposeful air in keeping with its character. The V8 engine shows up as a vast, shapeless bulge in the bonnet; otherwise the only real give-aways are the fat tyres and a neat little badge on the back. The TVR badge itself has recently been tidied up by Fiore and looks competent. The same can be said of the fastback lean-to on the tail, which incorporates a vigorous Kamm-chop back panel, dinner-plate Cortina tail-lights (instead of the Minx originals still shown in some advertisements) and an enormous tinted window which exposes the contents of the luggage tray to the public gaze much more effectively than it provides rearward vision. At the front, the only other change is a simple relocation of the side-lamps in the headlamp nacelles instead of down by the grille.

Cockpit equipment in both cars is what one would expect of a sporting vehicle. The Marcos's steering wheel is a dished, two-spoke affair with a rather thick wooden rim; the TVR's is flat, with a thinner rim and three plain matt-painted spokes; nice. In both cars the main instruments are located directly in front of the driver – with a shaped and upholstered hood in the Marcos, without in the TVR (the lights catch the top of the screen at night in consequence). In the Marcos the dials themselves are ex-Triumph, with detail calibrations in stylised white-on-black lettering and kilometre equivalents for the 140mph speedo on an inner ring. In the TVR we tested – an early model immaculately prepared and kindly loaned by racing exponent David Plumstead of Purley, London – the smallish electronic tachometer didn't match the big, bold black-and-white 160mph (!) speedo, but current models have different instrumentation.

Preliminary squirts

Both engines fired easily during tests; the TVR needed no choke at all, just a couple of preliminary squirts on the throttle, whereas the Marcos responded best with the control in use for a few minutes first thing in the morning. The TVR's clutch is tricky, with a deceptively light initial action giving way to a heavy period towards the end of the pedal's travel. Its action is sensitive so that the engine, which shows a surprising lack of torque below 2000 or so rpm (light flywheel?), will stall if you're at all clumsy even in first gear, and changing up at high revs calls for real skill since a weird centrifugal action in the mechanism causes the clutch to bind for an instant and then grip like grim death. Coupled with all of this the gearbox synchromesh is inclined to be lazy and the action very heavy indeed. We often had to struggle getting it to go into first from rest, and during full-throttle changes the trouble was just as much persuading the lever to come *out* of the previous gear as to enter the next. By far the best thing is not to fight it, letting the change find its own pace.

The Marcos of course uses the normal Volvo gearbox with a remote change as fitted to the P1800 coupe. Because of the shorter lever there is a feeling of notchiness which is absent in the bread and butter saloon installation, but it's still possible to select your gears easily and quickly, engage first without undue fuss, and slam the lever through in confidence during hard acceleration. The clutch is foolproof and quite light although, as with the TVR, there's a sad shortage of space for your left foot when it isn't actually on the pedal.

Acceleration in the Marcos is brisk – brisker than we had expected, actually – without being in the E-type class. Using the nicely spaced ratios to the full and changing up on the line at 6000rpm you get peak speeds of 40 in first, 60 in second and 80 plus in third. There's not so much a kick in the back as a steady progression all the way up to 75mph or so, when it's time to change into top and watch the speedometer strike out gamely for the 110mph mark. The Laycock electric overdrive, which works for some reason on top gear only, makes it possible to cruise at around 100mph on open roads with some abatement in noise level. Otherwise there's quite a row going on, since the carburettor intakes are barely silenced, there's a good deal of mechanical noise from the timing and valve gear, the exhaust note with its twin TR4 baffles is a shade over-fruity and even the Cinturatos send up plenty of rumble from the road surface. The differential on our car was rowdy, too; in fact almost the only thing lacking was wind noise. Presumably the cure, since the coupe body inevitably tends to amplify all this, is still more rubber insulation.

The TVR is an altogether more brutal performer. Its acceleration in first gear is enough to set both rear wheels spinning furiously, laying tracks of rubber down the road right up to the change-up point into second which falls at about 50mph with this engine (much more with the SE model which will do 7000rpm). Second will produce a healthy chirp as you let the clutch in on a dry road, and in the wet it's possible to get violent wheelspin even in third. For quick starts we found that the car responded best to a fairly tough technique which involved dropping the clutch and letting the rear tyres act as a sort of secondary cushion. Change-up points for the various gears are really rather academic, since you can easily get all the acceleration you need on the road using first and top alone; however, the sensible thing is to wait until the engine is turning quickly enough to deliver maximum torque in the next higher gear, a technique which provides acceleration without actually shredding any halfshafts or setting the tyres on fire.

Top speed, unfortunately, was purely academic with our TVR, since on two occasions when we tried urging the reasonably accurate speedometer beyond the 125 mark there was a sudden violent explosion and a rush of wind which we thought at first could only be the engine blowing up in the biggest possible way. It turned out to be caused by the leading edge of the glassfibre roof structure coming right away from the windscreen, and when we told the TVR man he said gaily 'You were lucky →

→ – if you'd tried putting on another five mph the back window would have blown out.' This was said by way of a joke, of course, and the company has been working on the problem ever since this very early car left the works. The answer, predictably, is to add a couple of rearward facing vents to equalise the pressure inside the cockpit at high speeds.

Both cars feel safe and stable at top-of-the-ton motorway speeds, the Marcos particularly. In the TVR there's a slight torque reaction which causes the car to veer noticeably towards the inside lane if you back off in a hurry. but otherwise it is barely sensitive to sidewinds. Like the Marcos it is a noisy car to drive really quickly, but in this case most of the row comes from the wind – although some is caused by induction roar from the engine. One really serious fault, and again one which is receiving attention, is the way the cockpit becomes insufferably hot during a long, fast drive due to the proximity of the right-bank exhaust system to the driver's footwell. The single sheet of asbestos fitted as a shield in our car was totally inadequate.

Roadholding in both cars is spectacular, but the characteristics differ. The Marcos, as one would expect from such an advanced specification, behaves in copybook racing fashion with almost no roll and a mild degree of initial understeer which finally becomes strong enough to force you to back off, automatically swinging the car back into line. Ultimate cornering speeds on smooth roads are among the highest in our experience (equal to the Lotus Elan, which we shall be reporting on soon) and there is an overall feeling of complete predictability which would make fast driving a real delight if only one could see better.

The TVR, which used to have a reputation for sudden and rather vicious oversteer, is very much improved in its Griffith form thanks to wider SP tyres and (we suspect) drastically altered rear-wheel camber settings. Cornering conventionally, behaviour is just about neutral up to the point which most people would consider an everyday limit. Beyond that, the tail begins to show signs of trotting out and the direction in which you proceed depends very much on what you do with the throttle.

From this you may gather that in a given corner it would undoubtedly be the Marcos that could get through faster, although the TVR would not disgrace itself. Does this mean the Marcos is the faster car from point to point in English driving conditions? Not really. On a long journey over unfamiliar roads there are strict limits to how fast one can take one's corners anyway, and the difference in roadholding of the two cars doesn't begin to show up until well beyond that point. But even on roads you know well it's possible to put up astonishing averages with the TVR, solely because of its effortless acceleration and unparalleled passing ability; we covered a regular 180mile test route of ours through near-deserted lanes in half an hour less than our usual time, without extending the car at all in any of the corners. The Marcos could certainly have equalled that time in similar circumstances, but to do it we would have had to try harder and we would have finished the course a lot more tired.

Marked fade

In braking, both cars put up a fair performance. The Marcos stopped very quickly indeed but showed quite a lot of fade towards the end of our tough 10-stop test from 60mph, but since it was fitted with the old drum brakes at the back this didn't really mean very much. Pedal pressures were quite low, although without a servo the all-disc setup might feel very different. The handbrake, despite its temporary appearance, was reasonably effective. In the TVR we noticed rather less fade, probably because of harder linings on the huge discs at the front, and stopping power was perfectly adequate from the speeds we were using. The servo unit fitted as standard kept pedal pressures well down, and the handbrake stood up well in use.

Steering is marginally more direct in the TVR, and the designers have managed to correct some of the pre-Griffith cars' undue sensitivity to road shocks. But a lot of shock still comes through from severe bumps and potholes – too much for comfort, certainly, even if there is no longer any danger of losing control because of it.

This brings us to the question of ride. The TVR Griffith falls squarely between the two extremes of, say, E-type Jaguar softness and Morgan rigidity: its ride is not actively uncomfortable, but you are invariably very conscious of the irregularities in a typical British road surface and there's no saying what it might be like on the continent. Ground clearance, however, is low and we managed to scrape the underneath mildly once or twice.

The Marcos is much the same in character. With such a sophisticated suspension system you might imagine that Marsh and friends had aimed at a Lotus Elan-type ride, real boulevard softness combining with tenuous roadholding. Consequently it comes as something of a shock to realise that the suspension's vertical travel at the back is only three inches – no more than in the much less scientific TVR. Again, bumps can be felt at all times, one must go carefully over such obstacles as humpback bridges for fear of bashing the undertray, and although there is very little active discomfort one instinctively avoids roads which one knows to be full of irregularities. In corners, though, there is little sensitivity to surface and, beyond an occasional bodily movement sideways when all four wheels are caught out together, one can press on.

Well, there they are. Having come this far you may think we've been unduly critical in our assessment of these two GT competitors. If so, we ask you to bear in mind two points. The first is that we believe honest criticism is never out of place. And the second is that the prices of these cars, both of which are selling in the same market category as (say) the Rover Three-litre and the Jaguar S-type, invite the harshest possible criticism of imperfections of finish as well as shortcomings which have to do purely with performance. It will also pay to bear in mind that the Marcos costs more than an open E-type and the TVR is substantially more expensive than a Sunbeam Tiger.

Both, then, are obviously cars for real enthusiasts to whom some particular aspect of their specification appeals irresistibly. In the case of the Marcos such aspects are likely to be its looks, its quite fascinating technical specification, its superficial comfort, its novelty, and the ease with which it can be converted into a competitive racer within the limits of its class. The TVR's big selling point is most likely to be its acceleration; Tiger or no Tiger, in its tank or at the traffic lights, we doubt whether one can buy as much performance for less in Britain today.

Which do we prefer? We would like to say the Marcos, since we have always tried to support honest endeavour and we do most sincerely admire the effort that has gone into its design. But speaking as simple, honest enthusiasts we must admit that the sheer Ooomph of the TVR Griffith 200 has an irresistible appeal. Happily for everyone, there is at least a 50percent chance that you will think differently.

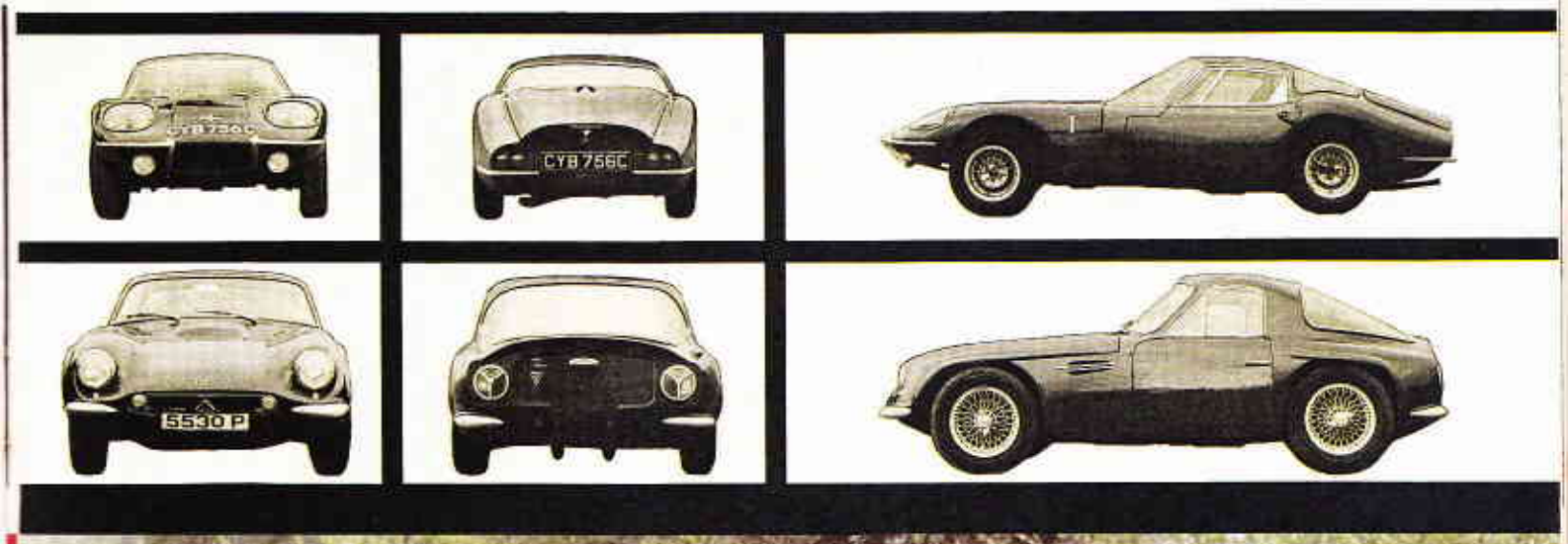
SO Jim Clark

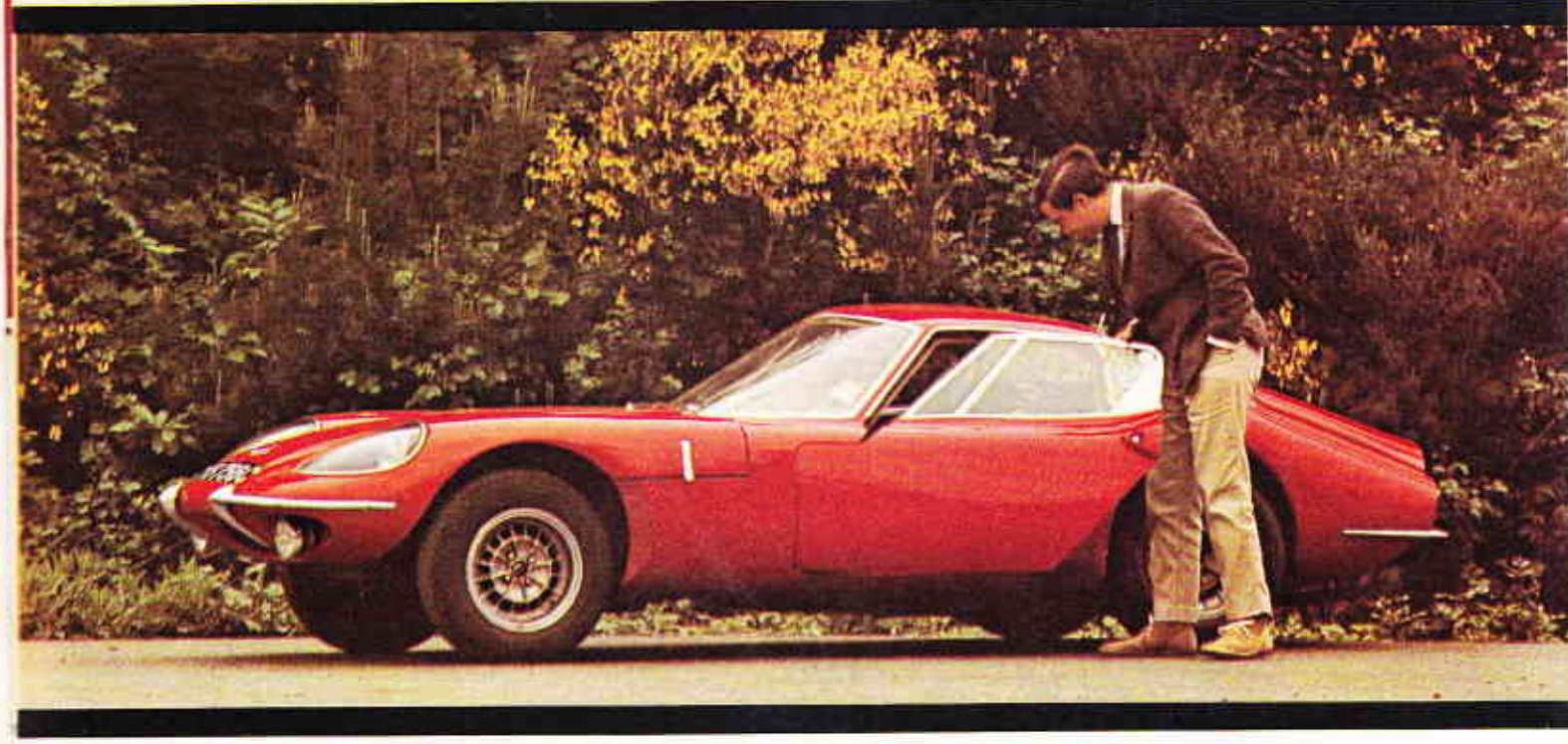
INSIDE THE MARCOS, THE tilted snout accentuates an already strong feeling that you're sitting in a satellite nose-cone poised for takeoff. Because the roofline is so low, the sill so high and the seat itself so close to the ground, getting in and out can be something of a struggle despite quite generous door openings. But once you've got yourself and your dolly installed there's really quite a lot of room for both of you – too much, in fact, for drivers on the dumpy side of 5ft 10in, who have to have a special upholstered cushion (pictured) which fastens in place over the normal seat. The seat itself is lovely just to loll back in and gaze at the sky through the top half of the sharply raked screen – which has a flat section placed in front of you, incidentally, to avoid distortion. The cushions are resilient and the backrest is anatomically shaped ('We had a lot of trouble getting the chap out of the mould' quips Jem Marsh), and the fact that there is a built-in headrest encourages relaxation as well as guarding against whiplash injury. Actually driving the car like that is a rather different matter.

The main trouble seems to be not so much the reclining position as the ultra-low viewpoint, which puts the scuttle not far below the level of a tall man's chin and the rear quarters up around his ears. It's true that most people have difficulty seeing behind them when they're lying on their back, but one could put up with that in the Marcos (there's an excellent rear view mirror) if one didn't feel that one's vision was so restricted anyway aft of the door windows. Coupled with the fact that you can't see the edge of either front wing, or even the nose of the car beyond the level of the radiator, all of this adds up to a distinct tendency in most men to crane forward sharply whenever they're called upon to park in a crowded place or (more important) to press on in a twisting country lane. It shows up worst of all on humpback bridges, where the usual feeling of elation is translated into an agonising moment of total blindness during which one can see nothing but that long, undulating bonnet groping for the stars . . .

Getting in and out is even more of a problem in the TVR, which has always featured quite ridiculously narrow doors with needlessly constricted openings, but visibility is not.

photographed by Charles Pocklington at the CAR proving ground

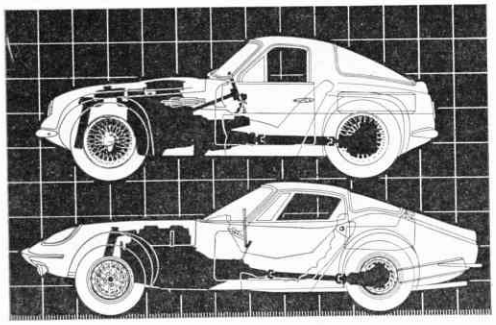




terse test

Ratings poor fair** average*** good**** outstanding******

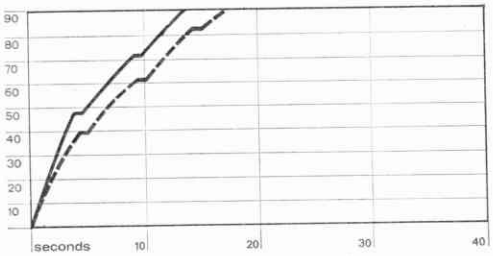
	TVR Griffith 200	Marcos 1800GT
Appearance	**	*****
Compactness	*****	**
Economy	**	***
Acceleration	*****	****
Top speed	****	****
Cornering	****	*****
Braking	****	****
Ride	**	**
Comfort	****	*****
Silence	***	**
Visibility	***	*
Finish	***	****
Accessibility	****	****
Convenience	****	***
Heating	****	****



Acceleration, standing start

TVR Griffith 200

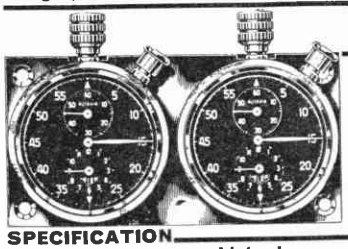
Marcos 1800 GT



CAR magazine presents this see-at-a-glance test table purely as a rough guide. Findings are entirely relative; 'hidden' factors such as price and market category have a big effect. For a detailed breakdown of each specific point, as well as a comprehensive summary of our views on the importance of the faults and advantages we found during our assessment, read this month's Giant Road Test in full

ACTION

		TVR Griffith 200	Marcos 1800 GT
Top speed, mph		126	115·2
Speed in gears, mph	I	49	40
	II	72	61
	III	102	83
	IV	126	103
	IV o/d		115
Acceleration, sec	0–30	2·3	2·9
	0–40	3·4	4·4
	0–50	4·7	6·8
	0–60	7·3	9·2
	0–70	9·2	11·9
Fuel consumption, mpg	overall	15·6	24·5
	driven carefully	18	27
	normal range	14–18	22-27
Braking			
stopping distance from 30 mph, ft		30·2	31·5
degree of fade after 10 stops from 50 mph, percent		7·5	12
Speedometer error, mph			
recorded speed	30 true speed	32	29
	40	44	39
	50	53	49
	60	63	58
	70	73	68
Weight, lb as tested with two people		2264	2015



Figures are the mean of several runs in opposite directions, using a corrected speedometer. Surface: smooth bitumen. In the case of sports cars they are recorded with hood and windows in place

SPECIFICATION

		TVR Griffith 200	Marcos 1800 GT
General	List price, UK purchase tax paid	£1693	£1935
Dimensions, in	Wheelbase	86	89
	Track front	51	49
	rear	52	50
	Length	138	159
	Width	64	63
	Height	49	42
	Ground clearance	5	4·7
	Headroom front	38	37
	Legroom front	37	41
Engine	Power, bhp/rpm	195/4400	114/5800
	Torque, lb ft/rpm	282/2400	110/4200
	Material	cast iron	cast iron/light alloy
	Cooling	water	water
	Configuration	V	in–line
	Valve gear	pushrod ohv	pushrod ohv
	Cylinders	eight	four
	Bore, mm	101·6	84·14
	Stroke, mm	72·9	100
	Capacity, cc	4727	1783
	Compression	9·1	9·5
	Carburettors	1 Ford 4–choke	2 Stromberg
Transmission	Synchromesh	baulk ring I, II, III, IV	baulk ring I, II, III, IV
	Control	remote floor	remote floor
	Ratios, overall I	10·8	10·25
	II	7·5	6·54
	III	5·27	4·85
	IV	3·89	3·91
	Clutch, size, in	10·4	8·5
	Tyre size, in	185 x 15	175 x 13
Steering	Type	rack and pinion	rack and pinion
	Turning circle, ft	32	37
	Turns, lock to lock	2·5	2·3
Brakes	Type	disc/drum	disc/drum as tested
	Size, in front	10·75	9·75
	rear	9	9
Suspension	Type front	independent, with unequal length wishbones and coil springs	independent, with unequal length wishbones and coil springs
	rear	as above	cross–braced leading link with coil springs
Structure	Type	2 door 2 seat glassfibre coupe with steel tube space frame, front engine driving rear wheels, rear luggage platform	2 door 2 seat glassfibre coupe with wood and steel monocoque structure, front engine driving rear wheels, rear boot

OPERATION

		TVR Griffith 200	Marcos 1800 GT
Fuel	Type	super/premium	super
	Capacity, gal	17	14
	Range, miles	225–260	340–375
Oil	Type, SAE	10W/30	10W/30
	Capacity, pints	8·5	7
	Change interval, miles	6000	5000
Lubricant	Type, SAE (oil)/ grade (grease)	80/90	30/90
	Number of points	none	6
	Change interval, miles	6000	6000
Air	Tyre pressures, front	24	26
	rear	26	26