



Golden mile eater

Blackpool-built TVR with well conceived installation of V-6 engine; rapid acceleration and effortless cruising; excellent roadholding but firm ride and heavy steering; comfortable well equipped interior; poor ventilation and access to luggage

IT IS 15 YEARS since the first TVR appeared with a choice of Climax 1100 or supercharged Ford 100E engine, a bonded steel tube and glass-fibre body/chassis unit, and torsion bar independent suspension. Since then, though TVRs have always looked much the same (with its limited resources the firm has sensibly stuck to the original basic design); numerous changes have been made: the chassis is considerably strengthened, the suspension modernised to an all-wishbone layout; the "special" image largely eliminated by refinement and there have also been about as many different engines as registered company names and proprietors. Since the present team, under Martin Lilley, took over in 1965, the company has been greatly stabilized and production steadily built up to the present rate of 25 cars per month, of which about five are the new Zodiac-engined Tuscan V-6.

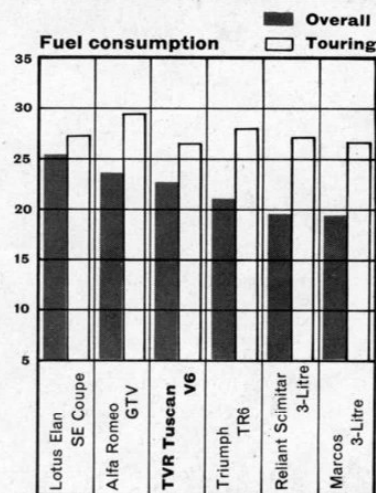
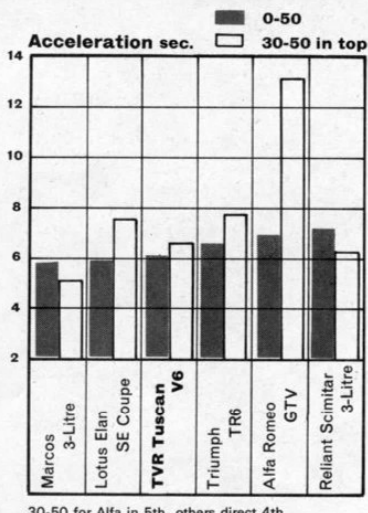
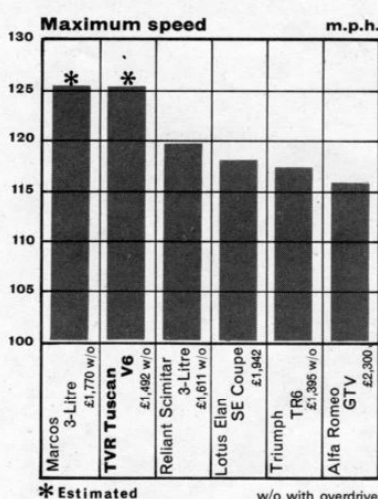
The last time we tried a TVR Tuscan it streaked from rest to 100 m.p.h. in just 13.8 seconds, the fastest production car we have ever tested. With a standard Zodiac 3-litre V-6 in place of the 271 b.h.p. 4.7-litre Ford V-8, the latest Tuscan is understandably less fierce but still retains an exciting performance;

Price: £1,492 (no purchase tax, available only in component form). Overdrive £85 extra.

since the two cars are otherwise identical, right down to the Cobra-type final drive unit, it feels and handles like a car obviously designed with more power in mind. V-8s are, of course, in short supply and costly both to buy and run in this country so the previous Tuscan was perhaps a rather shaky proposition for a small company. With the compact and comparatively inexpensive V-6, it has been possible to ask less than £1,500 (in component form) for a car which we estimate to be capable of 125 m.p.h., reach the ton in under 25 s. and return a fuel consumption of at least 22 m.p.g. It handles better than any previous TVR we have tested though it is our first long wheel-base model (our V-8 was built just before the extra 4 in. was added to the rather squat chassis). There are still faults, notably the kickback in the steering and the lack of ventilation and, for all its smooth, refined power, the engine's performance is a little marred by standard Ford gear ratios. Surely now that this unit is proving so useful for sports GTs and small saloon conversions it would be worth somebody's while to market a set of special cogs; or perhaps they will come when the 3-litre Capri finally arrives. At the moment the only alternative is a close-ratio Corsair box and then you have to forego the overdrive, which gives such comfortable, relaxed cruising in the very high overdrive top. On

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Performance



Performance tests carried out by Motor's staff at the Motor Industry Research Association proving ground, Lindley

Test Data: World Copyright reserved; no unauthorised reproduction in whole or in part.

Conditions

Weather: Dry and cool wind 10-20 m.p.h.
 Temperature: 60°F
 Barometer: 29.75 in. Hg.
 Surface: Dry tarmac and concrete
 Fuel: 99 octane (RM) 4-Star rating

Maximum Speeds

	m.p.h.	k.p.h.
Estimated maximum speed (see test)		
Direct top gear	125.0	202
O/d 3rd gear	121	194
3rd gear	105	169
2nd gear	86	138
1st gear	55	89
1st gear	38	61

"Maxmile" speed: (Timed quarter mile after 1 mile accelerating from rest)

Mean	112.5
Best	115.4

Acceleration Times

m.p.h.	sec.
0-30	2.6
0-40	3.8

0-50	6.0
0-60	8.3
0-70	11.1
0-80	14.3
0-90	18.7
0-100	24.8
0-110	33.5

Standing quarter mile	16.2
Standing kilometre	30.0

	O/d	Top	3rd
	sec.	sec.	sec.
10-30	—	—	5.2
20-40	8.8	6.7	4.5
30-50	9.2	6.6	4.3
40-60	8.6	6.3	4.3
50-70	8.4	6.1	5.2
60-80	9.5	6.6	5.4
70-90	10.2	7.9	—
80-100	12.6	9.6	—
90-110	17.6	15.4	—

Fuel Consumption

Touring (consumption midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum less 5% allowance for acceleration)	26.6 m.p.g.
Overall	22.6 m.p.g.
	(= 12.5 litres/100km)
Total test distance	1,073 miles

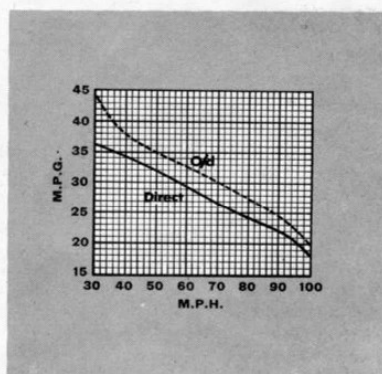
Speedometer

Indicated	30 40 50 60 70 80
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True	29	38	47	57	67	77
Indicated	90	100	110			
True	86	96	105			
Distance recorder						2% fast

Weight

Kerb weight (unladen with fuel for approximately 50 miles)	17½
Front/rear distribution	50½/49½
Weight laden as tested	21½ cwt



stable in a straight line and is only slightly affected by gusty cross winds. But it was generally agreed that though it always felt very safe and controllable on slow corners it was a little less predictable on open sweeps, with a tendency to run wide on entry, suggesting a rather slow initial response to steering movement which becomes more noticeable as the speed rises. The brakes were reassuring, the servo worked well and normal road use produced no fade though pedal travel increased slightly over the duration of our test. The handbrake, conveniently placed beside the gear lever, is very powerful.

The interior is well laid out and very comfortable for two. The seats, though thinly upholstered, give good support all round from thighs to shoulder. The steering wheel is well placed (a larger one might foul your knees) and the pedals are set and angled just right for heel-and-toe changes.

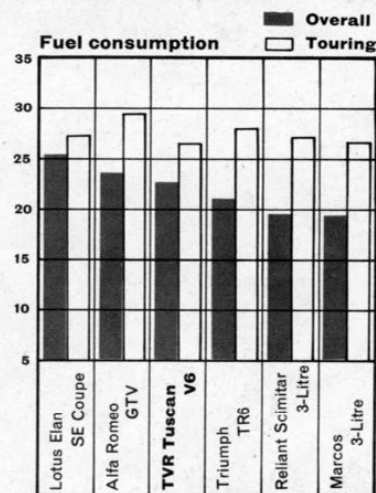
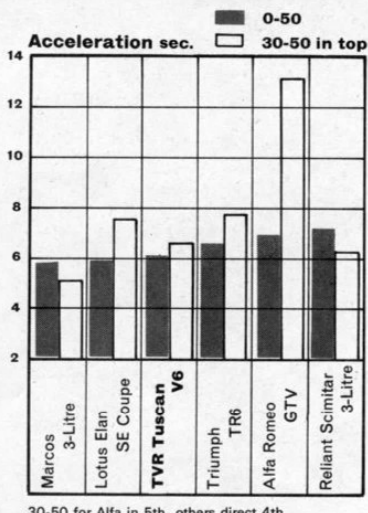
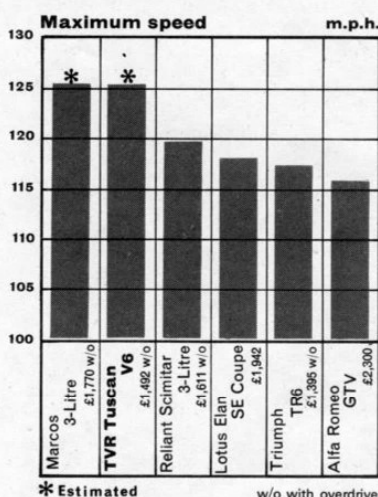
The fascia, like most of the interior, is well finished in soft matt black pvc material and all minor controls are clearly labelled piano key switches: the neat, round dialled instruments are ideally placed. The Triumph Herald steering column has the usual indicator stalk on the right (much too close to the overdrive switch behind it) and the lighting stalk on the left with a dip-through-mainbeam arrangement. Electric windows on the test car were experimental and very desirable except when the

driver's one occasionally failed, usually with the window down when it was raining. . . .

Although the interior looks airy, our main complaint on the test car was its total lack of proper ventilation. This we were told was partly due to the small Rover 3-litre fascia vents not being coupled to the inlets, but in view of the pressure which builds up inside with the windows closed and the singular lack of effect from two vents which do admit some air on each side of the fascia, we would suggest that a rather more comprehensive system, including extractor slots, would be necessary to keep the interior cool and fume-free in hot weather. Some of the car's "special" ancestry was evident in the recalcitrant window, which made doubly awkward a driver's door which sometimes refused to open from the inside, and the tendency for the other door to be forced open to the safety catch at high speed. Otherwise the car feels sturdy, well built and reasonably well finished. The exterior is fairly smooth around the door apertures and with both windows closed wind noise is low. Inside, the strident exhaust is reduced to a pleasant hum and you can converse in normal tones at 100 m.p.h. or listen to the cracking on the radio, the interference shielding being rather inadequate for a glass-fibre body.

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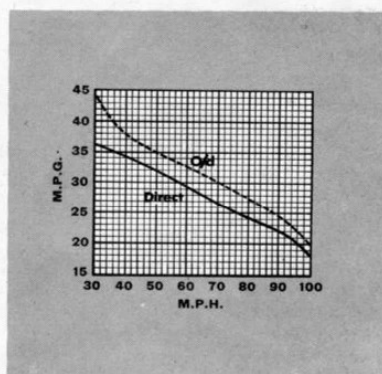
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